

Traffic Safety Roads

The Graham Feest Consultancy
Incorporating the UK Road Safety Network

February 2024



Celebrating 2024



Traffic Safety Roads

TRAFFIC SAFETY ROADS (TSR)

collates a range of information and opinion from various sources. Whilst every effort is made to ensure its accuracy the Graham Feest Consultancy cannot be held responsible for any incorrect information provided from third parties or the views expressed by individuals.



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GRAHAM FEEST is a road

safety consultant and a CIHT accredited training provider, organising and leading low-cost high value events around the UK; speaking at national, international and local conferences/seminars; organising/conducting workshops both in the UK and overseas; along with providing support and guidance drawing on fifty years' experience in the field of road and traffic safety. He is a former County Road Safety Officer and Head of Road Safety for IAM Road Smart; the immediate past Chair of the National Road Safety Committee and is the current Chair of the Institute of Master Tutors of Driving, Road Safety Advisor to the ADI National Joint Council and Road Safety Consultant for the RichWorks.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT is extended to the following principal sources of information along with the articles from individual contributors;

AA, ADI National Joint Council, Agilysis, ARRM, CIHT, Clearview Intelligence, Brake, DfT, DIA, DfBB, DVSA, eDriving, ETSC, Fleet News, GEM Motoring Assist, Intelligent Instructor, Hadstrong, Highways Magazine, Highways on Friday, IAM RoadSmart, IHE, IMTD, LAPV, LCRIG, LGA, Living Streets, Logistics UK, London Road Safety Council, MCIA, MSA, National Highways, PACTS, RAC, RHA, RoadSafe, Road Safety GB, Road Safety Scotland, Roadpol, Road Safety Wales, RoSPA, SMMT, Sustrans, TfL, TRL, The RichWorks, Transport Scotland, TRL, Transport Network, UCL etc

Traffic Safety Roads is published by the Graham Feest Consultancy *incorporating the* UK Road Safety Network

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Edition 9 Issue 02 - No.93: February 2024

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*Front Cover Picture
Depicting Roadworks and Diversions*

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EDITORIAL

Readers coming to my newsletter for the first time - I need to explain that the expression 50 20 10 refers to having personally spent 50 years in road safety, twenty years having had my own consultancy and then 10 years that my executive

assistant, Victoria has been with me. This gives me time to reflect as I first became involved in my work in 1974 and so I am able to share with you my 50th Anniversary during 2024.

Reflecting on some of the things in the seventies in the last issue now leads me into the eighties and I moved to West Sussex County Council and became the counties Senior Road Safety Officer for Educational Development. The latter part of the 80's saw the introduction of the National Curriculum with its three core subjects of English, Maths and Science along with formalised schemes of work attainment targets and the introduction of assessment tests (SATS) with education being placed into four key stages. Schools had to start using the National Curriculum in 1989 but there were a few years building towards its implementation. Teachers became very concerned about the expectations being placed on them and it put a squeeze on issues which were not regarded as education and road safety was a casualty which led to a more creative approach of ensuring that it was integrated into the subject matter and the focus of delivery was switched to providing teachers with the methodology of integrating our subject matter. What did become clear however was that the road safety profession in the early days had a greater understanding of the requirements of the national curriculum than the teachers and I found myself not only showing teachers how to use our subject matter in the core and other subjects but also educating them about the various demands and elements of the national curriculum.

Very sadly the highly regarded RAC ACU Motorcycle Training Scheme operated by many road safety departments with an army of volunteers came to an end in 1982. The demise of the scheme which had a long history saw many authorities abandoning motorcycle training, developing their own stand alone scheme or taking advantage of the BMF and RoSPA who set up a schemes to fill the gap. In 1981 the Government introduced a package of changes with regard to motorcycling with a maximum size of learner machines being reduced to 125cc. A provisional motorcycling licence entitlement was limited to 2 years and a 2-part test was introduced with the intention of reducing collisions by steering learners to take training with approved organisations on suitable motorcycles. The first part of the test included some basic off-road motorcycle control exercises - usually conducted at large goods vehicle (LGV) centres - the second part included the usual on-road riding.

On 31 January 1983 the seatbelts wearing law came into force. Shortly after this, 90% of car drivers and front seat passengers were observed to be wearing seatbelts. Moreover, a 29% reduction in fatal injuries of front-seat passengers and a 30% drop in serious injuries were reported that year.

Having joined the Institute of Road Safety Officers not long after coming into the profession a new body known as the Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers (AIRSO) came across my desk and in 1987, I became a member which allowed me to reach out to fellow practitioners in the commercial and charity sectors meeting fleet and transport managers, driver trainers, leaders of trade and other associations etc all of whom had an interest and involvement in keeping drivers safe on the road. As you will discover in my next editorial this Association was to prove significant in the direct of my road safety career as indeed was my appointment as County Road Safety Officer for Northamptonshire in 1989.

This particular month pulls out the 20 in my 50 20 10 for it was on 1st February 2004 that the Graham Feest Consultancy was established. In my next editorial I will talk about the nineties and the many exciting things which happened in a decade which brought about many significant advances in road safety with a big shift away from being something just primarily aimed at children.

NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF BRAKE

Brake is delighted to announce that Ross Moorlock has been named the new Chief executive officer.



Ross has held the position of Interim CEO since April 2023 when founder and former Chief executive Mary Williams OBE retired and stepped down from the role after 29 years. Prior to this, Ross was Chief operating officer at Brake, having joined the charity back in 2017. As interim CEO, Ross has overseen a period of expansion. In 2023, BRAKE grew from 37 employees in January, to 62 by December, with growth across all teams including campaigns, fundraising and operations, but most significantly within the National Road Victim Service.

RICHARD ALLSOP

I am sad to inform you of the death of Professor Richard Allsop who was a long time well respected road safety advocate following a brief illness.



Richard was an Emeritus Professor of Transport Studies at UCL, where he played a senior role in transport research and teaching between 1976 and 2005. He had extensive experience of research, training and advisory work on road safety, traffic management and other aspects of transport policy and was a friend and supporter of the Graham Feest Consultancy and those who have received this newsletter over many years would have found comments he had made to some of the articles. He was also very involved with PACTS serving as a Trustee and Director for 20 years and then as a Special Advisor for nearly ten. Most recently he sat on the Policy and Research Committee and in PACTS Road Environment Working Party as well as representing PACTS at the European Transport Safety Council.

POTHOLES

The AA attended more than 600,000 incidents involving vehicles damaged by potholes last year and according to Admiral Car Insurance the number of pothole-related claims increased by a record 40% last year when compared to 2022.

Rounded up to the national scale, it means an estimated two million vehicles were affected by tyre, wheel, steering and suspension damage caused by potholes in the UK in 2023 - costing drivers an estimated £4.74m.

A new 'Pothole Partnership', comprising of the AA, the National Motorcyclists Council, British Cycling, IAM RoadSmart, the British Motorcyclists Federation and manufacturer JCB has been formed in response to 'widespread concern' about poor road maintenance and to press for more effective permanent repairs.



There is optimism the Government's recent £8.3bn commitment to local roads could improve conditions and the Pothole Partnership's view is that the funding allocation needs to be front-loaded so local highway engineers can start addressing the backlog of necessary structural repairs now.

HAZARD PERCEPTION TEST FOR MOTORCYCLISTS

The National Young Rider Forum is working on the development of a 'good quality, motorcycle specific hazard perception test' tailored to the needs of young riders in a project funded by The Road Safety Trust and carried out with the expertise of Dr Victoria Kroll and Dr David Crundall of Esitu Solutions, a spin out company from Nottingham Trent University.

Young motorcyclists are overrepresented in crash statistics. The data shows many of the crashes they are involved in are the fault of other vehicles, particularly those with four wheels and the project seeks to improve the hazard perception, and hazard prediction skills of young riders. By filming hazards from the perspective of a motorcyclist riding in a mainly urban road environment will ensure that the test will reflect the real dangers faced by riders.

Dr Victoria Kroll, CEO of Esitu Solutions, said:

"Esitu Solutions is really excited to be collaborating with the National Young Rider Forum on this pivotal project. Saving lives lies at the core of our company's mission, and we are immensely grateful to The Road Safety Trust for their funding, enabling us to make riders safer on the roads."



The project is expected to be completed by 2025.

National Young Rider Forum, said: "Sadly, over the last three years, nearly 12,000 young motorcyclists have been injured in road crashes, and of those, nearly 4,000 have been killed or seriously injured."

DRIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE

With an issue which is likely to get worse, new data estimates that in the region of 400,000 drivers have been caught driving without insurance over the past four years.



iCompario submitted a Freedom of Information request to the DVSA and to every regional police force in the UK to determine how many motorists have been convicted of driving without insurance since the beginning of 2019.

The data also showed that in some areas like Ilford in East London, one in 50 licence holders have been caught driving without insurance in the past four years. Bradford in West Yorkshire (one in 57), and Romford in East London (one in 64) are also described as 'no insurance conviction hotspots'.

With figures from the Association of British Insurers showing that the average insurance cost in the UK is now £561 - up 61% in the last year - iCompario fears that more drivers might be tempted to risk driving uninsured to cut down on costs.

The organisation points to a survey of 1,600 UK drivers, included in the study, which reveals that roughly a quarter (24%) would consider driving without insurance due to financial concerns and the rise in cover prices.

Road Pricing could offer the solution to this issue by an insurance element included in the price per mile, thus insuring that no one can drive without cover, or alternatively providing a "fob" confirming insurance cover which has to be used to activate a charging/fueling pump before it can be activated.

HEADLIGHT SURVEY

Over recent years car lights have improved considerably but now a survey by the RAC of 2,000 drivers found 89% think at least some headlights on cars on the road today are too bright and is calling on the Government to commission an independent study into the issue of headlight glare after new research found 85% of those affected believe the problem is getting worse.



Of the drivers who complain about the brightness of car headlights, 91% say they get dazzled when driving with three-quarters (74%) saying this happens regularly.

While the RAC has been surveying drivers on dazzling headlights since 2018, these new findings show more drivers than ever appear to be suffering from them, with 85% of those affected stating they believe the problem is getting worse.

When it comes to the effects of glare on drivers, 67% who suffer say they have to slow down considerably until they can see clearly again, while a similar proportion (64%) believe some headlights are so bright they risk causing collisions.

As part of its study, the RAC asked drivers to estimate how long it takes them to see clearly again after getting dazzled by other drivers' lights.

Nearly one-in-10 (7%) say they find headlight glare so bad that they avoid driving at night altogether, a figure that rises to 14% for drivers aged 65 years and over.

While 68% say it takes between one and five seconds, 11% say it takes six or more - enough for a driver travelling at 60mph to cover 160 metres, the equivalent of 40 car lengths.

Government collision statistics shows that since 2013, there has been an average of 280 collisions a year where dazzling headlights were a contributory factor and it is estimated that six a year involved someone losing their life.

FITNESS TO DRIVE CAMPAIGN - SCOTLAND

With Scotland's Big Survey 2023 showing that driving is the most common way to get around among over 60s, with 72% of respondents saying this is the mode of transportation they use most. The Scottish Government and Road Safety Scotland has launched a new campaign encouraging older drivers to consider their driving habits and have a free regular NHS eye examination so they can continue driving safely.

With recent stats showing 29% of car driver casualties killed or seriously injured in road collisions were aged over 60 years, the Fitness to Drive campaign highlights that eyesight can affect the ability of older drivers and calls for anyone in that age demographic to have their eyes examined regularly, or as soon as they notice a change.



The campaign says it is common for drivers to adapt their driving behaviour as they get older, for example, by not driving at night or on busier roads to avoid the glare from oncoming traffic, or by driving shorter distances. These adaptations often happen gradually and can be a sign of deteriorating vision, the campaign adds. The campaign also addresses family and friends who may be initiating discussions about driving with their loved ones, which can be a sensitive subject.

To support the campaign a toolkit with additional information has been put together and can be found at <https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

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MOT TEST

At long last the Government has provided its response to the consultation about the future timing of the MOT Test in which it has concluded that there will be no change to the existing regulations.

Speculation that it might change for the first test to four years, has at least for the time being left as it is but we can be sure that it will come back to the drawing board again at some stage as this is the third time it has been debated in recent years.



The government response to the consultation on updating MOT testing for cars, motorbikes and vans, confirms that the first MOT will remain at 3 years from registration. Every subsequent MOT will also continue to be taken once every year, ensuring motorists can continue to drive with peace of mind.

Launched in January 2023, the consultation sought views to ensure roadworthiness checks continue to balance the cost to motorists, road safety, advances in vehicle technology and tackling vehicle emissions.

To ensure MOTs are fit for the future, the government will further investigate how to better monitor diesel vehicle emissions through the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA). This will include whether testing should do more to ensure that diesel vehicles comply with emissions regulations.

Analysis from the AA suggests that an annual MOT can potentially save drivers between £200 and £400 as picking up developing faults each year means drivers aren't hit with higher repair bills further down the road.

ANIMAL DAMAGE



RAC Insurance have indicated that animal-related vehicle breakdowns have hit an all-time high with 303 occurrences of animal damage in the first eleven months of the year- more than any previous year on record for the same period. *(Events in which a car strikes an animal are not included).*

It is advised drivers that rodents may become drawn to cars that are abandoned for extended periods of time or that have food within or close by.

Rats are known to chew through fuel hoses, invade engine compartments, and shatter headlights, which accounts for more than half of this year's animal damage.

Patrols also recorded multiple incidences of foxes gnawing speed sensor cables, windscreen wiper blades and brake hoses.

Many of us are used to seeing the occasional rat or mouse on the street, but finding one in your car is not only a nasty shock but often the cause of very unwelcome and expensive damage said the RAC.

An RAC patrol officer working in south-west England discovered a squirrel using a car's air filter to stockpile nuts.

One patrol attended a Porsche where 10 mice had made a nest under a panel at the bottom of the windscreen.

Another was asked to rescue a baby pet python that became stuck behind a wheel trim after becoming drawn to its owner's car's heated brake

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TEMPORARY ROAD WORKS TO BE DIGITALISED

Data on temporary speed limits, road closures and parking spaces will be mandated for satellite navigation (satnav) systems under new plans unveiled by the Government

Roads minister Guy Opperman says that all Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which are short term traffic measures such as temporary speed limits or road closures, will be made digital. Until now, TROs have not been automatically updated on digital systems, meaning they are sometimes missing from satnav systems.

The Government says it will now mandate data on TROs and the location of parking spaces is made freely available for satnavs.

Opperman said:

**ROAD
CLOSED
AHEAD**

“Everyone knows the frustrations of being sent down a closed road by your satnav, so by going digital with our traffic information, we’re making sure that drivers have the very latest travel information to rely on.”

Going forward, regulations will require traffic authorities to send their TROs to a new digital publication platform. The data will then be available online for anyone to use.

CODE FOR COUNTRYSIDE ROADS

NFU Mutual (*National Farmers' Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited*) has announced plans in its 2023 Rural Road Safety Report to create a Code for Countryside Roads and to bring together ‘expert knowledge and advice to make rural roads safer for everyone’.

The report found that, in 2022, fatalities on roads rose back up to pre-pandemic levels with rural road deaths accounting for almost two thirds of all fatalities on roads. Despite more incidents happening in urban areas, the fatality rate on rural roads is ‘strikingly higher’ - at one for every 31 collisions, compared to one for every 120 on urban roads.

When respondents to a survey, featured in the report, were asked what their biggest rural road safety concerns were:

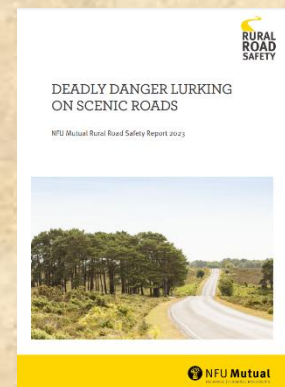
- 25% identified loose livestock or animals.
- 25% found vehicles, or slow-moving traffic were a concern.
- 28% cited mud and debris.
- 50% cited the impatience of drivers.

Blind corners, narrow or winding roads, and poor road quality topped the list of concerns overall.

The report also identified an upward trend in fatalities involving horses and their riders, finding them to be ‘significantly at risk on rural roads’. According to the latest figures from the BHS (British Horse Society), 69 horses were killed on the roads and 139 riders were injured in 2022, a 21% increase from 2021.

NFU Mutual says its new code will include feedback and advice from expert groups with the overall aim of ‘providing a clear guide on how people should use the roads’.

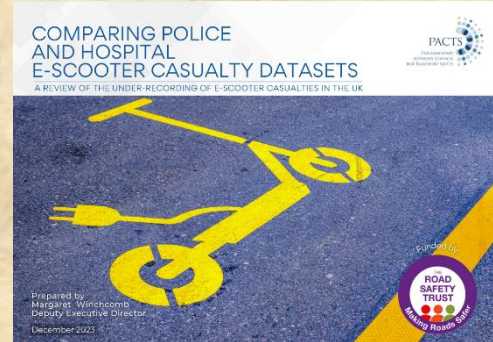
A copy of the report can be found at <https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>



E-SCOOTER CASUALTY DATA SETS

PACTS has published a study investigating the extent of under-recording of injury collisions involving e-scooters which builds on their previous extensive research in 2022 into the safety of private e-scooters.

Knowing how many people are injured in road traffic collisions is important. It means that, for any form of transport, the risk of harm to the driver or rider and the risk of harm to other road users can be better understood. The official data for all road traffic casualties, regardless of type of mobility, are based on police records. It has long been recognised and accepted that when comparing the official data with the number of people presenting at hospital with an injury from a road traffic collision, there are discrepancies.



By analysing data from two months in late 2021 PACTS looked at 300 casualties recorded by hospitals across the UK, police records and data from the rental trials to identify matches between the different datasets.

The study found that:

- Fewer than 10% of casualties with any level of injury from a collision involving an e-scooter presenting to emergency departments were recorded in the official data;
- Around a quarter of those most seriously injured in collisions involving e-scooters were recorded by both the police and at hospitals.

E-scooters, be they in the regulated rental trials or privately owned, are classed as motor vehicles. Collisions resulting in injury should be reported to the police. Capturing data from collisions with illegally ridden private e-scooters may be difficult. That should not be the case for the 23,000 rental e-scooters in the Government run trials. Therefore PACTS calls on the DfT to:

- Improve the means of recording e-scooter casualties using the rental e-scooter schemes by updating guidance to operators and local authorities so data collection more closely aligns with recording systems the police use;
- Increase the opportunities for casualty data to be collected by issuing clear information to the public about the obligations of reporting road traffic collisions to the police, including those involving e-scooters on public roads and public places.

A copy of the report can be found at <https://www.grahamfeest.com/resources/latest-uploads/>

NEW MOTORCYCLE CAMPAIGN

The National Young Rider Forum has launched a campaign to help keep young riders safe at junctions as statistics show that 60% of motorcycle collisions can occur at junctions.

The campaign, across social media, highlights this statistic and provides young riders with simple set of instructions to navigate any potential dangers and will also appeal directly to drivers on four wheels to always check for bikers before emerging from any type of junction. It stresses that motorcyclists, particularly young inexperienced ones are road users who require extra care, consideration and concentration from drivers and junctions pose a real risk to those on two wheels.

CYCLING TO WORK LINKED WITH BETTER MENTAL HEALTH

New Research has shown that people who cycle to work are less likely to be prescribed drugs to treat anxiety or depression than those who commute using different modes of transport.

The analysis of almost 380,000 people living in Scotland suggests that commuting by bike reduces the risk of mental ill-health and whilst previous research suggests cycling to work benefits peoples' mental wellbeing, most studies have involved small numbers of participants and self-reported measures of mental health.

Edinburgh researchers combined data for 378,253 people aged 16-74 from the 2011 Scottish census with NHS prescription records for the following five years. The people included in the study lived and worked in Edinburgh or Glasgow, stayed within around one mile of a cycle path and did not have any prescriptions for mental ill-health at the start of the study.

The team's analysis also reveals that only around 2 per cent of commuters in Glasgow cycled to work, with just under 5 per cent doing so in Edinburgh. Men were more likely than women to ride a bike to work.

These findings provide further evidence of the importance of promoting active travel and investing in infrastructure to encourage more people to commute by bike, the team says.

Researchers found a 15 per cent reduction in prescriptions for depression or anxiety amongst cycle commuters in the five years after 2011 compared with non-cyclists. Commuting by bike led to greater reductions in mental health prescriptions in women than in men.



The study used the fact that otherwise similar people are more likely to cycle to work if they live close to a cycle path. Using this property, it was possible to mimic a randomised controlled trial and compare the mental health of those who cycled to work to those using other modes of transport but who were otherwise comparable.

HOME OFFICE TYPE APPROVAL

The Government has launched a welcomed Call for Evidence on Home Office Type Approval (HOTA), the process by which enforcement technology is approved to ensure that evidence from devices can be admissible in UK courts without eye-witness corroboration.

The Call for Evidence is a significant win for the 'Let's Get HOTA Working' campaign, launched by Intelligent Transport Systems UK (ITS UK), the industry association for transport technology. It will allow enforcement technology manufacturers to feed their thoughts directly to the Home Office on how the process can be improved to support road safety and a robust and effective approval process for suppliers.

The Call for Evidence will run until 14th February.

For some time, suppliers have been highlighting issues with HOTA, including the long and uncertain timelines for approval, the need for regular dialogue with assessors, the requirement for a process by which modifications to current devices can be fast-tracked and that updates to the SpeedMeter Handbook guidance need to be made. Getting this right - with a robust, but clear and effective approval process in place - will not only improve road safety, but will also support investment and growth in a globally-regarded UK industry.

LANE RENTAL

A consultation, from the Department for Transport has been launched on plans for highway authorities to use at least half of lane rental scheme surpluses for road repairs, claiming that this could generate 'up to' £100m and is seeking to extend the current £10,000 per day fine for overrunning street works into weekends and bank holidays and also increase other fines.

Lane rental schemes allow highway authorities to charge companies for the time that street and road works occupy their busiest routes. However, such schemes only cover a tiny fraction of the network and only two new councils have launched such schemes since ministers announced a planned national roll-out six years ago.

Following the original successful pilots from Transport for London and Kent, only Surrey and West Sussex currently operate lane rental. The schemes cover less than 5% of London's road network and between 5% and 7% elsewhere. The prospect of Highway Authorities being able to retain some of the cash for their own road repairs is seen as an incentive for others to set up such a scheme.

Nonetheless, the DfT said its plans could generate 'up to' £100m extra over 10 years to resurface roads while helping tackle congestion.

Ministers first announced plans for a national lane rental roll-out in February 2018. Last autumn, the then roads minister, Richard Holden, promised to 'chase down' every local authority without a lane rental scheme, indicating a degree of frustration at the slow pace of the roll-out. Under the more common permitting schemes, utility companies can be fined £10,000 per day fine for overrunning street works, but only on working days. The consultation seeks to extend this into weekends and bank holidays, as well as doubling fines for companies who breach conditions, from £500 up to a maximum of £1,000.



The announcement received a lukewarm reception from Street Works UK chief executive who said:

'Utilities perform a vital role in connecting households, working to the highest standards, whilst complying with rigorous inspections to ensure works are high quality and lasting. We look forward to engaging constructively with Government throughout this consultation, representing our members and the wider industry, to ensure both utilities and local authorities can deliver infrastructure works whilst giving customers and road users the speed of delivery, lack of congestion, and transparency they expect.'

COMMERCIAL VEHICLE PRODUCTION 2023

2023 was a bumper year for UK commercial vehicle production following huge investment in new facilities and model line-ups, with some 120,357 vans, trucks, taxis, buses and coaches leaving factory lines, according to SMMT.

The strong performance, 18.5% above the year before, means that volumes were at their highest level since 2010, with exports driving the bulk of the growth, as overseas deliveries rose by 25.8% to represent almost two thirds of production - another 13-year high. The EU again took pole position as the UK's biggest global market, responsible for more than nine in 10 exports, followed by Australia and the US - emphasising the value of positive trading relationships with the bloc and indeed countries all over the world.

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ROADPOL



Roadpol is a network of European traffic police forces, led by senior police officers, primarily committed to reducing the number of deaths and serious injuries on European roads. Members are the traffic police forces of various European countries, but we are open for countries outside Europe as well, because there should not be borders for saving lives.



The results from the co-ordinated latest pre-Christmas Alcohol & Drug enforcement operation from those countries who participated indicated that more than 1.233.481 were checked which is more than twice the number from the same operation a year earlier (753.000 drivers).

Of these, 17.779 (12.180 in 2022) drivers were under the influence of alcohol

6.002 (3.184 in 2022) under the influence of drugs.

Thus data show that both drug and alcohol violation rate jumped compared to 12 months ago - 14% increase for drugs and 11% for alcohol. Same pattern was observed this time last year making it a consistent trend.

It is not possible to indicate in which country the violation percentage was the highest, because the way of substance detection differs too much. Legal limits of substance levels in blood/breath also vary. Although the legislation in European countries differs slightly, driving under the influence is punishable in all countries. Some countries have a 0 limit (zero tolerance), while in other countries a low content of breath alcohol level is still allowed. As a result of the operation tens of thousands of fines for millions of euros were issued and in 8.451 cases the driver's license was seized.

According to statistics the use of alcohol and/or drugs before or while driving a vehicle leads to a large number of collisions with other road users or fixed objects every year. The number of road users who are injured or killed in these collisions is also high. "Specifically, individuals within the 18-25 age group, commonly categorized as "young drivers," frequently lack awareness regarding the risks associated with drug driving. Many in this demographic fail to recognize that even minimal quantities of narcotics can render them unfit to operate a vehicle. Additionally, there is a trend to underestimate the lasting impact on driving ability, with some not realizing that the impairment can persist even if drugs were consumed several days prior.

GRITTERS HIT BY MOTORISTS



Five National Highways gritters were struck by other vehicles while they were out and about spreading salt last winter. It compares to just one incident the year before and National Highways is urging motorists to give them time and space.

National Highways operates 443 Romaquip-Volvo gritting vehicles and a total pool of around 530 gritting vehicles helping to keep England's motorways and A-roads safe - one gritter for every eight miles of road.

The company started the winter season with around 280,000 tonnes of salt at its 128 depots.

The most efficient speed for gritting a road is up to 40mph. Gritters will try to stick to this speed, even on motorways. On three-lane carriageways, gritters will drive in the middle lane, so all three lanes can be treated equally. Usually, when a gritter is spreading salt, its amber lights will be flashing.



FRANCE LOWERS DRIVING AGE

France has lowered the minimum age for obtaining a full driving license to 17 years instead of 18 effective from 1st January 2024.



The change is part of the policy set earlier by the National Refoundation Council aimed at promoting autonomy and access to employment for young people. In effect, young people at 17 years of age who have passed the general theoretical test (which is possible from the age of 16 (15 years in the case of a accompanied driving)) and have covered the minimum of 20 hours of driving (13 hours for the automatic transmission license) can now take the practical driving license test. Youngsters who have covered the said requirements will no longer have to wait until

they are 18 years old to take the exam and obtain a drivers licence.

According to the French Road Safety Agency candidates who have practiced accompanied driving are ideal for the new reform. Such drivers have shown a success rate on the first presentation of the practical exam almost 20 points higher (75% compared to 57% for the B license) and with a lower accident rate. The practice also allows access to a cheaper insurance policy and shorter novice driver probationary period - 2 years instead of 3.

There are no changes to the probationary conditions. In the first two years after obtaining the licence drivers must observe a 110 km/h speed limit on the motorway, a maximum blood alcohol level of 0.2 g/l. They also start with an initial 6 points in the record which are doubled to 12 at the end of the probationary period should the driver has not committed any offenses.

The agency clearly informs that the drivers licence obtained at the age of 17 does not automatically allow French individuals to drive from this age in other European countries. "The age of access to the right to drive depends on the national regulations in force and is specific to each member state of the European Union. Drivers must therefore find out before their departure about the legislation in force in the country of destination", the agency stated.

MOVING TOWARDS AUTOMATIC TRANSMISSION

DVLA data has shown a 270% increase in driving tests in an automatic car over the last decade. and that tests in automatics accounted for 324,064 in 2023. On average of 1.7m practical tests were conducted each year over the last decade and it would appear that around 60% plus of young drivers are now opting for automatic only practical tests.

Research from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), and published by carwow, shows that just 24% of new cars sold in 2011 were ordered with an automatic gearbox. A decade later that percentage has nearly tripled to 62%.



As automatics become more prevalent, driving instructors are predicted, if they have not already done so, to make the shift towards automatic-only driving lessons to follow demand. This presents a challenge for future generations who wish to learn to drive manual vehicles, and accelerates the trend towards automatic transmission becoming the sole choice for new drivers.

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OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



The Transport Safety Research Centre at Loughborough University are inviting transportation professionals to join a discussion on fatigue risk management in the sector. This is part of a broader project aimed at tackling fatigue-related challenges and enhancing industry practices through online learning materials. Details for the focus groups are as follows:

- Focus Group Sessions: Running from January 31st to 9th February 2024
- Duration: 60-90 minutes
- Venue: Online via video conferencing or in-person meetings

Discussion Topics: Experiences with fatigue management in transportation operations, challenges encountered and ideas and strategies for improving fatigue risk management

If you are interested in taking part, following the link <https://lnkd.in/eXrWsW7F> to register. If you have any questions or need any further information, please contact Ashleigh Filtness Rachel Talbot A.J.Filtness@lboro.ac.uk

TRANSPORT TRAFFIC SAFETY ROADS



The Graham Feest Consultancy is promoting these two events and very much hopes that you will want to attend but the Early Bird Discount Rate is coming to an end.

These one day conference style event with an expert line up of speakers at each location so why not choose one:

Book now for your early bird price

for your place at Tortworth on Monday 26th February 2024
and for Coventry on Monday 4th March 2024 at

<https://www.grahamfeest.com/gfc-events/transport-traffic-safety-roads-2024/> and then follow the link to your chosen location and click for the booking form:



THE FLEET MANAGERS ROADSHOW (NORTH WEST) 2024



I have been asked by one of our avid readers of this newsletter to bring this to your attention.

The Fleet Managers Roadshow (North West) 2024 taking place at The Village Hotel Warrington 110 Centre Park Square Warrington WA1 1QA on Wednesday 7th February commencing at 10.00a.m.

An event bringing together essential suppliers for any fleet manager, from insurance, recruitment, and HR, to corporate workwear and industry software. Showcasing the latest vehicles, trailers, equipment, and technology, plus essentials like tyres, graphics, and vehicle CCTV. Learn valuable insights from industry experts at the seminars on the hot topics affecting the industry and other related issues. Details at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-fleet-managers-roadshow-north-west-2024-tickets-742183620187?aff=ebdsshcopyurl&utm-campaign=&utm-content=&utm-medium=&utm-source=&utm-term=&utm-share-source=>

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LCV REGISTRATIONS FOR 2023

UK demand for new light commercial vehicles (LCVs) grew by 21.0% to reach 341,455 units in 2023, according to the latest figures published by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) with a record number of zero emission vans joining Britain's roads.

Britain saw an additional 59,316 LCVs of all types and sizes join its roads than in 2022, following an extra £2 billion spend by companies that carry out essential roles in the economy, from local trades to retailers and online delivery services.



BREAKING DOWN ON THE MOTORWAY

Recent research by the RAC reveals that nearly eight-in-10 drivers would unknowingly put themselves in danger after breaking down on the motorway and stopping on the hard shoulder with only a fifth (22%) of the 1,900 drivers surveyed would do the right thing.



If breaking down on one of the motorway on a cold and wet winter's night, the majority would not stand to the rear of their vehicle, as far as possible from traffic and ideally behind a barrier if there was one with one-in-10 saying that they would stay in their vehicle leaving them at great risk of being seriously injured or killed if another vehicle were to hit them.

Two-thirds (65%) would also unwittingly put themselves at risk by standing either in front of or next to their car which would mean that if another driver collided with their broken-down vehicle, they are likely to be hit too. The analysis corresponds with reports from nearly 200 RAC patrols which found that 78% of drivers of broken down vehicles on motorways were still in their vehicles when they arrived.

A video to highlight best practice in the event of a breakdown can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPFqSRN_kbY

VEHICLE SALES TO BE REGULATED

New regulations have come into force which will increase electric vehicle (EV) sales. The zero emission vehicle (ZEV) mandate sets out the percentage of new zero emission cars and vans manufacturers will be required to produce each year.

This year, 10% of vans and 22% of cars sold by manufacturers will need to be electric.

The targets for manufacturers will increase each year, requiring 80% of new cars and 70% of new vans sold in Great Britain to be zero emission by 2030, increasing to 100% by 2035.

Vehicle makers that fail to achieve the ZEV mandate sales targets will be subject to fines.

NEW SAFE DRIVING COURSE

FORS - the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme - has launched a new 'safe driving' course, replacing its safe urban driving (SUD) and van smart courses. The new course is offered through the FORS Professional training portfolio and is available to drivers of all vehicle classes, from vans through to 44-tonne GCW articulated vehicles.

The full redesign means attendees will receive the very latest tuition on defensive driving to instil a safety mindset which benefits drivers, vulnerable road users and the wider public. The course includes drivers' regulatory responsibilities and the importance of safe driving practices on motorways, rural and urban roads. It also deals with key areas that may negatively impact individuals behind the wheel such as driver fitness, health, distraction and impairment and a practical on-cycle session and a theory module are included.

EYE SIGHT - IS THAT THE REAL PROBLEM

Regularly debated is the question both of people's ability to pass the outdated number plate test for driving safely and whether it should be replaced by a proper eyesight test conducted by a medical practitioner.

Visual acuity is assessed and reported as a fraction in UK ophthalmology clinics, e.g., 6/6, 6/9, or 6/12 on the Snellen test. The eye's distance from the Snellen chart (measured in metres) is the numerator (number above the line), and the letter chart's line is the denominator. Typically, 6/60 Snellen acuity is represented by the largest letter on the chart. A smaller denominator indicates greater vision; a bigger denominator indicates worse vision.

The test, developed in the 1860s by Dutch physician Hermann Snellen, is gradually being supplanted by the more recent LogMAR test, which features more uniform letter spacing. However, driving regulations in the UK are still Snellen for the time being.

Recently it was reported that the DVSA are considering tighten the UK driving regulations when it comes to the eyesight test but is being able to read a number plate at 20 metres the point - surely it is about being able to see what is in front, to the side and behind you and that is greater than the size of the letters of a number plate.

Whilst we do get the occasional person who, in the event of a crash is found not able to read the letters and numbers until they standing on top of the plate itself, these cases are few and far between and they can see perfectly that there is a car in their path - so is it the eyes which are the real problem or inattention and slow reactions?

EXPANSION OF BORIS BIKES

A 200% fleet expansion in London of the Santander bikeshare service is set for this summer as a result of investment from Transport for London (TfL). There will be 1,400 more 'Boris bikes' on London streets and a new £3 day pass will be introduced in March which offers users unlimited rides under half an hour.

The Mayor is determined to increase public transport use and active travel in London, improving the health of Londoners and helping to achieve the aim of net-zero carbon by 2030. Making active transport as affordable and accessible as possible is believed to be key to this mission. The investment will make Santander cycles one of the most affordable ways to get around the capital.

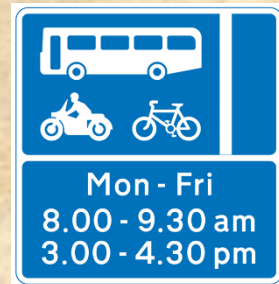


MOTORCYCLISTS IN BUS LANES

The Department for Transport (DfT) has updated its guidance for councils on allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes.

The starting point for the guidance is that traffic signs give local authorities the flexibility to allow motorcycles into their bus lanes, but this must be explicitly stated in the traffic regulation order for the bus lane.

It includes updates to legislation since the last version in 2007 but maintains the existing policy that councils should allow motorcyclists - solo-powered 2-wheelers including mopeds - to use bus lanes 'wherever it is appropriate to do so'.



The guidance notes that there are potential benefits and disbenefits of such a move, adding that the decision should be taken with care to mitigate foreseeable and avoidable risks.

It cites the following policy considerations:

- safety implications involved in restricting motorcyclists to general traffic lanes, against the possible problems of allowing motorcyclists into the bus lane
- effect on other vulnerable road users, especially pedestrians and cyclists
- possible impact on bus journey time reliability due to additional traffic in the bus lane
- reduction in congestion for other traffic on routes currently used by motorcyclists
- potential for motorcycling to become a genuine choice for road users if it is seen as a more convenient means of transport
- potential for overall improvements in transport efficiency
- local publicity to help advise road users of a policy change

The DfT guidance also recommends that councils should consult when introducing motorcyclists into a bus lane and provides advice on monitoring and enforcement.

From a users perspective it is time that we had a more standard approach to bus lanes in terms of their use. Times of operation vary across the UK and even within the same city or town. There also needs to be a more consistent approach as to when a motorist enters a bus lane - for instance to allow an emergency vehicle to pass. The highway code encourages drivers to pull over to the left where it is safe to do so and yet people are receiving fixed penalties in those situations for doing so and appear to have no mitigation on their side.