



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

Bringing you important news for business drivers ~ JULY 2008

Casualties down

For the first time in many years, annual road fatalities have dropped below the 3,000 figure. In fact, casualty rates in general have fallen by several percentage points which is encouraging news, not only for those responsible for road safety policy but also the practitioners who clearly, on a number of levels, are having a positive effect.

There is still work to do though. 247,780 people last year were involved in road collisions of one sort or another and estimates suggest that a third would have been affected by the involvement of a business driver.

Economy drive

With the price of fuel rocketing there is no better time to think about trimming consumption through a bit of behavioural change and DriveTech's ECO Real World Combination course can do just that.



DriveTech devised the course that was central to the Safe & Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) programme that was funded by the DfT over the last couple of years, so we know a thing or two about reducing fuel consumption.

Did you know that a typical company car driver uses £3,700 worth of fuel annually? With SAFED type fuel economy training, you can expect savings of between 8 and 12% in consumption, saving you between **£300 and £450 per year per driver**. You also benefit from incident reduction as a result of the safer driving techniques employed, with virtually no increase in journey times.

Our knowledgeable Account Development Manager, Kelly Robertson, would be pleased to hear from fleet customers wanting to know more about how DriveTech can help them reduce fleet running costs, so why not call her direct on **01344 467886** or email her at fleetsafe@drivetech.co.uk

Parking mad

A recent report suggests that one in five collisions in London involve a parked car. It seems that some 700,000 motorists in the capital come into contact in some way with parked vehicles every year, leaving the insurers with a £1.25 million repair bill to deal with.

As we know from experience, the majority of these incidents are simply down to lack of concentration, usually due to distraction factors of one sort or another. On the other hand it could be that an increasing number of drivers are failing to have eye tests. Food for thought?

Inflated fuel bills

Motorists are collectively wasting more than £1 billion a year despite rocketing fuel prices, by failing to keep an eye on their tyre pressures.

Research by Cooper Tire Europe found that, at any one time, a staggering 95% of vehicles on the road have at least one tyre under inflated by 10%. This not only increases fuel consumption and reduces the life of the tyre, but also increases the risk of crashes.



Under inflated tyres are harder to get moving, and can result in an increase of 2.5% in fuel consumption - an unwanted extra expense considering UK motorists spent £34 billion on fuel last year.

With around 30 million passenger vehicles on the roads, and an average cost of 14.74p per mile for petrol cars and 12.81p per mile for diesel cars, drivers of affected vehicles are unwittingly shelling out an extra £44.22 per year each (£38.43 for diesel drivers) - a collective total of £1.26 billion.

Alarming, under inflated tyres also increase stopping distances and are therefore a contributory factor to road accidents. DfT data reveals that defective and under inflated tyres cause 1,000 serious injuries or fatalities every year.

We suggest that motorists check their tyre pressures at the very least once a month but preferably whenever they fill up at a petrol station.

Regular checks pay dividends

Fleet drivers are causing unnecessary breakdowns, increased maintenance and repair costs due to a lack of basic car maintenance equating to vehicles being off the road for at least 11,757 days a year, says the RAC.

The warning comes following RAC estimating that over 40,000 fleet breakdown call outs could be avoided if fleet drivers conducted basic maintenance checks of their vehicles and undertook driver training.

RAC's vehicle fault analysis (VFA) for fleet vehicles shows that 17 out of the top 20 reasons for breakdowns could be affected by drivers failing to carry out simple actions.

The data also reveals that fleet drivers are twice as likely to be involved in a road traffic collision as the average motorist. If fleet drivers adhered to UK road rules, took adequate breaks to avoid tiredness or considered undergoing training to improve driving skills, the number of fleet call outs to an RTC could be reduced by as much as 50%.

A deadly conversation

Marvyn Richmond, 49, was so engrossed in a conversation with his mother that he failed to notice traffic ahead of him had come to a standstill, and ploughed into the back of the queue, killing Michael Buston, a passenger in a van.

Richmond, of Oakwood, Derby, an HGV driver for 25 years, caused carnage when his lorry slammed into the queue of traffic on the A631 at Corringham, near Gainsborough, Lincs.

The court was told that he was "oblivious to all around him" because of the 23-minute call to his mother and did not even apply the brakes of his Scania HGV before ploughing into the traffic.



During his summing up to the jury, Recorder David Farrell QC said the fact that Richmond probably had both hands on the wheel did not alter the fact that he was severely distracted by talking on his Bluetooth headset.

Some businesses, including the FirstGroup transport company, which employs 135,000, have already imposed their own bans on employees making any sort of phone call whilst driving on company business because of the dangers of doing so.

Richmond is not the first driver to be jailed for killing someone while using a hands-free phone. In 2003 Michael Leach, 29, was jailed for four years at Exeter Crown Court for a similar offence and in 2001 Roger Murray, a 37-year-old lorry driver, was jailed for 18 months in Ayr for causing a fatal crash while on his hands-free phone.

The maximum sentence for causing death by dangerous driving is 14 years.

Insignia cuts a dash

GM UK Fleet has a new online fleet management website, not only giving access to full details about the GM range of vehicles but also a P11D value and tax calculator, as well as access to the three day test drive programme. Go to www.gmukfleethub.co.uk for more information. This co-incides with the launch of Vauxhall's stunning replacement for the Vectra, the Insignia, some models of which can be specified with a truly innovative safety feature – an in-cabin speed limit sign spotter to aid with speed limit compliance.

A deadly sneeze

We pointed out the potential safety hazard of sneezing whilst driving because of hay fever, in the May 08 issue of the newsletter. Sadly our prediction has come true.



35 year old Lisa Badham-Moore from Lincolnshire hit and killed a motorcyclist as she veered into oncoming traffic as a result of losing concentration whilst reaching into the passenger door compartment for a tissue to stifle a hay fever-induced sneeze. Badham-Moore admitted driving without due care and attention at Spalding Magistrates Court; she was lucky that the initial charge of causing death by dangerous driving was dropped.

What price one wonders if she was a business driver going about work duties at the time?

Euro push

You might think it barely relevant but remember that the UK is the most legislation compliant EU member state.

MEP's have backed a recent report saying that 'accident simulation training was vital', which the DfT sees as being an endorsement of its determination to introduce a culture of life-long learning for at-work drivers. Watch this space.

Image problem

According to 20th annual 'Report on Motoring', aggressive driving, often leading to road rage, is on the increase amongst the company car community and companies are being encouraged to adopt training programmes which give guidance on defusing potentially explosive confrontational situations.



Although this should reduce the risk of road rage induced collisions, and even harm to the participants in extreme cases, it is reputational risk that is at stake here. Drivers in liveried vehicles often fail to recognise the influence that their behaviour is having on fellow road users, road users who could be customers for the product being promoted on the vehicle in question.

Cross border cooperation

A recent deal between British and Irish governments sees disqualified drivers caught on one side of the border being brought to book when they return home. There is now no way that drivers flouting the law can any longer get away with it just by leaving the country in which the offence took place. This is the first arrangement of this kind within the EU and paves the way for similar moves elsewhere in Europe.

Issued by the DriveTech Communications Department.

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