



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

Bringing you important news for business drivers

March 2008

Quash the need for speed

One of the major contract hire and leasing providers has analysed the type of fines received by the 55,000 drivers in its care. It transpires that 41% of the fines were for speeding, nearly double that of the next highest offence.

Apart from the obvious business disruption that can result from fines being imposed on those who drive for work, the processing of documentation by the providers leads to increased monthly charges so it really is a 'lose lose' situation for all concerned, so why not try this tip to aid with speed limit compliance:



Use

3rd gear in a **30** limit

4th gear in a **40** limit

5th gear in a **50** limit or higher

Also on speed-related matters, readers should be aware that the speed cameras on the M25 between the junction with the A3 and the M4 are changing to digital format from wet film from February 15th. The difference is that the number of speeding offences which will be processed will be virtually limitless, so anyone speeding is almost certain to be prosecuted (or offered a Speed Awareness Scheme course to avoid the points on their licence).

The other really important thing you need to think about when travelling along this stretch of the M25 is that, because more offences can now be processed, the threshold for cameras being triggered is going to drop from a reported 90 mph to just 79 mph!

Gang threat

There appears to be a new criminal trend developing in south London, which could spread to the rest of the country and which all drivers should be aware of.



Street gangs have devised new initiation rights that require prospective gang members to cruise the streets in their cars with the lights off and then follow any vehicle whose driver flashes its lights, points a finger or hoots at them. The jobs are then expected to shoot indiscriminately at the offending vehicle, without regard for who is in the vehicle.

As this alert comes from the London Ambulance Service it does seem to have some basis in truth, so any business drivers having to operate in south London after the hours of darkness should be aware of this potential threat and should not be tempted to respond to any vehicle seen without lights.

The eyes have it

A vital element of staying safe on the road is seeing and being seen. All too often drivers overlook the need for regular eyesight checks, even if they have self-certified in the affirmative, so it's vital that they are regularly reminded.



The last proper research carried out on the subject suggested that in the UK up to 67% of the driving population had uncorrected eye defects, so, even if **your** drivers are well focused, there's every chance the person coming towards them hasn't seen them! But at least if you issue regular eyesight check reminders internally you're contributing to your duty of care.

A pain in the neck

Amazingly there are still seemingly responsible adults who still refuse to belt up in the back, despite the fact that it's been the law since 1991.



The problem is now so serious that several police forces are carrying out spot checksand are even catching drivers not wearing FRONT seat belts as well, despite it being generally viewed by the vast majority as being as unacceptable as drink driving.

Incidentally a good tip is to always have the rear belts clipped in their housings. This has the double advantage of stopping loose, heavy loads in the boot knocking the rear seats forward in an impact situation and also annoying rear seat passengers so much when they sit down that they HAVE to put them on.

Work rage

The Work and Stress Research Group at the University of South Australia studied 130 Adelaide workers and analysed the impact of feeling undervalued at work on their anger and their resulting driving performance. In a paper in the journal 'Accident Analysis and Prevention', the researchers report a significant relationship between what they call effort-reward imbalance (ERI) and driving rage.



"This finding implies that individuals who suffer a perceived imbalance between high effort and low reward in the workplace may develop increased over-commitment and general anger, which in turn increases the individual's tendency to experience frequent and intense anger in driving," the paper concludes.

This research is not country-specific so those responsible for fleets would do well to have a closer look at repeat colliders and see if their HR colleagues can shed any light on any in-work problems that might be at the heart of the issue.

Mobile mayhem

The family of a County Durham woman killed by a texting driver has backed a campaign highlighting the dangers of using mobile phones at the wheel. Maureen Waites, 64, from Wingate, near Peterlee, died in November 2006 after a car driven by 20-year-old Rachel Begg crashed into her vehicle.

Begg admitted causing death by dangerous driving and was sent to a young offenders' institution for four years.



A 1.5m Government-backed THINK! campaign is timed to coincide with the first anniversary of the introduction of tougher penalties for using a mobile phone when driving and features a hard-hitting television advert.

A spokesman for Mrs Waites's family said: "We fully support this campaign to encourage people to switch off their mobile phones when driving. We know first-hand how devastating the consequences can be when someone is distracted by their mobile phone, even just for a couple of moments. People should think of the consequences. They don't think it will happen to them but it happened to us and devastated our family."

If any customer needs assistance with the formulation of any risk management policy documentation, including guidance on the correct use of mobile phones whilst driving, please get in touch. Kelly Robertson will be able to help and she can be contacted via kelly.robertson@drivetech.co.uk

Under pressure

According to weekly motoring magazine Auto Express, 40% of garage forecourt airlines are faulty or inoperative, which, when you consider that almost three quarters of all cars on the country's roads have tyres that are under-inflated, is a big concern.



The only sure way to know that your tyres are going to give you optimum performance is to carry your own foot pump and a separate tyre pressure gauge in the glove box. Don't rely on the gauge on the foot pump itself – it hasn't a hope of being accurate. A useful reminder for the correct tyre pressure settings is to write them on an adhesive label and stick it on the driver's door jamb.

Fairy story

Some of you may have read a recent story about JAAMA's online 'Key2 Vehicle Management System', which they claim has "a link to the Drive Vehicle and Licensing Agency database so enabling licence checks to be undertaken". We felt it our duty to point out to DriveTech customers that this claim is simply not true.

No such link is possible yet, although it may well be at some point in the not too distant future. When it is, DriveTech, along with all the other licence checking providers, will also be able to take advantage of the enhanced facilities on offer.

Issued by the DriveTech Communications Department.

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