



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

## Bringing you important news for business drivers - November 2009

### Road Safety Week



The theme of this year's Road Safety Week (November 23-29), organised by the road safety charity Brake, is drink and drug driving. Although this is hopefully a topic that should not affect business drivers, it is still something that those responsible for running vehicle fleets should be aware of. It's still not too late to apply for information and resources - [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk) is the place to go.

### Disposal costs



According to leasing firm Alphabet, 40% of leased vehicles require remedial work when de-fleeted, at an average cost of £300 per vehicle. The company is advocating financial penalties for drivers who incur unacceptable levels of damage to their vehicles.

However, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that those drivers who have experienced some form of approved fleet driving training adopt a far more considered approach to the way in which they treat their vehicles. In other words it's a win/win situation for the DriveTech customer – fewer collisions and associated cost, as well as improved residual values and minimal de-fleeting charges.

### Tyre ignorance

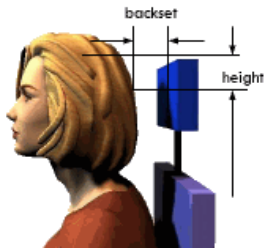


25% of company car drivers have never checked their tyre tread depth and a further 41% haven't checked them in the past six months, according to TyreSafe. There seems to be an alarming "it's not my problem, it's a company car" attitude amongst a minority of drivers. Do they not realise that, as the driver, **they** are responsible for the condition of the tyres and, if caught with an illegal tyre, the fine is £2,500 and three penalty points PER TYRE.

And not having a depth gauge is not an excuse – use a 20p coin. If you can't see

the outer band of the coin when inserted in the tread groove the tyre is legal. If you can, it needs replacing.

## Head bangers



Despite quite a lot of publicity, some of it from DriveTech, many drivers still do not routinely adjust their head restraints correctly. A recent survey found that the situation amongst van drivers is particularly bad - two out of three don't know the correct positioning for a head restraint. With insurance pay outs for whiplash at an all time high it's crucial that head restraints are adjusted properly, so that

the middle of the cushion is in line with the driver's ears.

## Snow and ice may be on the way, so here are some winter driving tips



Before you even consider setting out:

- Have you looked at the weather forecast for the route you intend taking?
- Have you checked for road blockages and diversions *before* you set

out?

- Do you have a method of taking alternative routes if you have to? If it's snowy can you avoid going up (and down!) hills for instance?
- Is your journey really necessary or can you use public transport instead?
- Do you have emergency equipment (\*see list below) in the vehicle in case you are stranded in it overnight...or even longer?
- Does your mobile phone have coverage over the route you are taking and do you have a car charger with you?
- If fuel stations are closed due to weather conditions, do you have sufficient fuel for the round trip?

### As you set out:

- Clear all glass of snow, ice, frost or mist before setting out. Is your washer bottle full and does it have proper additive to stop it freezing?
- Check that all vehicle lights are working properly and use dipped headlights on the move.
- Free the wipers from the screen first if sub zero – don't force the wiper motor to do it unaided.
- Set the radio to the station with best traffic information.
- **Reflect on the fact that braking distances in sub zero conditions can be 10 times the normal distance.**

### Once on the move:

- Minimise distractions – sub zero weather calls for 110% concentration.
- Be smooth with all steering, accelerator and braking inputs.

- Leave as much space around you as you can at all times. Be defensive.
- If a skid starts, don't panic. Calmly remove the cause, usually over excessive steering or brake application, look where you want to end up, and steer into the skid.
- If it starts to snow heavily don't be fearful of fresh unpacked snow – it provides more grip than compressed snow.....which is ice, and therefore completely gripless.
- If the weather is hovering around the zero mark be prepared for deadly, invisible black ice (caused by rain falling on an already frozen surface) and adjust speed accordingly.
- Think ahead - water will collect in dips and form ice; snow drifts will build up adjacent to gaps in walls or hedgerows; open bridges will ice up before surrounding roads as freezing air cools the underside; if the idiot in front hasn't cleared the thick layer of snow off his car, it could break loose at speed, land on your windscreen and obscure your vision; cold tyres will never give as much grip as warm ones.
- If snowing steadily, be prepared to stop periodically to sponge off the headlights and tail lights. You must be able to see and be seen.
- Driving in a snow blizzard can be mesmerising. Maintain an active eye scanning routine. Varying focal responses will keep you alert and maintain points of reference.
- Be prepared to compensate for the inadequacies of others who get it wrong and threaten your space!

\*At least a litre of drinkable fluid; 4 x energy bars; waterproof boots; blanket; winter jacket; scarf; gloves; reflective jacket; piece of old carpet; snow shovel; torch and auxiliary power lead connectable beacon lamp; reflective warning triangle; sponge; paper and pencil (not a biro!) so you can write a message in wet/sub zero conditions.

### ...and news from DriveTech itself:

DriveTech's move into the mother ship in Basingstoke went very smoothly and all systems were up and running in accordance with the schedule we published in several e-newsletters beforehand.

DriveTech staff received a warm welcome from their AA colleagues on arrival, as you can see from the pictures here.



DriveTech occupies the entire seventh floor at Fanum House with distinct areas for FleetSafe customer care, DriverAware customer care, training, IT and other management functions.



**DriveTech**

As you can see from the adjacent logo, DriveTech soon becomes a division of the AA in its own right. The process of brand harmonisation is under way at present but may take several weeks to complete due to its complexity. We therefore apologise for any confusion that may arise as a result of occasional inconsistency caused by temporary dual branding.

In fact this will be the last fleet customer e-newsletter in this design format – the December issue should sport the full, new look, AA DriveTech branding.

Finally, any customers who have arranged to visit DriveTech at Fanum House, Basing View, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 4EA can find directions, a location map and a key contacts telephone list at [http://www.drivetech.co.uk/fleetsafe/co\\_details.htm](http://www.drivetech.co.uk/fleetsafe/co_details.htm)

Issued by DriveTech Communications in association with *autoproactive*.

**Copyright free** – please feel free to distribute any of the above information to your business drivers.

If you have any queries associated with this e-newsletter please contact [steve.johnson@autoproactive.co.uk](mailto:steve.johnson@autoproactive.co.uk).

If you no longer want to receive this monthly newsletter please contact us at [unsubscribe@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:unsubscribe@drivetech.co.uk)

**DriveTech (UK) Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of AA Corporation Limited, a company registered in England and Wales (Reg. Number 03797747)**