



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

## Bringing you important news for business drivers **September 2009**

### Premium price



In a recent insurance industry survey, 91% of underwriters predicted that there would be a rise in insurance premiums for those companies renewing policies in quarter three this year. This flies in the face of the predictions made by the same experts in Q2 when they believed that premiums would remain stable.

“The increasing cost of claims and the fall in investment return is increasing upwards pressure on motor fleet insurance premiums,” explains John Briggs, head of technical motor underwriting at Zurich.

It goes without saying that any fleet customer with a driver risk management programme in place stands a far better chance of preventing insurance cost rises than one without.

### Pain in the neck



Amazingly it seems that two out every three drivers still doesn't know how to correctly adjust their head restraints (or headrests as they also known), despite considerable publicity on the subject over the years.

The most popular view appears to be to have them as low as possible, so that you can rest your neck against the padded part. In a severe crash this would cause the neck to extend over the head restraint and the chances of neck breakage are extremely high.

As most of our readers hopefully know, a head restraint should always be positioned so that the centre of the padded area is level with the ears. A huge number of whiplash claims could be prevented if drivers bothered to take this simple risk management step.

## Tyre focus



October is officially Tyre Safety Month and the highly respected TyreSafe organisation has a wealth of free information available for fleet managers wanting to educate and inform drivers about the need to keep those black round things in tip top condition at all times.

It's worth reminding company car drivers that, as the driver, **they** are responsible for the condition of their tyres and that defective ones can lead to a fine of £1,000 **per tyre**.

For all sorts of guidance go to <http://www.tyresafe.org/tyre-safety/>

## Careless costs



There are plans to allow police to issue £60 on-the-spot fines for careless driving offences later this year. Currently these cases are heard in court and can attract fines of up to £5,000 and nine penalty points on the driving licence.

“Making careless driving a fixed penalty offence would help the police to enforce against bad drivers who admit fault with a minimum of bureaucracy, freeing up police resources,” says the DfT, “but all drivers would always have the option to contest their case in court and we would work with the police and the courts to develop guidance to ensure that cases are handled correctly.”

## Drug warning



Fleets are being urged to take the issue of driving whilst under the influence of drugs more seriously. New research suggests that at least one in ten young males drive after taking illegal drugs and some of these are inevitably going to be driving in the course of their work duties. We already know that one in five drivers killed on UK roads have had some form of impairing drug in their system.

Whilst many employers have policies that stipulate the unacceptability of driving under the influence of alcohol, many make no mention of the impairment caused by drugs, recreational or otherwise.

In order to protect themselves from the ‘nobody-told-me-I-couldn’t-put-my-dog-in-the-tumble-dryer’ syndrome, employers would do well to include the proviso about drugs in all driving-related policy material and ensure that drivers have read and accept the stipulation.

After all it's a serious matter – being convicted of drug-driving leads to a 12 month ban, a large fine and a criminal record.

## Help from the HSE



The Health & Safety Executive is making around 250 of its downloadable, PDF-format guides on a wide range of employment-related topics free to download from this month. For more information see <http://www.hse.gov.uk/resources/index.htm>

## Another pair of eyes



A company better known for producing some of the most desirable in car entertainment systems has come up with a device that could transform the lives of truck and bus drivers within three years.

Alpine Electronics has devised an innovative in-vehicle camera system, linked to a navigation database, which can see around corners and eliminate blind spots. A front mounted camera shows the views to the left, right and straight ahead, side-mounted ones help eliminate side swipes and the rear mounted one checks for the presence of pedestrians or other hazards. By using complex real time processing the cameras in combination can also give a 'Top View' of every potential threat around the vehicle, allowing the driver to take appropriate steps to mitigate the risk.

## Five star rating



Seven new cars have just received the EuroNCAP five star accolade for crash worthiness: Honda Insight, Kia Sorento, Renault Grand Scenic, Skoda Yeti, Subaru Legacy, Toyota Prius 3 and the VW Polo. The Citroen C3 only missed out on a five star rating because insufficient models come with ESC as standard.

## ...and news from DriveTech itself:

We've informed you in previous e-newsletters about the acquisition of DriveTech by the AA and the resulting synergies which will benefit our customers but now comes some exciting news.

Later this year DriveTech will be moving offices and taking its own floor at the AA headquarters at Fanum House in Basingstoke. This means that all the Group's considerable expertise and resources

will be immediately on hand, allowing faster decision making and more efficient product and system development.

But that's not all.

It has been decided that AA Fleet will merge into DriveTech by the end of the year. For customers of both existing brands it will be business as usual, other than the ability to specify a wider, more diverse offering of interventions to reduce cost, keep drivers safe and protect corporate reputation.

We will of course advise you of dates and any alterations to contact details well before any changes take place but in the mean time if you have any queries or concerns please feel free to contact DriveTech Managing Director, Jim Kirkwood, who will continue to be ultimately responsible for the Group's fleet-related business, personally on [jim.kirkwood@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:jim.kirkwood@drivetech.co.uk)

**Smile!**



The ultimate city car!

**Issued by the DriveTech Communications Department.**

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

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