

## CONTENTS

- 1 Contents
- 2 Editorial / FiveAI Begins Self-Driving Car Testing in London
- 3 Number of Motorists Using Phones While Driving Still High / Police...
- 4 Use of Driver Retraining Courses to Avoid Points up by Third in....
- 5 Test Passes / New Associates / UK's Roads are the Safest in Europe
- 6 Explained: The Different Kinds of Cruise Control and How They Work
- 7 Continued / UK Driverless Car Advance 'Slowed by Potholes and....
- 8 Garages Back in Favour as Car Crime Rises / Food for Thought
- 9 Five Motoring Misdeeds You May Not Know That Could Land You....
- 10 How to Overtake Safely
- 11 Continued / Alternative Definitions
- 12 Group Night Diary
- 13 Want to Drive on the Skid Pan?
- 14 UK Set to Adopt New EU Speed-Limiting Rules for Cars
- 15 Continued / Dart Toll Ducked
- 16 Drivers Support Use of Long-Lens Cameras to Catch Bad Drivers
- 17 Word Search ~ Bays
- 18 Are Your Wheels too Tyred to Drive? Driving With Technology
- 19 Continued / The police gadget that knows if a driver is using a....
- 20 One in Five Drivers has Ignored Red 'X' Signs on Motorways
- 21 Keep on Trucking: Driving Tips from IAM RoadSmart
- 22 Sunglasses: A Shady Business
- 23 Courts Report / Chinese Pedestrians Face Fines for Crossing the ....
- 24 Group Officials

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Registered Charity No.1049496

## **EDITORIAL**

I notice again this year, that with the coming of the warmer weather, more women (and men) are wearing “flip-flop” type shoes and are driving in them. These can be dangerous as they easily slip off of the pedals, so please ensure that you wear suitable footwear if you intend to drive. You can always carry a spare pair in the car and change them when necessary.

Potholes are still a big problem especially on the not so major roads. The local councils seem very slow when it comes to repairing them, which are not done very well and the first bit of frost and snow we get, the hole is back. Try to avoid them when you can, but remember, never compromise safety.

*Stay safe and enjoy your driving.*

### **FIVEAI BEGINS SELF-DRIVING CAR TESTING IN LONDON**

Supervised tests of a potential autonomous car service built by a UK-based artificial intelligence firm have begun in two London boroughs.

Autonomous technology firm FiveAI has started testing five self-driving cars in Bromley and Croydon as the latest step in its plans to eventually roll out an autonomous, car-sharing service in London.

The company hopes to begin passenger trials in 2020.

As part of the test, the five vehicles will operate on all days of the week and all times of day and night, with trained safety drivers in the vehicles at all times to take control if required.

FiveAI first began gathering data by manually driving their sensor-enabled cars on London streets last year to help build the software required to run the tests.

It says it has worked with local councils and Transport for London (TfL) as part of its planning for the scheme.

The company’s co-founder and chief executive Stan Boland said: “Safety and trusted partnerships are crucial to everything we do.

“We’ll continue to keep residents informed along the way, working closely with the London Boroughs and Transport for London.” The company has previously said it hopes to eventually create an autonomous car service that could help reduce congestion, emissions, incidents and the cost and time of journeys in London. In 2017, the company was also part of a consortium that was awarded a grant of more than £12 million by the Government to develop software for an autonomous car system, a project known as StreetWise.

Future of mobility minister Jesse Norman said the Government was keen on seeing self-driving cars on UK roads.

“The long term potential for self-driving vehicles is huge – to improve road safety, tackle loneliness and isolation and create economic opportunity,” he said.

“So I welcome the safe testing of this new technology. But increasingly self-driving cars are just one of many innovations we are likely to see on our roads. The Government’s new Future of Mobility: Urban Strategy sets out how it will plan for their introduction.”

**COPY DATE FOR AUGUST SEGMENT IS**

**1st JULY 2019**

## **NUMBER OF MOTORISTS USING PHONES WHILE DRIVING STILL HIGH**

**While there's still a large number not wearing seatbelts.**

Too many drivers are continuing to ignore warnings about the dangers of using a phone while driving or driving without a seatbelt according to the UK's biggest independent road safety charity IAM RoadSmart.

A major Department for Transport survey released this week showed that hundreds of thousands of motorists were still ignoring seatbelt and mobile phone usage laws in 2017.

The survey showed that in 2017, more than one percent of all drivers were seen using a phone while driving on weekdays, with 0.4 of those seen driving with the phone to their ear and double that holding a phone in their hand. Taxi and private hire drivers were the worst offenders, making up 3.3 percent of the total offenders, followed by van drivers (2.1 percent) and car drivers (one percent).

Seatbelt wearing remains high according to the survey, with 96.5 percent of all vehicle drivers observed using a seatbelt on weekdays in 2017. It's a high number but it also highlights the worrying statistic that there was still 3.5 percent of drivers not wearing their seatbelts.

Of those observed to be wearing their seatbelts, 93.1 percent of front seat passengers and 90.7 percent of rear seat passengers buckled up in Great Britain, and 98.6 percent of all car drivers observed using a seatbelt in Great Britain in 2017.

"In spite of these being small percentages, this still amounts to hundreds of thousands of people who daily flout the law and put themselves and others at risk," said Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart director of policy and research.

"The best way of tackling this ever-present issue is to make people believe there is a high chance of being caught. This could start tomorrow if consistent guidelines on using mobile speed camera vans to enforce seatbelt and mobile phones laws were issued."

"Currently there is no standard approach on using this high-profile resource across the UK. Making non-wearing of seatbelts an endorsable offence is also a quick win. Not only would it persuade more people to take the offence seriously, but it might tempt them to take a seatbelt awareness course. People avoid using seatbelts for a wide range of individual reasons and these views need to be challenged face-to-face."

## **POLICE WARNING**

A juggernaut carrying treacle has overturned on the M25. Drivers are being asked to stick to the inside lane.



## **USE OF DRIVER RETRAINING COURSES TO AVOID POINTS UP BY THIRD IN FIVE YEARS**

The use of driver retraining courses as an alternative to penalty points and a fine has increased by more than a third in the past five years, new figures show.

Press Association analysis of data from the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (Ndors) found that 1.45 million



UK drivers completed a course after committing a motoring offence in 2018.

This is up 36% on the total of 1.07 million in 2013, and means the courses have been attended by more than 10 million people since 2010.

Speed awareness courses were by far the busiest last year, with 1.19 million attendees. Nearly 110,000 motorists were sent on recently introduced motorway awareness courses.

These are focused on boosting understanding of smart motorway laws such as variable speed limits and the use of red X signals to illustrate when the left hand lane is closed.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said: “This data suggests that, astonishingly, as many as one in four drivers has now been sent back to the classroom for breaking road traffic law – hopefully to emerge as ambassadors for better, more responsible motoring behaviours.

“While the logic of sending drivers who commit minor transgressions back to the classroom is clear, it begs the question of what should be done in a similar vein to tutor those found guilty of more serious breaches of the rules of the roads before they injure or kill themselves or others?”

Eight different Ndors courses are provided by private companies on behalf of the police.

They are offered to drivers who commit a minor offence at the discretion of police forces, as an alternative to penalty points and a fine.

Drivers cannot attend more than one course within three years.

The amount that drivers can expect to pay for the courses depends on where they live. Ndors said in 2017 that speed awareness courses ranged from £75 to £99.

Courses are provided across the whole of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Only some of the courses are available in Scotland.

A spokesman for UK Road Offender Education, the organisation responsible for managing Ndors, said recent independent research showed the courses were more effective at reducing speeding over a three-year period than issuing fines and points.

## **ABS MASTER?**

A mate of mine recently admitted to being addicted to brake fluid.

When I quizzed him on it he reckoned he could stop any time.....

## TEST PASSES

Congratulations to the following who have recently passed their IAM Roadsmart test:-

Steve Riches (1st)

Philip Langeard

Jessica Martin (1st)

Nicola Halse

## NEW ASSOCIATES

Welcome to the following new Associates who have recently joined the Group:-

Stacey Housego

Terry Coen

Jonathan Powell

John Williams

Samantha Goddard

Connor Perfect

Julia Ravera

## UK'S ROADS ARE THE SAFEST IN EUROPE

The UK has the safest roads of any country in the EU, according to the European Commission's Annual Accident Report.

Statistics for 2018 show that there were just 28 road traffic fatalities for every million UK residents. That's the lowest number of any EU member state, beating Denmark (30) and Ireland (31).

In total, 25,000 people were killed on the roads in the EU last year, but the total figure decreased by one per cent. Since 2010, the fatality rate has decreased by 21 per cent – an impressive reduction, but still a way off the target the EU set to halve 2010's number of road deaths by 2020.

Some countries came close, though – road fatalities in Greece fell by 45 per cent over the eight-year period, while Lithuania, Portugal and Slovenia came close with 43 per cent, 35 per cent and 34 per cent respectively.

The most dangerous countries in terms of road fatalities were Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia, with 96, 88 and 78 deaths per million inhabitants respectively. The average across the whole EU was 49 deaths per million inhabitants.

These figures come soon after an announcement that the EU will require a large number of safety systems to be fitted on all vehicles by the year 2022. These include a reversing camera, lane-keeping assistance and, controversially, intelligent speed limiters that will be able to prevent drivers from going over the speed limit. The UK has agreed it will also comply with these regulations after leaving the EU.

## THINGS THEY SAY IN THE COURTS

Attorney: "What gear were you in at the moment of impact?"

Witness: "Gucci tracksuit and Reeboks."

Attorney: "All your responses must be oral, OK? What school did you go to?"

Witness: "Oral"



## **EXPLAINED: THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF CRUISE CONTROL AND HOW THEY WORK**

Hands-free driving may be a relatively new innovation – but foot-free driving has been around for decades. In fact, the first cruise control systems were installed over 60 years ago – and in many ways they operate identically to the systems found today.

But what exactly is cruise control? Put simply, it's an automatic system which keeps your car at a constant speed with as little variation as possible. The inventor, Ralph Teetor, was said to have come up with the idea after a frustrating journey with his lawyer, who sped up and slowed down as he talked.

### **How do you use cruise control?**

Cruise control is offered as standard equipment or at least as an optional extra on nearly every new car sold in the UK – though you may need to look a bit harder for it if buying an older vehicle. Basic systems are usually operated by a control either on the steering wheel or a steering column stalk.

Cruise control consists of an up/down (or +/-) control, as well as a 'Set' button, a 'Recall' button and sometimes an on/off button. The driver brings the car up to their desired speed, and if the system is switched on, pressing 'Set' will store that speed in the car's memory.

The vehicle will then take control of the accelerator, keeping the car at the desired speed for as long the driver wants. Fine-tuning of the speed can be achieved with the +/- controls, and the target speed is often shown on a dashboard display.

The system is switched off in two ways – either with external input, such as the driver pressing the throttle or brake, or by using the on/off switch. At this point, the desired speed is still usually stored in the car's memory, and that's what the 'Recall' button is for – allowing the driver to return to their previous speed after passing an obstruction, junction or traffic.

### **What are the other kinds?**

There's not really much you can innovate on cruise control, but car manufacturers have managed to do it – and come out with adaptive cruise control and advanced adaptive cruise control.

Adaptive cruise control adds a scanner to the front of the car, usually a camera, radar, or laser array – or some combination of the three. This continuously scans the road ahead for traffic and is able to detect when there's a car in front.

The system then alters your car's speed so that instead of closing the gap to a slower-moving car, it will follow it at a set distance – controllable by the driver. The car will continue to match the speed of the car in front until it changes lane, exits the road or the driver overtakes.

Advanced adaptive cruise control adds an extra layer to this, as it's capable of altering the cruise control's speed limit to match the speed limit of the road it's driving on – ensuring that the driver is never speeding.

Adaptive cruise control is usually paired with a form of autonomous emergency braking, and usually with lane-keeping assist, too.

*Continued*

The most sophisticated systems will work at any speed – from following cars at high speeds on the motorway to crawling autonomously at the back of a queue of stop-start traffic. These systems are usually paired with an automatic gearbox, to prevent over- or under-revving by an inattentive driver. Cruise control in manual cars is usually disengaged when the clutch or gears are operated.

### **What are the advantages and disadvantages?**

Cruise control has several advantages, chief among which is fatigue reduction. Allowing drivers to take their minds off keeping a constant speed allows them to focus more on steering and interacting with other traffic, as well as allowing them to stretch their legs and reduce muscle aches.

Advanced adaptive cruise control can prevent accidents thanks to its sensor array knowing where other vehicles are, and systems capable of reading speed limits can prevent drivers violating them and risking a ticket. It can also improve fuel efficiency.

However, it can be dangerous. Sophisticated systems, especially those paired with lane-keeping assistance tech, can encourage drivers to pay less attention when driving, increasing the risk of a collision.

Older systems were also very dangerous in the rain, on icy roads or on loose surfaces. That's because the loss of traction in a wheel could lead the car to speed up rather than slow down, resulting in a total loss of control.

### **UK DRIVERLESS CAR ADVANCE 'SLOWED BY POTHoles AND POOR BROADBAND'**

A new study has found that the development of self-driving vehicles in the UK is being hampered by potholes on roads and poor broadband.

Analysis by consultancy KPMG found that although the UK led the charge in the promotion of self-driving vehicles, it was being let down by an overall lack of high-quality infrastructure.

Slow mobile networks mean that cars can't communicate with one another as effectively – and KPMG says the UK "lags behind other countries in 4G coverage".

Local road quality was highlighted in the report as well, particularly around towns where potholes are a common sight. The study also found that public scepticism about driverless cars was higher than in other countries included in the report.

However, it acknowledged that the UK was pushing towards better mobile networks, with extensive investments in 5G testing.

But it also admitted that the UK "needs to continue proactive efforts to address the critical factors of infrastructure and consumer acceptance".

The survey looked to find out how well countries were preparing for the arrival of driverless technology and placed the UK seventh out of 25 – behind the Netherlands, Singapore, Norway, the US, Sweden and Finland.

### **HUMOUR IN UNIFORM**

The escaped convict who successfully hid in a sewage farm has surrendered. The police organized the entire population of North West Kent to flush him out.

## **GARAGES BACK IN FAVOUR AS CAR CRIME RISES**

More drivers are keeping their car in the garage overnight as thefts increase.

British drivers are keeping their cars hidden away in garages overnight amid rising car thefts, according to new research.

A study by insurance firm Ageas found that half of UK households are keeping their car in the garage, despite what the company calls a “twenty-first century trend” of garages being repurposed for storage or living space.

Back in 2014, a study by the RAC found that 62 percent of people no longer store cars in their garages, but the new results appear to show a shift in attitudes since that finding.

Ageas says it suspects the increasing number of stolen vehicles could be the reason for the culture shift, after ONS figures revealed a 49-percent increase in reported car thefts during the past four years.

Robin Challand, the claims director at Ageas UK, said the numbers showed that garages were back in vogue.

“It seems that the demise of the garage has been overstated,” he said. “We know from our claims data that very few cars are stolen from locked garages and so it’s certainly one of the best ways of protecting your vehicle from thieves. “Half of the British households we surveyed now seem to be taking full advantage of this by parking their car in their garage overnight, acknowledging that it’s the most secure option particularly when car theft is rising across Britain.”

Richard Billyeald, chief technical officer at Thatcham Research said keeping a car in the garage would reduce the chances of theft, but drivers could take other measures to improve the chances of keeping thieves at bay.

“Out of sight is often out of mind for car thieves. So, if you’ve got a garage, using it and making sure it’s securely locked will help reduce the risk of your vehicle being stolen.

“Whether you have a garage or not, don’t leave anything valuable on show in your car. Check that your vehicle is locked before leaving it by listening for the locking noise, watch for the lights to flash or mirrors to fold, or simply pull the door handle. Make sure that your alarm or immobiliser is enabled when you leave your car, and if your car doesn’t have one, think about buying an approved aftermarket alarm, steering wheel lock or other locking device. These are proven to deter thieves.

“Then once inside your house, always store your keys away from household entry points, and report any unusual activity to the police.”

## **FOOD FOR THOUGHT?**

Two cannibals were eating a clown—one said to the other, does he taste funny to you?



## **FIVE MOTORING MISDEEDS YOU MAY NOT KNOW THAT COULD LAND YOU WITH A FINE AND POINTS**

As a motorist, it can be easy to pick up a few bad habits over the years, but you'd be forgiven for not having a good look at the Highway Code on a regular basis.

However, there are some driving misdeeds that can take an unwitting toll on your wallet – here are five of them...

### **Eating at the wheel**

It's a situation many will be familiar with. You're halfway through a long journey and when you stop at the services for some food you're asked if you want to eat in or take away. You're in a hurry, so you take it with you and start eating it as you pull back on to the motorway.

While this will save you a few minutes, it also means you're driving without due care and attention – and that can land you with up to nine points as well as severe financial penalties.

### **Splashing pedestrians by driving through a puddle**

Section 3 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act states that driving "without reasonable consideration for other persons using the road" is an offence. The act rightly considers pedestrians to be road users, and driving through a puddle without looking to see if there's anyone on foot and in the firing line can result in a fixed penalty posted through your door.

### **Driving too slowly**

Being a cautious road user is – in most cases – quite a good thing. However, it's possible to drive too slowly in the eyes of fellow road users – and, more importantly, the law.

If you're driving slowly enough to be a potential hazard to motorists, you can receive an unlimited fine and up to nine points on your licence.

### **Beeping your horn**

Road rage is something that should be kept in check for various reasons, and that includes the Highway Code.

In general, you are only supposed to use your horn to make other drivers aware of your vehicle's presence. However, regardless of the circumstances, using your horn between 11.30pm and 7am in a built-up area can leave you liable to be fined up to £1,000.

### **Driving with an overly dirty number plate**

Keeping a car clean is always a good thing to do, but there are in fact legal ramifications that should convince you to wield a water-filled bucket and some car shampoo.

Your number plate needs to be clean, or at the very least legible. Even if sections of it are obscured you'll be liable for a £1,000 fine – and your car could even fail its MOT if it has an illegible number plate.

## **BUSINESS NEWS**

An Orpington man was declared bankrupt recently after his Origami company had folded.

## HOW TO OVERTAKE SAFELY

Overtaking seems to have become a bad thing. I'm not sure when and how this happened but the roads now seem to be full of drivers who believe their role in life is to flash anyone who has the temerity to overtake a slower vehicle on a public road, no matter how safe the manoeuvre was.

While there is no doubt that overtaking can be dangerous - it isn't if it is done properly.

Roadcraft: The Police Driver's Handbook, the advanced driving handbook used by every police force in the UK, examines overtaking in detail and splits the process into three distinct sections, which it calls the Overtaking Triangle.

We'll consider each of the three points in turn, but first:

To overtake or to not overtake, that is the question

Before you do anything else, you need to find out whether it is safe and appropriate to overtake.

You'll need to hang back a little way from the vehicle in front to give you the best possible view of the road ahead.

Some of the things you are looking for include:

- ◆ Will overtaking the vehicle in front cause you to exceed the speed limit? If so, you don't need to overtake, do you?
- ◆ Is overtaking justified? If it's only going to gain one or two places in a queue of traffic should you bother? Is it worth the risk?
- ◆ Is the way ahead clear? By that I don't just mean clear of oncoming traffic: are there any side roads coming up on the right? Houses, into which the driver might turn? Bends, hollows in the road or other topographical features that would make overtaking dangerous? Is anyone overtaking you?
- ◆ Is there enough space in front of the car you want to overtake to allow you to pull in safely?
- ◆ One tip is to look for shadows too; you can sometimes spot a smaller car or motorcycle up ahead by its shadow well before you can actually see it in full.

Once you have decided to overtake, and that it is safe to do so, you will move into the Overtaking Position, the first stage of the Overtaking Triangle.

### **The Overtaking Position**

At this point you'll be sitting behind the slower vehicle at a safe distance (remember the 'Two Second Rule'?) and have decided the way ahead is clear and that overtaking it is safe and appropriate.

Now you'll need to:

- ◆ Select an appropriate gear to give you maximum torque and acceleration. The gear should (in a perfect world) allow you to complete the overtaking manoeuvre without having to change up to a higher gear.
- ◆ Check your mirrors again to make sure no one is overtaking you. A quick glance over your shoulder will make sure you've checked the blind spot your mirrors don't cover.

*Continued*

- ◆ If it's clear, you now pull out into the middle of the road and into the opposite carriageway. This gives you even better visibility and allows for a second check that it is safe to continue with the overtake. Don't indicate at this point; to do so would be to mislead other road users as to your intentions, which you aren't clear of until this check is completed.
- ◆ If it's not clear, you can just pull back into your lane safely and without having to brake or inconvenience anyone else.

### **The Take-Off Position**

No, nothing to do with flying, this is the position at which you are starting to commit to the overtaking manoeuvre.

- ◆ You've checked that it's safe to proceed, so now is the time to indicate right in order to let other road users know that you intend to overtake.
- ◆ Accelerate smoothly but firmly; at this point there is still time to cancel the overtake if you see something that could present a hazard.
- ◆ Once you draw level with the vehicle you are committed to seeing the move through. You should be accelerating strongly at this point, although still taking care to make sure you don't exceed the speed limit...

### **The Return Position**

You are now safely past the slower vehicle and the danger is almost over. Now, all that's left to do is return to your side of the road:

- ◆ Check your mirrors to make sure that you aren't cutting in too soon and won't force the slower vehicle to brake.
- ◆ Cancel your right-turn indicator but there is no need to indicate left unless you are telling other road users something that isn't obvious. If you think it might help, then feel free to do so but if you've planned and executed it all properly there shouldn't be a need.
- ◆ Steer your car into your side of the road smoothly and in a straight line.
- ◆ Adjust your speed to the conditions and change into a higher gear when appropriate.

That's all there is to it. It might sound a bit long-winded but it really isn't and practice makes perfect; happy overtaking!

### **ALTERNATIVE DEFINITIONS**

Common sense: A really cheap perfume

Contours: A fraudulent travel company

Copperplate: Police dentures

Counterpane: A paracetamol tablet

Court Marshall: A tennis umpire

Creepy-crawly: A haunted town in West Sussex

Dead Ringer: Alexander Graham Bell

Deerstalker: An expensive private detective

Palliasse: A friendly donkey



## Group Night Diary

Meetings are held at the Small Hall, Crofton Halls, York  
Rise, off Crofton Road, Orpington, BR6 8PR  
Doors open 7.15pm for 7.45pm start

11th June 2019  
An Evening with Paddy Hopkirk  
IAM RoadSmart ambassador

10th September 2019  
(To be advised)

10th December 2019  
The Christmas Quiz  
(including buffet)

If you would like to organise a Group Night or have any suggestions for a Speaker, then please contact a member of the Committee.

Their details can be found on page 24.

## Want to Drive on the Skid Pan?



Following the group's successful "Skid Pan Experience" at the Essex Skid Pan, Kelvedon recently, we will be booking another date later in the year.

There are some names already on the list for the next event, so if you want to go, get your name down early to avoid disappointment.

The visit will start with a briefing on what you will be doing including safety instructions. There are 10 places and there will be 2 instructors who will give a demonstration on the skid pan and then you will be able to drive with the instructor and practise what you will have been shown; to create a skid and to be able to keep control, hopefully!

The cost is £63 each and you will be using the skid pan cars which are both front and rear wheel drive.

***The next visits to the skid pan have been arranged for Saturday 15th June and Saturday 21st September.***

Please let Michaela Halse have your name by e-mail, telephone, text or post to:-

39 Great Queen St.  
Dartford  
Kent  
DA1 1TJ

E-mail to: michaelahalse121@gmail.com

Phone: 020 7802 3240 Mobile: 07860 409493

**Book now to avoid missing out !!**

## **UK SET TO ADOPT NEW EU SPEED-LIMITING RULES FOR CARS**

New cars sold in the UK from 2022 are set to have devices fitted which stop them breaking the speed limit.

The Department for Transport (DfT) said new EU rules that have been provisionally agreed would apply to the UK despite Brexit.

Intelligent speed assistance (ISA) is one of a raft of safety measures set to become mandatory in European vehicles after the plans were given approval by the European Commission.

It is claimed the changes could help save more than 25,000 lives and avoid at least 140,000 serious injuries by 2038.

Road safety charity Brake described it as a “landmark day for road safety”, but the AA said the “best speed-limiter is the driver’s right foot”.

ISA prevents vehicles from speeding by limiting engine power, but the system can be overridden or temporarily switched off.

Speed limits are detected using a sign-recognition camera and GPS technology.

The approved mandatory safety features for cars, vans, trucks and buses also include a warning of driver drowsiness and distraction, such as when using a smartphone while driving, and a data recorder in case of an accident.

Devices for lane-keeping assistance, advanced emergency braking and crash-test improved safety belts are suggested for cars and vans, while the legislation also addresses drink-driving, making it easier to retrofit an alcohol interlock device – used in a number of EU member states to tackle repeat drink-driving.

A DfT spokesman said: “These interventions are expected to deliver a step-change in road safety across Europe, including the UK.

“Intelligent Speed Assistance systems are expected to give drivers feedback when the speed limit is exceeded rather than limiting the speed, much like satellite navigation does now.”

EU Commissioner Elzbieta Bienkowska said the “vast majority” of fatal road accidents are caused by human error.

“We can and must act to change this,” she said.

“With the new advanced safety features that will become mandatory, we can have the same kind of impact as when safety belts were first introduced.”

Joshua Harris, director of campaigns for Brake, said: “These measures will provide the biggest leap forward for road safety this century, perhaps even since the introduction of the seatbelt.

“These life-saving measures come at a vital time, with road safety in a concerning period of stagnation with more than 70 people still being killed or seriously injured on British roads every day.”

Brake urged the Government to commit to adopting the regulations in the UK, no matter what happens with Brexit.

The DfT said vehicle safety measures generally relate to technical standards set by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, and the UK’s relationship with this body will be unaffected by Brexit.

The political agreement on the new safety measures has yet to be formally approved by the European Parliament and Council.

*Continued*

This process could take several more months due to European Parliamentary elections in May, according to the European Transport Safety Council.

AA president Edmund King said: “There is no doubt that new in-car technology can save lives and there is a good case for autonomous emergency braking to be fitted in all cars.

“When it comes to intelligent speed adaptation, the case is not so clear.

“The best speed-limiter is the driver’s right foot and the driver should use it to do the right speed in the right situation.”

### **DART TOLL DUCKED**

Two million foreign drivers dodge Dartford Crossing Charge since toll booths were removed — owing £200m

NEARLY two million foreign drivers have dodged the Dartford Crossing Charge since toll booths were removed - racking up £200million in penalty charges owed.

One in five non-UK drivers have not paid the £2.50 car toll or £6 truck toll since 2014 which carries a £108 fine.

The 1.8million cases have been passed to the European Debt Recovery Agent to try and track down the fare dodgers.

But Highways England declined to tell The Sun how much has been recovered as the figure “could have the potential to encourage drivers of non-UK vehicles to purposely avoid payment”.

Celebrity motoring lawyer Nick Freeman, dubbed Mr Loophole, has previously blasted Highways England for not releasing the number of fines paid by foreign motorists.

He said: “It means it’s complete nonsense and they’ve recovered nothing.”

The revelation sparks fears hundreds of millions has been lost since the introduction of the free-flow electronic charging system.

Highways England said nearly eighty per cent of foreign truckers pay the Dart Charge compared with 95per cent of UK lorries.

The crossing over the Thames between Kent and Essex is the busiest stretch of road in the UK and in 2017 it earned Highways England £207.4million – forty five per cent of that in fines.

But difficulty in tracking down foreign drivers suggests Brit drivers are being forced to pay the lion’s share of the penalty charges.

The Freight Transport Association has warned: “It is quite difficult to follow up on non-UK registered vehicles in comparison to those that are registered in the UK with the DVLA.

“There are ways that it can be done and there are enforcement agencies across Europe that can be used.

“We think that more efforts need to be made to make sure that those that do use the crossing actually pay.”

Mr Freeman has blasted the UK for being “soft” on foreign drivers



## **DRIVERS SUPPORT USE OF LONG-LENS CAMERAS TO CATCH BAD DRIVERS**

Around six in 10 drivers support the idea of police using long-range mobile cameras to enforce the rules of the road, according to new research.

A study by the RAC found that 59 percent of the 2,201 motorists it questioned thought the cameras, which are currently being trialled by police in Gloucestershire and can be used to catch offenders up to one kilometre away, should be used to catch drivers who speed, tailgate or use handheld phones while driving.

The vast majority of those (78 percent) said the cameras would be best employed for preventing the use of handheld mobile phones, while a similar number (77 percent) also suggested using the so-called 'long-lens' cameras to catch those hogging the middle lane, tailgating or not wearing seatbelts. Seven in 10 (71 percent) thought the cameras would make British roads safer, while half (50 percent) thought the cameras would lead to more drivers being caught speeding.

However, the study also revealed a split between drivers who thought the cameras should be used covertly and those who thought drivers should get fair warning that speed traps were in use. Almost half (46 percent) said it was unfair to use cameras without warnings, while 45 percent said it was not.

RAC road safety spokesperson Pete Williams said although the cameras were designed to catch drivers committing offences such as using a handheld mobile phone, there was "no doubt" that they would be used to prevent speeding – a use that might be divisive.

"While speed enforcement can split driver opinion, the findings of our survey show widespread support for the new long lens of the law," he said. "This is perhaps because drivers are used to speeding being enforced by a variety of means and are frustrated a similar focus is not employed to catch those they regularly see committing other motoring offences.

"Although this new long-range camera could be used to enforce illegal mobile phone use or tailgating, it's primary use will no doubt be to catch speeding drivers, if it becomes more widely used by forces. While there is certainly no question that speeding needs to be controlled, some drivers would prefer this new camera to be used to enforce other motoring offences.

"The new camera may bring some road safety benefits in relation to speeding that existing camera technology doesn't. It could be argued that fixed speed cameras don't have as powerful a long-term effect on drivers' behaviour as the fear of being caught by a long-range speed camera on a motorway or straight country road would. On the other hand, those that were against the use of these cameras claimed the lack of a visual deterrent was reason enough for them not to be employed by all UK police forces.

"However, with dramatically fewer roads police officers on patrol these days enforcement of multiple motoring offences via long-range camera could be seen as a more efficient use of police time, and something that is clearly very much welcomed by drivers who don't break the law in these ways."

## WORD SEARCH ~ BAYS

Hidden in the grid below are the names of 24 different bays. They may read horizontally, vertically or diagonally, but always in straight lines.

Y	A	W	L	A	G	A	H	R	T	H	C	G	S	H
O	J	F	F	F	B	P	E	W	R	A	K	N	U	W
J	G	L	G	O	U	T	O	U	E	W	F	O	S	E
C	N	E	U	E	N	N	Z	R	M	K	B	I	A	H
K	A	K	T	U	K	C	D	R	A	E	A	T	G	X
A	I	R	O	N	A	A	Z	Y	D	N	Z	P	E	Z
R	Q	C	D	M	O	R	E	C	O	M	B	E	P	Z
O	N	N	N	I	N	M	O	P	C	Q	I	C	O	P
E	B	J	I	I	G	L	P	L	A	G	E	N	O	D
R	O	I	F	L	W	A	S	T	L	S	Y	O	E	N
W	T	F	S	Y	B	E	N	G	A	L	E	C	Q	O
B	A	W	N	C	L	U	Y	C	I	Q	L	H	O	S
B	N	R	H	P	A	Z	D	A	M	P	M	Q	C	D
I	Y	Y	A	D	U	Y	P	L	E	N	T	Y	Z	U
X	V	N	F	F	W	A	P	E	L	B	A	T	M	H

ABOUKIR	CHESAPEAKE	FUNDY	NAPLES
BAFFIN	COLWYN	GALWAY	PEGASUS
BENGAL	CONCEPTION	HAWKE	PIGS
BISCAY	DONEGAL	HUDSON	PLENTY
BOTANY	DUBLIN	MONTEGO	TABLE
CARDIGAN	ENCOUNTER	MORECOMBE	TREMADOC

## ARE YOUR WHEELS TO TYRED TO DRIVE?

It's important to regularly check your tyres to see if they're fit and healthy to help you get from A to B safely. That's why IAM RoadSmart's Head of Driving and Riding Standards, Richard Gladman, has put together some top tyre tips to help you stay safe on the road:

- ◆ Check your tyres regularly. We recommend weekly vehicle checks which include inspecting tyre pressure, tread depth and the overall condition.
- ◆ Ensure that your tyre's tread depth is at least 1.6mm for a car (however, we recommend 3mm), and 1mm across  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the width of the tread pattern and with visible tread on the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  for motorcycles over 50cc. If your motorcycle is up to 50cc, all the grooves of the original tread pattern must be clearly visible.



The 20p test – check your tyre tread with a 20p by placing it into the main groove of your tyre. The outer band of the 20p coin should be obscured when it is inserted. TyreSafe have produced a great example of this:

- ◆ Make sure your tyres have the correct pressure. You can find this information in the vehicle manufacturers' handbook, on the inside of the fuel filler cap or driver's door sill, and you can get this information when purchasing tyres.

You can find out more information by visiting the TyreSafe website.

## DRIVING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Mobile communications and GPS systems used as sat-navs are becoming very common in cars. Whether you are connecting your Bluetooth to blast tunes or looking for the nearest Waitrose, these have become a fundamental part of the daily drive for many of us.

These tips give advice on using technology to complement your driving, from IAM RoadSmart's head of driving and riding standards Richard Gladman.

- ◆ Whilst a sat-nav aids in getting you from A to B try to not become reliant on it. It is important to pay attention to road signs and the road ahead, in case there's a diversion sign that the device may not have picked up
- ◆ Get to know your sat-nav before you set off and always programme it when stationary. Many people trust their sat-navs not to get them lost but you also need to know about roadworks, diversions and places to stop. Keep an old fashioned map to ensure that you limit the chances of going completely off track

*Continued*

- ◆ Create your playlist before you start your journey. Taking your eyes off the wheel to look or adjust your music can often prove to be hazardous. It only takes a few seconds distraction to cause an accident. Remember to also keep your music down in some circumstances; your hearing can keep you safe, so be prepared to turn the music off
- ◆ Don't make or take calls when driving and never text or engage with social media on your smartphone. Through extensive research it has been shown that making calls, even hands-free, affects concentration and slows reactions when driving
- ◆ Some vehicles have the ability to create a Wi-Fi zone allowing internet access. This should be used as a luxury for passengers whilst ensuring they do not distract you as the driver. For instance a computer screen reflecting in the dark is a dangerous distraction

Richard said: "The latest driver assistance systems can be the perfect back-up to cover our occasional human failings but are no substitutes for concentration. The driver must always remain connected to what is going on around them. Multi-tasking is a myth and all too often that glance away can become a complete switch-off to an emerging risk. No text, tweet, check in or status update is worth crashing for."

### **THE POLICE GADGET THAT KNOWS IF A DRIVER IS USING A MOBILE**

Police have been armed with a device that can tell when motorists are using their phones while driving.

The box-like gadget, which can be attached to a lamp post at the side of the road, uses sensors to pick up mobile phone signals when a driver is texting, making or receiving a call or using data.

It can also detect whether they are using Bluetooth, meaning it can tell when a driver is using their phone hands-free and, therefore, not breaking the law.

The device is linked to a sign further down the road which flashes a mobile phone to advise the driver to stop using it. Unfortunately, it cannot determine whether the mobile phone is being used by the driver or a passenger, meaning it cannot be used to actually catch offenders.

But Hampshire and Thames Valley police forces - the first to use the technology - say they will use it to identify mobile phone hotspots on busy roads. They can then send road traffic officers to the area to try and catch drivers.

The device will be used first on the A34 in Oxfordshire before being deployed across the Thames Valley and Hampshire areas. It cannot be used in built-up areas as there are too many people using mobile phones.

*Ack Daily Mail (12/04/19)*

### **CONSTRUCTION NEWS**

Roland Perks, the Orpington man whose wife had a ten year affair with a home improvement contractor said today that he had had no reason to suspect them. Mr. Perks was speaking from his twelve-bedroomed, three-bathroomed, double garaged, solar heated, en-suite prefab.

## **ONE IN FIVE DRIVERS HAS IGNORED RED 'X' SIGNS ON MOTORWAYS**

RAC warns that such behaviour could have fatal consequences

One in every five motorists has illegally driven in a closed smart motorway lane over the past year, according to new research.

An RAC survey of almost 2,100 drivers found that 23 percent had used lanes with a red 'X' on the overhead gantry, which tells motorists that the lane is closed. The signs are often used on stretches of motorway with 'all-lane running', where the hard shoulder can be used as a driving lane, and could be used when there is an obstruction, such as a broken-down vehicle.

The vast majority of those who had driven in closed lanes said they had done so "accidentally", with just three percent of respondents saying they used closed lanes on purpose. And encouragingly, 99 percent of those quizzed said they knew the red 'X' sign marked out a closed lane.

Of more concern, though, is that although 87 percent said they would leave a closed lane as soon as possible, 13 percent of drivers said they might pass a couple of signs before doing so. And motorists seem to think the problem is even more widespread than offenders care to admit, with 48 percent of drivers saying they "frequently" see red 'X' signs disobeyed.

The RAC says those who ignore the signs are potentially endangering their own lives, as well as those of other road users.

Highways England has been trying to improve compliance rates since 2016, and the organisation, which is responsible for running England's motorways and major A-roads, has sent more than 160,000 warning letters to drivers who have either ignored a red 'X' or used the hard shoulder as a lane when it was not in use.

And in 2017, the government amended the Road Traffic Offenders Act to enable offenders to be captured on automated cameras. However, the legislation has to be completed before the authorities can use the technology for enforcement.

The RAC's spokesperson, Simon Williams, said the consequences of failing to comply with red 'X' signs could be catastrophic.

"Smart motorways are now very much part of the fabric of England's motorway network and will become even more commonplace in years to come with more being opened all the time," he said. "Red X signs, which denote when lanes are closed, are paramount in safety terms as any stricken driver who has not managed to reach an SOS area is at tremendous risk of being involved in a collision with vehicles that ignore them.

"It is also extremely dangerous if road workers or emergency service staff are attending to incident in the road. Our research found drivers understand very clearly what red Xs mean, yet worryingly far too many appear to have driven under one, dramatically putting themselves at risk of encountering a stationary vehicle or a worker in their path, and all the horrific consequences that could have.

"Highways England has been working hard to get the message across to drivers that they should not drive in lanes closed by red Xs, but there is still some way to go to ensure near total compliance."

## **KEEP ON TRUCKING: DRIVING TIPS FROM IAM ROADSMART**

Driving in front of, or even behind, a large lorry can be daunting. But there's no need to panic as Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart's head of riding and driving standards, is here to help with seven top driving behaviour tips to keep you at ease on the road.

- ◆ When you're driving along the motorway, you'll notice many lorries with foreign number plates. Bear in mind that the driver will be sitting on the left hand side rather than the right, so you may be difficult to see and the driver may be acclimatising his lane position in the UK. Take extra care when passing and allow more space if you can
- ◆ We've all heard the saying "if you can see their mirrors, then they can see you." But an HGV can have up to five mirrors, and the driver is only limited to looking at one at a time so they may not see you. Hold back and you will eventually be visible in their mirrors
- ◆ Identify when there is a likelihood of the HGV changing lanes. Is there a slip road coming up which will be joining traffic and may force a lane change? Or if there is an HGV in lane two, are they likely to change back into lane one? Be accommodating by hanging back and allowing them to pull into the lane they are looking to move into
- ◆ At one point in time, we've all experienced heavy spray from an HGV in front of us. You can control this by extending the distance between yourself and the lorry. The Highway Code suggests at least four seconds in the rain but if needed, make it more. Not only will it prevent your wipers working overtime, it will also improve your vision beyond the HGV
- ◆ An articulated lorry will track sideways in a right-hand bend on the motorway and on a roundabout, so avoid being beside it. A good rule of thumb is to be safely in front of or safely behind, but never beside an HGV when entering a roundabout
- ◆ If you see a queue of traffic in front of you and have an HGV behind you, introduce your brake lights early to pre-warn the driver behind and slow down gradually. This will let the HGV driver extend their braking distance and stop in plenty of time. On a motorway or dual carriageway, hazard lights can be used to show drivers behind you of any issues further in front (Highway Code rule 116)
- ◆ Despite being legally limited to 60mph, an HGV can only physically go a maximum of 56mph on the motorway. So if you do see a HGV on the right hand lane, give them a helping hand by slowing down and letting them into the left lane. Allow them to pass more easily if you can

Richard said: "As any HGV driver will tell you, they sometimes need a bit of extra space to move down the road. Visibility can be restricted, and no amount of mirrors will allow all of the blind spots to be monitored all of the time. By applying some simple rules and sharing the road space, we can make life easier for all of us. On a roundabout they will need more than one lane so let them have it; a few seconds delay will be worth it if you prevent a crash. Walk that mile in the other man's shoes and understand what we may need."

## **SUNGLASSES: A SHADY BUSINESS**

The sky's blue, sun is shining and the snow, fog and rain are a distant memory. It's time to get the top down, the shades on and celebrate the great British summer with some open-air motoring. But hold on a minute - those shades might make you look cooler than an ice box, but are they OK for driving? Are sunglasses a boon or burden for the safe driver?

Tim Shallcross, IAM RoadSmart's head of technical policy and advice, has put together a set of tips outlining key information that you should be aware of.

### **Did you know about the EU standards for sunglasses?**

As a matter of fact, there is an EU standard for sunglasses, ensuring the frames are reasonably strong and sweat resistant and the lenses are shatterproof, scratch resistant and give good protection against harmful ultra-violet light.

Any which show the CE mark (and any sold in the EU should have it) should come up to the standards, but they are also graded into five categories - 0 to 4 - to show how dark the tint is, or more specifically, how much visible light they let through.

### **What categories of sunglasses are there?**

Category 0 specs allow 80% to 100% of visible light through and are fine for driving at any time. Categories 1, 2 and 3 are progressively darker tints, shielding against brighter levels of sunshine, and while they are all fine for daylight driving, none of them should be worn if you're driving at night. The darkest is category 4, which lets just 3% to 8% of the light through. These are very dark, like ski goggles. They are so dark that they should not be used for driving at any time, and category 4 sunglasses must be labelled as unsuitable for driving.

### **Where can I find this information?**

Seems simple enough. Sunglasses on sale in shops such as chemists or opticians do have the label and are marked with the category - normally on the arm. However, online shoppers beware; a look through several shopping websites revealed that very few sellers display the tint category or any symbol, so you have no way of telling whether the glasses are suitable for driving until they arrive. A few are advertised as category 4 and suggested as being good for cyclists, although the official standard states they are "not suitable for driving and road use", and common sense would say that if they're too dark for driving, they're too dark for cycling.

Photochromic glasses aren't marked but they should be fine for most cars because they respond to ultraviolet light to darken. Car windows block UV light, so the glasses will stay more or less clear. Watch out if you drive a convertible though, because once the roof's down the glasses will darken, but at their darkest they still allow about 20% of light through, putting them around category 2 or 3. Just be aware that they will stay dark for quite a while if you drive into a tunnel or underpass or a long stretch of shadows.

So, while the sun stays shining, check the tint number before you drive and make sure your shades keep you safe as well as cool.

## COURTS REPORT

- ◆ A BMW driver who attached a "laser jammer" to his car to dodge speed cameras has been jailed. The businessman, 58, installed the device to block the signals which track how fast cars are travelling. Officers launched an investigation after finding their equipment recorded an error code when he drove past a police safety camera van on the A658 near Harrogate, north Yorkshire. He was jailed for three months and fined £1,500 at York crown court.
- ◆ An NHS manager, who was so drunk she keeled over as she got out of her car has been struck off. Police stopped the 44-year-old on her way home from Perth Royal Infirmary. She was nearly seven times the drink-drive limit. She was jailed for four months.
- ◆ A 31-year-old man from Gorton, Manchester, who had been banned from driving on three previous occasions, pleaded guilty to causing the death of an 11-year-old boy through dangerous driving. At the time of the accident, the driver was travelling at 55mph in a 20mph zone.
- ◆ A lorry driver, 51, left a cyclist, also aged 51, in a coma for six weeks after hitting him in Hull in 2017. He admitted driving carelessly and was fined £500 and given six points.

## CHINESE PEDESTRIANS FACE FINES FOR CROSSING THE ROAD WHILE TEXTING

In a bid to improve pedestrian safety, a Chinese city has introduced fines for those who cross the road while looking at their phones.

The fine is small – only around £1.13, or 10 Chinese Yuan – but traffic police in the coastal city of Wenzhou hope that it will act as a deterrent and send a clear message that texting while walking can be dangerous.



The rule came into force on January 1 as part of Wenzhou's new traffic act, which also forbids littering, spitting, parking shared bikes improperly or failing to clear up dog mess. Since the ban came into force, more than 1,000 people have been fined or given a warning.

A police spokesman told local newspaper Zhejiang Daily: "Those questioning the rule may ask how long a person has to have his or her head lowered to deserve the punishment, but danger can happen any time. It's dangerous to have your head lowered even for a second."

'Smartphone zombies' as the practice has been christened, is becoming a major problem for many major cities. Wenzhou isn't the only one to have introduced fines – Honolulu, the largest city in Hawaii, threatens distracted crossers with a \$35 (£26.53) fine.

Finally, a driving instructor, who undid a lady's bra whilst giving her a lesson, has had his licence endorsed for exceeding the limit in a built up area.

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Views and opinions expressed in SEGMENT are not necessarily those of the Editor or the South Eastern Group Committee or IAM Roadsmart. SEGMENT is the official publication of the South Eastern Group of Advanced Motorists.

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SEGMENT is printed by Darenth Print & Design Ltd. Tel. No. 01322-288627