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EDITORIAL

As I sure that you are aware, that although IAM RoadSmart have started testing/training for motorcycles, all car activity remains suspended until further notice.

Therefore, at present, there is very little happening on the driving front. We will advise you further when circumstances change.

Meanwhile, the warmer weather that we are enjoying comes with its own problems, including your vehicle overheating, particularly if you are caught in a traffic jam.

To help overcome this problem, inspect all the hoses and ensure that the coolant is kept topped up. Keep extra water on board and if your car does not have air-conditioning, ensure that it is well ventilated.

No matter what the season, driving at a sensible speed, paying attention behind the wheel and having a properly maintained vehicle will make driving safer for everyone.

Stay safe and enjoy your driving.

ELECTRIC CAR GREEN NUMBER PLATES TO LAUNCH IN AUTUMN

The government has given the go-ahead to green number plates for 100% zero emissions electric cars. The new plates will be introduced from autumn 2020.

Both front and rear EV number plates will carry a green strip on the left-hand side.

Only fully zero emissions electric cars will be eligible to use them.

The idea behind the green number plates is to make it easier to identify 100% zero emissions vehicles.

This will, for example, help local authorities spot EVs eligible for specific initiatives such as entry into zero-emissions zones, or cheaper car parking.

Zero-emissions cars, vans, taxis, motorbikes, buses, coaches and HGVs will all be eligible to carry a green number plate.

The scheme will be non-mandatory and EV owners will be able to opt out.

“Green number plates could unlock a number of incentives for drivers and increase awareness of cleaner vehicles on our roads, showing people that a greener transport future is within our grasp,” said transport secretary Grant Shapps.

The go-ahead for green EV number plates comes after the government first suggested the idea in 2018.

Car makers, motoring groups, local authorities and the public all fed into the subsequent consultation on how best to introduce green number plates.

Surprisingly, only 1 in 5 motorists actually supported the idea behind green number plates when quizzed last autumn.

The Surveillance Camera Commissioner also questioned the policy behind green number plates, calling for the process to be “tightly controlled”.



COPY DATE FOR OCTOBER SEGMENT IS
7th SEPTEMBER 2020

OVER 11,000 NEW DRIVERS LOST THEIR LICENCE IN 2019

More than 11,000 new drivers had their licence revoked in 2019 after receiving too many points.

Under the New Drivers Act 1995, motorists will lose their licence if they receive six or more points in the first two years after passing their test. And in 2019, almost half of the drivers that lost their licence this way did so because they didn't have insurance.

Of the 11,125 drivers that lost their licence, 81.5 per cent were male.

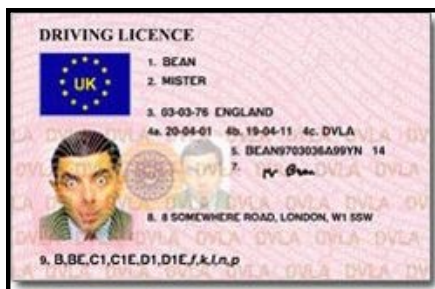
There were 5,503 insurance-related offences, accounting for 49 per cent of all licence revocations. This was followed by speed limit offences at 2,871 (25 per cent) and miscellaneous reasons at 1,155 (10 per cent).

Vehicle defects and distraction and careless driving rounded out the top five, accounting for six and four per cent of offences respectively.

Sarah Rees, managing director of AA Driving School, which analysed the data following a freedom of information request, said: "The amount of people who are caught without car insurance is staggering. It's a legal requirement not only for new drivers, but drivers of all experiences.

"Statistics showing licence losses under the New Drivers Act are often used as a means to call for stringent graduated drivers licencing to be brought in to the UK. But these figures show insurance is actually the single biggest barrier to new drivers staying legal and keeping hold of their licence.

"More must be done to educate people on the risks of driving when uninsured as well as improve education around other risky driving behaviours such as speeding and using handheld mobile phones."



MOTORISTS ARE FINDING DRIVING DIFFICULT AFTER LOCKDOWN

Almost a fifth of motorists have admitted to struggling to get to grips with driving again after several months of lockdown.

A survey of 2,000 motorists, commissioned by Hyundai, found that the average driver has travelled just 90 miles in the past 28 days, compared with a typical average of 583 per month. Thirty per cent travelled 25 miles or fewer.

With many covering such few miles, 18 per cent said they were struggling now they were driving more. Of that number, 28 per cent had stalled their car, 21 per cent had 'kerbed' their wheels, and 21 per cent had forgotten to indicate.

Meanwhile, 40 per cent said they hadn't visited a filling station recently, with 12 per cent admitting they couldn't remember the location of their fuel filler or charge point.

While many are concerned about their own driving, more are worried about others, with 48 per cent saying they are concerned about other motorists' driving standards now restrictions are lifting.

Another survey by the South Korean manufacturer found that 44 per cent of drivers were concerned about more cyclists using the road, with 18 per cent admitting to having had a near-miss with a cyclist as either a driver or pedestrian.

SUMMER BATTERY CHECKS

You might think it strange to publish a battery article in late summer and, while you would be right, there is sound reasoning for it. While most battery failures appear in winter, the cause can be what occurs to them before the cold weather arrives.

The electric cannibal

A conventional 12v car battery, literally, eats itself to death. This is because a plastic battery case contains lead-based materials and sulphuric acid. Over time,



the sulphuric acid reacts with the lead and this reduces the battery's capacity. This reduces the battery's state-of-health, more about which can be read here.

The natural chemical reaction is the main cause of aging, which speeds-up as the battery becomes hotter. Exposing the battery to high temperatures, such as that experienced within the engine bay on a hot day, accelerates this aging process. However, it is unlikely that you will notice any issue, because the electrical demand that cars place on their batteries is fairly low during this time of year.

Yet, with the cold-start ability of a healthy battery dropping by at least 30% at 0 degrees Celsius, not helped by cold engines becoming harder to turn-over as ambient temperatures drop, it is unsurprising that any damage that has been wrought on the battery by wear and tear as well as corrosion over a long, hot summer is not revealed to the car owner until the first cold morning of autumn/winter.

Therefore, the best you can do is to consider that any protective shields that are placed around a battery, whether in the engine bay, or elsewhere in the car, may be intended to help keep it cool, so ensure that they are fitted. In the case of the Volkswagen van in our picture, note that the battery is kept very well insulated – all of this material should be retained and not discarded.

As autumn approaches, it will be beneficial to have your battery's state-of-health checked so that you can be sure that your battery will not let you down on a cold morning start.

BREAKING NEWS

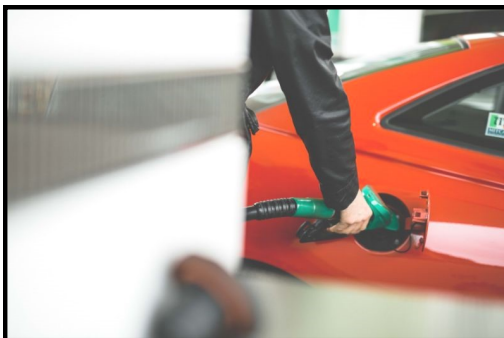
(Ed -My thanks to David Palmer)

Just be careful because people are going crazy from being in lock down! Actually, I've just been talking about this with the microwave and toaster while drinking coffee and we all agreed that things are getting bad. I didn't mention anything to the washing machine as she puts a different spin on everything. Certainly not to the fridge as he is acting cold and distant. In the end the iron straightened me out as she said everything will be fine, no situation is too pressing. The vacuum was very unsympathetic... told me to just suck it up, but the fan was more optimistic and hoped it would all soon blow over! The toilet looked a bit flushed when I asked its opinion and didn't say anything but the door knob told me to get a grip. The front door said I was unhinged and so the curtains told me toyes, you guessed it ..pull myself together!

WHY OWNERS OF OLDER CARS SHOULD BE WARY OF NEW E10 ECO-FUEL

Classic car owners are being warned about a new eco-friendly petrol that could damage their cars.

Under current regulations, 'E5' unleaded petrol can contain up to five per cent bioethanol, which is created from crops and is therefore a renewable resource.



From 2021, E10 will become the new

standard, which has up to 10 per cent bioethanol in the mix.

Doing this helps to reduce vehicle CO2 emissions – by up to 750,000 tonnes per year, according to government estimates – but classic car insurance company Hagerty is warning that E10 can cause damage to older vehicles.

The RAC estimates up to 600,000 vehicles on UK roads are not compatible with E10, because while classics are the most at-risk vehicle type, it is also advised that owners of vehicles made before 2002 do not use the fuel.

There are two key issues, with the first being that this fuel mix absorbs more water from the atmosphere, which can cause condensation in fuel tanks, fuel lines and carburettors, and cause corrosion.

The second problem is that ethanol is a solvent that can eat through rubber, plastic and fibreglass, with Department for Transport tests identifying that it can cause issues with fuel hoses and seals, blocked fuel filters and damaged fuel pumps to name a few.

Phil Monger, Technical Director of the Petrol Retailers Association (PRA) told Hagerty that changes won't be made overnight, and believes that 'many owners of old cars may have already made modifications since the introduction of E5 fuel'.

He added: "Vehicles that are very old will have materials that will not be compatible with E5 either. E10 will only hasten the day when it causes you some difficulty with those materials."

Guy Lachlan, managing director of Classic Oils, has offered advice to prevent problems, saying: "You've either got to use fuel with no ethanol or change the materials that don't like it.

"If you are in any doubt about your rubber fuel lines, change them. Get rid of your fibreglass petrol tank and install an aluminium one. The other thing ethanol really doesn't like is solder. If you are running a soldered float in your carburettor, then think about carrying a spare – they're generally quite easy to change."

If classic car owners fill up with E10 by mistake, it shouldn't be an issue if it's a one-off, so just ensure the next top-up is with the correct fuel.

The PRA says there will be a six-month awareness campaign released ahead of the fuel being introduced to prepare drivers, while a new website will allow owners to check if their vehicle is compatible.

MOST ACCIDENTS HAPPEN ON SLOWER ROADS

More than two-thirds of accidents take place on roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less. That's according to Department for Transport statistics.

Using figures from 2018, the research shows that 73,408 (60 percent) of accidents happened on roads with a limit of 21-30mph. Meanwhile, 10,661 (nine percent) took place on roads with a limit up to 20mph.



The data also shows that you're less likely to have an accident on a motorway or derestricted road.

However, accidents on faster roads are more likely to be fatal. For example, while 'just' 12 percent of accidents take place on a road with a 51-60mph limit, they make up 32 percent of fatal accidents. There were 542 fatal accidents in 2018.

Given the above, it will come as no surprise that London has the highest proportion of road accidents, but the lowest rate of fatalities. The key figures from a regional perspective are accidents and fatalities per one million people.

In London, the figures are 2,881 and 12 respectively. At the opposite end of the scale – and indeed, the country – Scotland saw figures of 1,178 and 27.

The East Midlands has the highest rate of fatalities, with 37 fatal accidents per one million people. The South West (31), Wales (30) and Yorkshire and the Humber (30) saw similarly high rates of fatalities.

Rural roads remain the most dangerous

The research commissioned by Choose My Car shows that you should take extra care at T junctions or staggered junctions. Nearly 36,000 accidents took place on these junctions in 2018 – that's nearly two-thirds (29 percent) of all accidents and 19 percent of fatal incidents.

Combined, crossroads and roundabouts accounted for around 20,000 of all accidents.

Finally, although two-thirds (67 percent) of road accidents take place on urban roads, the majority of fatal accidents (62 percent) happen in rural areas.

Rural roads are often narrower, derestricted, unlit and lacking the safety features seen in urban areas. Leave the road in the countryside and you're likely to encounter a stone wall or tree.

NEWS FROM AMERICA

A vicar from Texas has died after ingesting disinfectant. Police have charged Donald Trump with a serious breach of the priest.

FARMING NEWS

Mr. Sid Wakehurst, a cattle expert who has spent his whole life examining the back legs of cows, has been given a special award.

Said Mr. Wakehurst, "This is not the first time that I've had a pat on the back."

MORE THAN 9,000 DRIVERS IN THE UK HAVE 12 OR MORE POINTS ON THEIR LICENCE

There are more than 9,000 drivers on UK roads with 12 or more points on their licence, despite that being the number that typically triggers an automatic ban.

Drivers face an automatic ban of between six months and two years depending on the number of previous disqualifications, whether they hit 12 points from totting up numerous minor offences or by committing serious offences such as drink driving.

However, drivers can argue that losing their licence would cause 'exceptional hardship' such as losing their job in order to get an exemption from a ban.

Analysis of Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) figures by Auto Express magazine revealed how often this argument is upheld, with 9,349 motorists 'in possession of both a valid licence and 12 or more penalty points'.

In a statement to the magazine, the DVLA said: "In a small percentage of cases where the driver has 12 or more penalty points, a court can exercise its discretion and not disqualify the driver. In the majority of these cases, magistrates or sentencers may have decided to allow drivers to retain their entitlement to drive where it is considered that disqualification would cause exceptional hardship."

At the start of the year, the UK Sentencing Council, which sets guidelines for judges, opened a consultation and recommended that although losing a job after a ban might cause hardship, it should not automatically be considered 'exceptional hardship'.

Lord Justice Holroyde, chairman of the Sentencing Council, said: "The Council is aware of public concern that offenders who have incurred 12 penalty points or more are not always disqualified from driving. There are legitimate reasons why this might happen; the law allows for such a disqualification to be avoided or reduced for reasons of exceptional hardship.

"In response to requests from magistrates and other court users, we have recently consulted on proposed new guidance that will set out clearly the matters to be considered by the courts when deciding exceptional hardship applications. We will consider the responses to that consultation, and will issue guidance that will help make sure these cases are dealt with fairly, consistently and in accordance with the law."

NEW HOME NEW SYSTEM

Motorists who need to update address details in their vehicle log book can now do so online. Drivers who move home and fail to update the log book with their new address risk a fine of up to £1,000. Last year the government's Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency received about 1.4 million change-of-address applications. Drivers who file paper applications have to wait up to six weeks to get their log book back, but the online system will take five working days. You need to submit your vehicle registration number, log book document reference number and postcode to use the online service at gov.uk.

HUMOUR IN UNIFORM

It has just been reported that a juggernaut of onions has shed its load all over the M25. Motorists are advised to find a hard shoulder to cry on.

HOW TO STOP CATALYTIC CONVERTER THEFT FROM CARS

There has been dramatic increase in the theft of catalytic converters from cars in recent years, with police forces across the country seeing a surge in the expensive components being taken.

London has been hardest hit, with the Metropolitan Police recording more than 2,900 catalytic converter thefts in the first half of 2019 alone. That compares with 1,674 thefts in the whole of 2018.

What does a catalytic converter do?

A catalytic converter forms part of the exhaust system on a car. It processes the emissions from a combustion engine into less harmful gases, before releasing them into the atmosphere.

Catalytic converters first gained widespread use in the 1970s, with the United States making them mandatory from 1975 onwards. They became a common feature of modern cars in the UK from 1992.

Why are they a target for theft?

The chemical reaction that takes place within the converter requires precious metals to act as the actual catalyst. These include metals such as palladium, rhodium, and platinum.

Market values for these rare materials have increased substantially in the past 18 months.

Palladium can be sold for £1,300 per ounce, with rhodium is worth up to £4,300 per ounce. Such high figures naturally make catalytic converters a desirable target for thieves.

How do thieves steal catalytic converters?

As part of the exhaust system, catalytic converters are left exposed beneath most cars. This means thieves can simply slide under the car to remove them. SUVs are particularly at risk, as the ride height makes access beneath the car easier.

Some are bolted onto the exhaust, with other types being welded into place. The latter can be removed by cutting through the pipework to free the cat.

Most catalytic converters are unmarked, meaning they cannot be easily traced to an individual vehicle. Once taken, converters can then be sold to unlicensed scrap metal dealers.

Why are hybrid cars being targeted the most?

Hybrid vehicles, such as the Toyota Prius, have seen a larger increase in the volume of catalytic converters being stolen.

Thieves target these vehicles as the catalytic converters are said to be less corroded. The hybrid drivetrain results in lower overall exhaust emissions, leaving the precious metals in better condition. In turn, this makes them more valuable to sell on.

What are manufacturers doing to help?

The problem of catalytic converter theft is not new, with the AA noting that it has been an issue for more than a decade. This has given manufacturers time to develop ways of keeping cats safe.

Toyota offers a special 'Catloc' device, which can be retrofitted to a number of vehicles made by the manufacturer. Priced between £200 to £250 including fitting, Toyota has said it sells the Catloc without making a profit.

continued

The company has also reduced the price of replacement catalytic converters, and increased production, to help get drivers back on the road quicker.

What else can I do to protect my catalytic converter?

Not all cars are at such risk, with some models having the catalytic converter mounted within the engine bay. This makes it much harder to steal. Drivers should check with their local dealership if they are unsure.

The Met Police has also published advice on how to reduce the risk of your catalytic converter being stolen. These include:

- ◆ Parking your car in a garage overnight
- ◆ Ensuring your car is parked to make accessing the catalytic converter harder
- ◆ Trying to park in a location that is well-lit and overlooked
- ◆ Installing CCTV to cover where your car is parked
- ◆ Marking your catalytic converter with a forensic marker, which can make it harder to sell on by thieves

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE TRIALS TO COMMENCE ON UK ROADS LATER THIS YEAR

Some 188 miles of roads in the West Midlands will play host to an autonomous vehicle test later this year.

The Midlands Future Mobility project is run by a consortium of companies including Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG), MIRA, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Costain, Amey, Wireless Infrastructure Group, Vodafone, Coventry University and Highways England.

The planned route takes in a variety of different settings, including inner-city, suburban and rural roads. Stretching from Coventry to Birmingham, the routes are varied to see how autonomous vehicles perform in different real-world situations and locations.

New equipment, such as CCTV and communications units, are also being installed for the purposes of the trial.

Connected vehicles will be the first to be tested. These can 'talk' to one another to warn of traffic, collisions and crashes that other vehicles could be heading towards.

The vehicles in the early stage of research won't be driving themselves, but will have a driver and occasionally a second person in the vehicle to monitor and operate the cars. Midlands Future Mobility states that the testing will be 'as safe if not safer than current vehicles on the road'.

Models with fully autonomous technology will be tested on the route in the future, though these will also be closely monitored by operators in the car.

The planned route will also cause no disruption to local traffic or homes as it uses existing road infrastructure. It will later be expanded to include motorways, while increasing in length.

John Fox, project director at Midlands Future Mobility, said: "It is great to see that work has begun in making roads a more connected place, where drivers can make their journeys more safely and where goods can be delivered more efficiently.

"The West Midlands has a rich history of the automotive industry, and to see it is now progressing into Autonomous vehicles feels somewhat momentous."

BRIDGESTONE AND MICROSOFT TEAM UP ON NEW TYRE DAMAGE DETECTOR

Bridgestone and Microsoft have partnered up to create a new tyre damage detection device that could help to drive down the risk of road accidents.

The Tyre Damage Monitoring System (TDMS) is capable of detecting when a tyre has suffered damage from a pothole impact, or through a strike with a kerb or debris. When this occurs, it can immediately notify the driver.

Though tyre pressure monitoring systems have been mandatory in all new cars since 2012, they only detect changes in air pressure within the tyre, making them slower to react than Bridgestone's new system.

The technology is deployed through a link between Microsoft's cloud-based Connected Vehicle Platform (MCVP) and sensors already fitted to the car. It is capable of detecting irregularities in a tyre's surface, such as those caused by damage.

If damage to the tyre occurs, the technology is able to work out when and where it has taken place. This information could then be used to notify road maintenance agencies about pothole locations or other road imperfections which could prove an issue to other drivers.

Laurent Dartoux, CEO and President of Bridgestone EMIA, says: "Digital is such a huge part of what we do today at Bridgestone; it's imperative that we work with industry-leading partners who can support our needs today and in the future. By teaming up with Microsoft we have the opportunity to bring our Tyre Damage Monitoring System to millions of drivers, offering them better safety and peace of mind."

Bridgestone says that the new system is currently available to all fleets and manufacturers that already use Microsoft's MCVP programme, with many companies utilising the system to help with autonomous vehicle functions.

A PROBLEM OF OLD AGE

The male half of an elderly couple went to the doctor for a routine check-up.

"You are remarkably healthy for a man of your age" was the doctor's verdict.

"That doesn't surprise me at all" said the man, "God is looking after me".

"How do you know?" said the doctor.

"Well" said the man, "When ever I go to the toilet at night, he switches on the light for me when I get there and then switches it off again when I leave".

The doctor didn't comment but made a note that perhaps the man was suffering from dementia or a religious delusion.

A few days later the man's wife attended the surgery with a minor ailment and after the doctor had prescribed a remedy he thought he ought to check up on the husband's condition with the wife.

"Why do you ask?" said the woman. "Well" said the doctor "He seems to be under the impression that God switches on the light for him when he goes to the toilet at night and then switches it off again afterwards".

The woman turned white. "Oh no!" she said "He's p**ing in the fridge again!".



HOW TO AVOID LOW-SPEED CAR PARKING ACCIDENTS

The car insurance industry estimates there are more than 1,000 low-speed collisions in the UK every single day.

Yet despite the lack of speed, the average repair bill for these accidents tops £1,500.

According to GEM Motoring Assist, it's partly to do with the size of parking spaces, and the size of cars we try to squeeze into them.

Legally, a parking space can be between 7ft 6in (around 2,300mm) and 8ft 10in wide (just under 2,500mm), but most are closer to the minimum.

Compare that with the width of a typical family hatchback – 5ft 9in or 1,800mm, and you don't have much left either side of the car to work with, for both parking and getting out.

How to avoid parking prangs

Mirrors

The first thing you should do, when it comes to driving in general, is make sure your mirrors are set correctly. Maximise what you can see and you'll be a better driver – and a better parker.

Spacial awareness

Cars come in all different shapes and sizes, so familiarise yourself with your vehicle. Know where its extremities are, and learn what it can do in terms of turning radius.

Take your time

Parking safely is more important than doing so quickly. Plan your journey and allow time for parking. Aim to travel at times you know it won't be busy. Have in your mind exactly where you'll be able to park as easily as possible. Don't fight others for spaces, either. That'll just put pressure on and increase the likelihood of a prang.

Use what you've got

Gadgets like parking sensors and reversing cameras can be a godsend. Make good use of them, and you can turn from a parking pariah to a space-saver overnight.

Clear view

Make sure all your windows, mirrors and cameras (if you have them) are nice and clean, for ease of use. It's no good having perfectly set-up mirrors if they're rainy or mucky.

Reverse in, drive out

We suspect a great deal of the 1,000+ parking accidents that happen each day are due to people are reversing out of spaces blindly. Avoid this by reversing into your desired space. That way, you get a clear view out when it comes to leaving. If you must reverse out of a spot, do so slowly and carefully, perhaps with the guidance of a passenger or passer-by.





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

8th September 2020
A Presentation by Nigel Slater,
Kent Examiner
CANCELLED

8th December 2020
The Christmas Quiz
(including buffet)

9th March 2021
58th AGM
(with Guest Speaker to be advised)

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?



As I am sure that you are all aware, due to the Coronavirus lockdown, all IAM RoadSmart car activities have been suspended until further notice. This includes tests, assessments and of course associate training. We will advise you further when circumstances change.

In the meantime, please take care and stay safe.

DVLA LAUNCHES ONLINE LOG BOOK ADDRESS CHANGE SERVICE

Motorists who need to change the address on their V5C vehicle log book can now go online to update their details, rather than sending the paper form back to Swansea. The DVLA says this cuts the time to receive a new log book from six weeks to five days.

The government agency receives around 1.4 million paper change-of-address forms every year.

“We’re launching this service at a time when online services are becoming even more vital to help people get back on the road,” said DVLA chief executive Julie Lennard.

“This new online service is quicker and easier than sending your log book to DVLA.”

Motorists can update their address details in two minutes, claims the DVLA. The information they need to have on hand is:

- ◆ Vehicle registration number
- ◆ Log book document reference number
- ◆ Postcode

The DVLA is currently running a campaign encouraging motorists to use online services rather than sending paper documents to its Swansea HQ.

In April, the organisation warned of “significant delays” for motorists due to the coronavirus crisis.

Earlier this month, an automatic seven-month extension to photo-card driving licences was granted to motorists whose cards were due to expire.

DRIVER EYE TEST “NOT FIT FOR PURPOSE” SAYS SAFETY GROUP

The current eye test for drivers is ‘out of date’ and ‘not fit for purpose’, according to a road safety group.

Drivers must be able to read – with glasses or contact lenses if necessary – a car number plate made after 1 September 2001 from 20 metres.

An eye test is part of the practical driving test, with the driver asked to read a number plate on a parked vehicle.

If the driver fails the eye test, the driving test stops, the DVLA is informed and the licence is revoked. Re-applicants will be required to have an eye at a DVSA driving test centre, along with the standard eye test as part of the practical driving test.

Drivers must also have a visual acuity of at least decimal 0.5 (6/12) measured on the Snellen scale, along with an adequate field of vision.

An eye test every 10 years

GEM Motoring Assist says this isn’t enough and is calling for a detailed eye test to form part of the driver photo-card licence renewal process, every 10 years.

Road safety officer, Neil Worth, said: “If you can’t see properly, you shouldn’t be driving. Poor eyesight is linked to more than 3,000 fatal and serious injury collisions every year. We are worried that there are just too many people driving whose eyesight has deteriorated to an unacceptable level.

“We believe it is entirely practical and sensible to require a test of visual acuity and field of view every 10 years, something that would fit in with licence renewal.

“Tests of this kind would not only make our roads safer, saving lives, disability and many millions of pounds through the reduction in the number of crashes, but they would also play a vital role valuable tool in the early diagnosis of many other costly medical conditions, irrespective of driving.”

The 20 metres test

Rule 92 of the Highway Code states the following:

Vision. You MUST be able to read a vehicle number plate, in good daylight, from a distance of 20 metres (or 20.5 metres where the old style number plate is used). If you need to wear glasses (or contact lenses) to do this, you MUST wear them at all times while driving. The police have the power to require a driver to undertake an eyesight test.

In 2018, the DVLA launched a campaign to remind drivers that they can check their vision by taking the 20 metres test. Five car lengths or eight parking bays is an easy way to measure the distance.

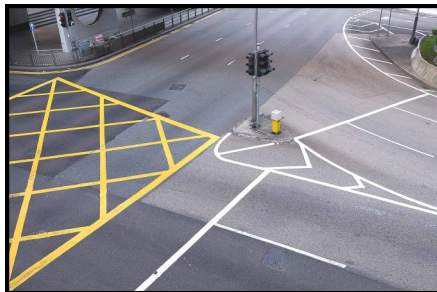
Dr Wyn Parry, DVLA’s senior doctor, said: “The number plate test is a simple and effective way for people to check their eyesight meets the required standards for driving.

“Having good eyesight is essential for safe driving, so it’s really important for drivers to have regular eye tests. Eyesight can naturally deteriorate over time so anyone concerned about their eyesight should visit their optician – don’t wait for your next check-up.”

As part of its Older Drivers Campaign, RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents), advises motorists to keep a spare set of glasses in the glovebox.

YELLOW BOX JUNCTIONS - HOW TO AVOID A PENALTY

Yellow box junctions can catch drivers unawares – and result in a hefty fine. Many are monitored by enforcement cameras, which can automatically process penalties. Our guide will help you obey the rules and avoid a £130 charge.



Most yellow box junctions are found in urban areas, where tailbacks can block opposing traffic flow. Until recently, only local councils in London and Cardiff could issue fines for ‘moving traffic violations’. However, drivers across the UK now face the same rules.

According to research by the RAC, eight in 10 drivers say they struggle to drive cleanly through yellow box junctions. And nearly half admit to getting stuck in them accidentally, with one in three blaming other law-breaking motorists for their infringement.

An investigation by Click4Reg found that London councils earned up to £520,000 from moving traffic violations every day. The City of London borough issued nearly 200,000 penalties in 2017-2018, raking in almost £25 million as a result.

What is the point of a yellow box junction?

A box junction keeps traffic flowing by marking out an area of road space that should be kept clear at all times.

When can I drive into a yellow box junction?

You are only meant to enter a box junction if your exit is clear – in other words, if you can drive all the way through it without stopping.

Am I ever allowed to stop in a yellow box junction?

If you are turning right, you can stop in a box junction if oncoming traffic prevents you from doing so – but only if your exit is clear.

What is the penalty for stopping in a yellow box junction?

You can be fined up to £130 for unlawfully stopping in a yellow box.

Will I get points on my licence for breaking yellow box rules?

No, you will not receive penalty points on your driving licence for a yellow box offence.

Why do people get wound up about yellow box junctions?

Motorists get annoyed with box junction transgressors because everyone else gets blocked, along with the offending driver. It is considered one of the more ‘selfish’ motoring offences.

Yellow box junctions are covered by rule 174 of the Highway Code.

RAC spokesperson Simon Williams said: “Our research shows yellow box junctions are a very divisive issue with drivers.

“There is a strong feeling that many junctions are not set up fairly, which leads to drivers having no choice but stop in them, whether that’s due to poor traffic light sequencing, poor design or being used in the wrong place.

The RAC adds that authorities should carefully analyse every box junction before installing a camera, to confirm it’s possible to drive through without stopping.

HOW HAS CAR SAFETY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

Car safety has come on in leaps and bounds in recent years. No longer is having a 'big' car the sole way of adding protection, while in-car technology has filled in the gaps between driver and machine.

Let's take a look at how things have changed and the direction car safety is going.

Early years

It'll come as no surprise that the early years of motoring weren't the most safety-conscious. Wiper blades were first introduced in 1903, while it wasn't until 1914 that indicators – or turn signals – were brought in.

When it came to crash testing, that took until 1934 for General Motors to undertake the first test while the first crash test dummy – called Sierra Sam – was put to work in the early 1950s. Then, in 1951, the airbag was invented, making for a huge leap ahead in terms of overall safety.

Seatbelts

In fact, it was the 1950s which saw the introduction of seatbelts. The decade saw airbags developed too and Volvo was the firm to bring in the three-point seatbelt – introduced in 1959 – which set the tone for technology for years to come.

In fact, its overall design has largely remained unchanged as it's so effective. However, it wasn't until 1963 that inertial reel seatbelts were brought in.

Safety technology

Safety technology took a huge leap forward in the 70s and 80s. Systems such as anti-lock brakes (first introduced on the S Class in 1978) and a supplemental restraint system are brought in, bolstering the amount of safety tech on new cars.

In 1983, the wearing of front seatbelts became compulsory in the UK, followed in 1987 that the fitting of rear seatbelts is compulsory too.

Further safety measures

The 1990s were dominated by several safety innovations which helped to make cars even safer. Volvo, for instance, was the first to produce a side-impact safety system in 1991, while Mercedes brought in electronic stability control in 1995.

In 1997, Euro NCAP was established, helping to improve European car safety through crash tests and ratings. In 2001, the Renault Laguna became the first car to achieve a five-star rating.

We also move into the age of autonomous assistance. Volvo – again, pioneering new safety technology – was the first to develop autonomous emergency braking while more recently the Swedish firm has introduced a 112mph speed limit for all of its new cars.

The future

Car manufacturers aren't resting on their laurels, either. Of course, autonomous technology is a hot topic at the moment, and though these systems are being tested it's still some way from being fully implemented.

That said, autonomous assistance is now becoming available on many new cars, while drive monitoring technology can assess a driver to see if they're concentrating enough.

WORD SEARCH ~ INVENTORS

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

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

BABBAGE	EDISON	NEWTON	WALLIS
BAIRD	FARADAY	NOBEL	WATT
BELL	HUBBLE	PASTEUR	WHITTLE
BIRO	MARCONI	PITMAN	WRIGHT
BUNSEN	MORSE	SANDWICH	ZEISS
COCKERELL	NAPIER	VOLTA	ZEPPELIN

CAT S, C, D, N: WHAT DO THE INSURANCE WRITE-OFF CATEGORIES MEAN?

If you're searching for a used car, you may come across vehicles described as a 'previous write-off'.

Essentially, this means the car's been damaged severely enough for the insurers to consider it not worth repairing, but someone has repaired it to return it to the road.

A car can be one of four write-off categories, depending on the severity of the damage.

These were revised in 2017 when the Association of British Insurance (ABI) changed its salvage code, to reflect the structural damage to a car rather than focusing solely on the cost of repair.

The categories are as follows:

Category A The most serious category. Category A write-off must be crushed: it can never legally be used on the road again. Parts cannot be removed from the vehicle, even if they appear to be salvageable.

Category B This signifies serious damage. The car again should never be used again on the roads and its body shell must be crushed. Parts may be removed from the vehicle for use on other cars.

Category S (formerly category C): The car has suffered structural damage and would be uneconomical to repair. If repaired by a professional, it may be returned to the road.

Category N (formerly category D): The least severe category. Damage is non-structural, but could affect safety-critical features such as brakes or steering.

Category D write-offs may be returned to the roads, but not until they've been professionally repaired.

It's worth bearing in mind that a car's value can affect its likelihood to be written-off. As insurance companies are responsible for writing a vehicle off following a crash, these tend to work on the car's value.

To put it simply, a nearly-new, expensive car will need a lot of damage to make it a write-off. An old banger with little value only needs small cosmetic damage to be written off.

Insurance write-off categories: Q&A

How do I know if a car's been written off in the past?

Although sellers should legally declare an insurance write-off, some unscrupulous owners try to hide it. You can get around this by searching for a car on Auto Trader, as all insurance write-offs are automatically declared, or by buying a vehicle history check.

Should I buy an insurance write-off?

The only reason to buy a car that's previously been written off is if it's considerably cheaper than an undamaged example. If it is, be aware that you'll also have to declare it when you sell the car on, and that will affect its value.

Only category S and N vehicles (D and C under the old system) can legally be sold for use on the road. We'd want to fully understand what caused the damage and see evidence that it'd been repaired by a reputable body shop. You'll also need to declare that it's a write-off to your insurance company.

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What happens to my car once it's written-off?

If your car has been damaged and the insurance deems it not worthy of repair, they will offer you what they consider to be the market value of the car and essentially buy it off you. It will then be sold at auction or scrapped, depending on the severity of the damage.

If you wish to keep the car, you may be able to buy it from the insurance company. It's worth noting that it'll then be your responsibility to repair the car, and there may be extra damage that isn't obvious by looking at it. You'll also have to declare that it's a write-off when you insure the car or sell it.

DRIVERS WANT TO SEE MOTORWAY SERVICES' FUEL PRICES CUT

Research from 2019 showed motorway services could be 37p per litre more expensive than normal petrol stations.

More than nine in 10 drivers want action to prevent the high petrol prices seen at motorway services' filling stations, new research has found. The study revealed the overwhelming desire to see the high prices,

which can be tens of pence per litre more expensive than at regular petrol stations, forced down.

Commissioned by car supermarket Motorpoint, the survey of more than 1,400 people found that a massive 94 percent thought the price of petrol and diesel at motorway services should fall. The result comes after research published last summer showed petrol could cost up to 37p per litre more at a motorway service station than at a traditional forecourt.

That study by fuel price app PetrolPrices.com worked out that filling up at a motorway service station could work out £20 more expensive for a car with a typical 50-litre tank. At the time, the company said filling a Ford Fiesta at Leicester Forest East services would cost £16.38 more than at Sainsbury's Fosse Park, just two miles away.

Motorpoint, though, says the issue is a pertinent one, as government plans to investigate high prices on motorways have failed to see prices drop. Back in 2018, then-Transport Secretary Chris Grayling called the prices "exploitative".

At the same time, demand for fuel is huge, with the Petroleum Industry Association claiming some 120 million litres of fuel are sold every day. And all this comes after the RAC has criticised fuel retailers in general for their so-called "rocket-and-feather" pricing, which sees prices rise quickly when the oil price increases, but fall more slowly when the cost of oil is reduced.

Mark Carpenter, the chief executive officer of Motorpoint, said the study showed motorists had strong opinions about motorway fuel prices, and the discrepancy between motorway and town-centre prices were "unjustifiable".

"The results of the Motorpoint poll clearly show the strength of feeling among motorists about the 'exploitative' price of fuel on our motorways," he said. "While many drivers value having the services available, and don't mind paying a small premium for the convenience, the current disparity between the price of fuel on our motorways and the price of fuel elsewhere are completely unjustifiable and action is needed to bring them more in line with each other."



DRIVING IN THE RAIN: TIPS FROM IAM ROADSMART

With the Met Office issuing yellow weather warnings for heavy rain, thunder storms and possible floods today across the country, here are some tips for driving in the rain from Richard Gladman, IAM RoadSmart head of driving and riding standards.



Heavy rain:

- ◆ Heavy rain will affect your visibility, so take it slow. Rule 126 of the Highway Code states that the braking distance between yourself and the vehicle in front of you should be two seconds when driving on a dry road, and at least four seconds in the wet. It is even longer on icy surfaces. IAM RoadSmart recommend up to 10 times the braking distance when driving on ice.
- ◆ Your windscreen should be clean, wipers effective and the jets positioned correctly and aimed at the screen. It is sensible to clean the windscreen, make any necessary adjustments and remove anything from the main area before you start your journey.
- ◆ A good rule of thumb is that if you need windscreen wipers, then you need your headlights. Automatic light settings will not always activate in bad weather conditions, so it is up to you to make a sensible decision as to whether these need to be turned on.

Aquaplaning:

- ◆ If the water is standing in puddles on the road surface, your car is at risk of aquaplaning. Aquaplaning is where a wedge of water forms in front of the tyre and lifts it up off the road surface. This is caused by the tread not being able to displace the amount of water present. If there is standing water slow down and pick your route to avoid this happening. To recover from aquaplaning, ease gently off your accelerator, have a firm grip of the steering wheel and be sure not to make any sudden steering actions. The car will eventually regain its grip as the water clears.

Floods:

- ◆ First ask yourself - can you take another route? If not, then you need to identify how deep the flood is. If the standing water is more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. If you are familiar with the road, you can judge the flood in relation to the curb.
- ◆ If heavy rain was not the cause of the flood, then what was? And what impact on the road does it have? For example, if it is a burst water main, the standing water may look like a normal flood but the road surface beneath the water may be completely broken up. If you are unsure how the flood has formed, then avoid it altogether.
- ◆ Are there other vehicles similar to yours that are safely driving through? From this, make a judgement call as to whether it is safe to travel through or not.
- ◆ If the water is fast flowing, do not attempt to drive through it, as there is a real danger of your car being swept off the road.

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- ◆ If you have taken everything into consideration and decide to drive through the flood, be sure to do so slowly. The best approach is to press lightly on your clutch and add gentle pressure on your accelerator to increase your engine revs. Do so without increasing your speed, in a similar way to how you would undertake a hill start. This will prevent water from entering your exhaust. If you are in an automatic car, accelerate slightly but control the speed with your brakes. When you have passed the flood, test your brakes to make sure they are dry and working properly.
- ◆ If you are in the slightest doubt, then turn around and don't go through the flood. Often modern saloon cars have the air intake in the wheel arch, which may be below the water level. If your engine should take in water, it will immediately hydro lock and the engine will stop.
- ◆ Remember to stay alert and avoid splashing pedestrians. If this is done accidentally- even when causing splashed when driving through puddles at the side of the road - you could receive a fixed penalty and three points on your license for driving without due care and attention, or without reasonable consideration for other road users. If deliberately done, it could be a public order offence, a court appearance and a fine.

Richard Gladman, head of driver and rider standards, said: "With the British weather the way it is, we should all be well-practised at driving in the rain. Keeping your car maintained and the rubber (wipers and tyres) in good condition will help you stay safe. In the recent extremes, we have seen that standing water and floods are becoming more commonplace, so take extra care and if possible avoid driving through standing water. If you're in any doubt about the depth or surface underneath a flood, then it's best not to take any chances."

THE BAPTISM

A man is stumbling through the woods, totally drunk, when he comes upon a preacher baptising people in the river.

He proceeds to walk into the water and subsequently bumps into the preacher.

The preacher turns around and is almost overcome by the smell of alcohol, whereupon he asks the drunk, 'Are you ready to find Jesus?'

The drunk shouts, 'Yes, I am.'

So the preacher grabs him and dunks him in the water.

He pulls him up and asks the drunk, 'Brother have you found Jesus?'

The drunk replies, 'No, I haven't found Jesus.'

The preacher shocked at the answer, dunks him into the water again for a little longer.

He again pulls him out of the water and asks again, 'Have you found Jesus my brother?'

The drunk again answers, 'No, I haven't found Jesus.'

By this time the preacher is at his wits end and dunks the drunk in the water again but this time holds him down for about 30 seconds and when he begins kicking his arms and legs he pulls him up.

The preacher again asks the drunk, 'For the love of God have you found Jesus?'

The drunk wipes his eyes, catches his breath and says to the preacher, 'Are you sure this is where he fell in?'

CYCLE LANE ROAD SIGNS AND MARKINGS – TIPS FROM IAM ROADSMART AS NEW ENFORCEMENT POWERS ARE GIVEN TO LOCAL COUNCILS

New powers have been granted to local councils to enforce cycle lanes – but do you know your road markings? Ignorance of the law is no defence, so with new bicycle facilities popping up all over our towns and cities at the moment, as cycling is encouraged to ease pressure on public transport during the Coronavirus pandemic, it is now more important than ever to know where and when you can park.

Cars or motorcycles illegally parked on mandatory cycle lanes can force cyclists to deviate from their path and put them at risk of conflict with passing vehicles. From today (22 June 2020) councils can use CCTV vans to record offences. There will always be a right of appeal if signage is unclear or mistakes have been made, but that can be a time-consuming hassle with no guarantee of success.

Neil Greig, IAM RoadSmart's Director of Policy and Research, therefore has these top tips to help ensure you know the rules of the road around cycle lanes and where you are allowed to park:

- ◆ Dust off your Highway Code and Know Your Traffic Signs knowledge. You can view both online to make sure you're familiar with road signs and markings and what they mean.
- ◆ Rule 140 of the Highway Code is the main one for cycle lane advice. It states: "You must not drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a solid white line during its times of operation. Do not drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a broken white line unless it is unavoidable. You must not park in any cycle lane whilst waiting restrictions apply."
- ◆ When it comes to a cycle lane marked with broken white lines, use common sense in relation to the term 'unavoidable'. While you should not normally cross them, there may be occasions when the confines of space or the nature of traffic dictate that it is unavoidable.
- ◆ It is your responsibility as a driver to check signage on street lights or poles to find out exactly what the parking restrictions are and the hours of operation of the cycle lane. These may have changed since you last visited your town centre. Even if a cycle lane looks temporary, if it has a solid white line it will be mandatory and the parking and stopping advice will apply.
- ◆ You can 'pick up and set down passengers' but that means you must never leave your vehicle unattended or stay too long. Loading information will be on plates or on kerb markings. If in doubt park or load somewhere else.
- ◆ With the introduction of pop-up cycle lanes and other initiatives to promote walking and cycling and keep public transport use to a minimum, check before you head out on the roads. Your local roads may be familiar to you, but they may have changed since you last ventured out on them.

Neil added: "Watch out for more cyclists than before on our roads. They have no airbags, crumple zones or seatbelts to protect them. Treat them the way you would want to be treated. It is important to give people the space - at least 1.5m - they need to use the road. At this time you should also expect a wider range of ages and abilities as more people try it out for the first time to avoid public transport."

MOTORISTS 'LEAVING SENSITIVE DATA ON THEIR OLD CARS'

Drivers could be leaving a trove of sensitive data on their old cars by not wiping information held from connecting to a smartphone, according to a survey. Synchronising a handset to vehicles via Bluetooth or USB allows people to do things such as play their own music, download contacts and messages, retrieve live traffic and navigation information, as well as making hands free calls or send messages.

However, failure to wipe data from a car before selling it risks inadvertently giving away personal information to any future owners, including contact numbers, home addresses and even wifi details.

A study by Which? of more than 14,000 motorists who had sold their vehicle in the last two years found that just over half (54%) made use of such features via their phone.

The results suggest that one in two (51%) drivers had not tried to unsync their phone before parting with the car, while a third (31%) said they took no action at all to remove their personal information.

Four out of five (79%) vehicle owners did not follow instructions in the car manual to remove data and return the car to its factory settings before they sold it, despite this being the best way to make sure no personal details are left on the operating system.

The consumer group is concerned that motorists are not being provided enough information about what is being collected when they sync their phones or download an app, and the importance of eradicating the data.

"If cars are not treated the same as a smartphone, tablet or other connected devices when it comes to data security, motorists risk giving away a treasure trove of information about themselves when they decide to sell their car," said Harry Rose, editor of Which? Magazine.

"Manufacturers must do much more to prioritise customers' personal privacy so that drivers fully understand how much data their vehicle could be harbouring and how to delete this information in order to eradicate these risks."

SCREEN-WASH IN SUMMER

You may think that screen-wash is suitable in winter only, where it keeps you on the right side of the law, by ensuring that your windscreen washers work in freezing conditions. While the presumption is correct, screen wash also has its uses in the summer months, too.

Health benefits

As screen wash tends to be used less in the summer months, the solution is at greater risk of stagnation within the water bottle. Legionnaires' disease, associated with ill-maintained water storage systems (including screen-wash bottles), occurs when a fine mist of contaminated water is breathed-in. Its bacteria thrives between 20 and 50 degrees Celsius, temperatures that are common within the screen wash bottle during the summer months. It is thought that a screen-wash additive helps to either kill the bacteria, or inhibits their reproduction.

Performance and safety advantages

The demands on summer screen-wash differ to those types used in winter. Several companies, therefore, have developed summertime additives that forgo anti-freezing properties in favour of being more effective at removing grease and dried-on insect residues, for example. This also helps to reduce the risk of glare.

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