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Editor: John Biggs
34 Woodhurst Avenue
Petts Wood
Kent
BR5 1AR

Telephone: 01689-838241
E-mail: jsbiggs@btinternet.com

Registered Charity No.1049496

EDITORIAL

Well, It will soon be that time of the year again! People shopping for presents and booking holidays not only abroad but also in this country. Lots of people visit friends and family during the Christmas and New year period making the roads extra busy even during the unusual and restrictive times that we are currently living in. The above, together with traditionally poor weather conditions make it undoubtedly a time to be especially vigilant if you are on the road, particularly during the evenings and at night, when there will be a lot of office and other parties going on. There is always someone somewhere who thinks that he or she is immune to alcohol (and Covid) and after attending one of these parties, still thinks that they are fit to drive.

Finally, I would like to thank those of you who have supported me by sending in articles during the year and wish all members and associates plus their families and friends a very merry Christmas and a happy, virus free New Year.

Stay safe and enjoy your driving.

MORE THAN 1 IN 3 NEW CAR BUYERS NOW CHOOSE AUTOMATIC

Cars with an automatic gearbox are growing in popularity as more and more new car buyers choose an auto.

Just 14 percent of new cars sold in 2000 were an auto. This had risen only slightly, to 18 percent, by the end of the decade.

However, between 2010 and 2020, automatic cars have been booming. At the end of 2019, they accounted for 36 percent of new car sales – doubling their popularity in just 10 years.

So far in 2020, the shift to autos has risen further, to almost 40 percent of new car sales.

Automotive information company Glass's is now predicting that within the next few years, more than half of all new vehicles registered in the UK will be automatics.

"The automatic has become an automatic choice," said Glass's editor Jonathan Brown.

"In terms of registrations, this is a rise from just 335k in 2009 to 827k in 2019."

Manual gearbox penetration at car auctions has also been decreasing since the end of 2018, he added.

"Wholesale volume of automatic gearboxes in 2010 stood at 119k cars, increasing to 368k in 2019."

In other words, the number of second hand automatic cars being sold through the trade to stock used car forecourts has more than tripled.

Mr Brown cites an ageing population and the "transformed" performance and fuel efficiency of automatic gearboxes for the shift.

However, the fact all electric cars, hybrids and plug-in hybrids are equipped with an automatic gearbox is also helping the shift.

So far in 2020, sales of such alternative fuel vehicles have boomed – with pure electric cars alone taking a 6.4 percent share in August 2020.

COPY DATE FOR FEBRURY SEGMENT IS
11th JANUARY 2021

HOW TO STAY AWAKE WHEN DRIVING LONG DISTANCES

A fifth of road accidents are caused by driver fatigue. So perhaps it's no surprise that a third of UK drivers are scared of driving in the dark.

According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), tiredness and drowsiness are factors in up to 25 percent of fatal and serious injury accidents.

Just as worrying is the fact that these types of crashes are 50 percent more likely to result in death or serious injury. That's because a driver who has fallen asleep cannot take action to reduce the impact.

RoSPA says accidents caused by tired drivers are most likely to happen:

- ◆ On long journeys and on monotonous roads, such as motorways
- ◆ Between 2am and 6am
- ◆ Between 2pm and 4pm (especially after eating or drinking just one alcoholic drink)
- ◆ After a night of interrupted or less sleep
- ◆ After drinking alcohol
- ◆ If taking medicines that can cause drowsiness
- ◆ After working long hours or a night shift

How to spot the signs

It's important to recognise the signs of tiredness. Failure to do so could result in an accident caused by reduced reaction times, decreased attention levels and an inability to judge risks.

Symptoms include:

- ◆ Yawning or rubbing your eyes
- ◆ Frequent blinking
- ◆ Daydreaming
- ◆ Trouble remembering the last few miles driven
- ◆ Missing exits or traffic signs
- ◆ Drifting from your lane

How to stay awake when driving

Not getting behind the wheel when tired is a good place to start, but the following tips will help you stay awake:

- ◆ Prevent tiredness: make sure you get between seven and eight hours of sleep the night before you drive. If you're regularly feeling tired, even after a full night's sleep, arrange to see your doctor.
- ◆ Plan ahead: design your journey to allow you to take regular rest breaks, especially if you're driving during peak tiredness times.
- ◆ Minimise the risk: plan to stop at a motorway services for a quick rest. Arrange to share the driving with a friend or family member. Coffee will help, but it's NOT a solution to tired driving.
- ◆ Stay cool: excessive use of in-car heating will make you feel sleepy. Keep the car comfortably cool and open the windows to get some fresh air.

Highway Code rule number 91 also states that a minimum break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving is recommended.

HOW SMOKING AFFECTS THE VALUE OF YOUR CAR

Everyone knows smoking is bad for your health. But when it comes to cars, it's also bad for your wealth. A heavy smoker may lose up to £2,000 when they part-exchange a car at a dealer.

This is according to vehicle data specialist HPI, which says dealers take a dim view of smoke-soiled cars. The smell is one problem, but cigarette ash can cause damage to the seat upholstery and trim.

Fernando Garcia, consumer director at HPI, said: "The first thing a car dealer will do when looking

at a car being sold by a smoker is to knock down the price of the part-exchange. "That's simply down to the fact that a car for part-ex has to be made fit for resale and this becomes considerably more difficult and expensive when that car was previously driven by a smoker.

"The two main impacts smoking has on a vehicle are physical damage to the interior and smell, something many smokers are often unaware of – or think can be resolved by using an air freshener."

Resale values up in smoke

Cleaning a car owned by a smoker can cost anything up to £150, but in severe cases, the internal fabric and headlining may need to be removed. This can cost hundreds or thousands of pounds, depending on the smell and type of vehicle. Repairing any marks, stains or burns will add to the cost, reducing the resale value still further.

Garcia added: "Some dealers tell us they won't even buy cars from smokers because of the time and expense of cleaning up a car and removing unpleasant smells.

"Unless consumers want to see the residual value of their vehicles literally go up in smoke, I'd urge them to try to quit or at the very least refrain from smoking inside the car when driving."

Smoking in a vehicle: the law

It has been illegal to smoke in a vehicle with anyone under the age of 18 since 2015, with the law introduced in England and Wales to protect young people from the dangers of second-hand smoke.

Both the driver and the smoker could be fined £50, and the law applies even if somebody is sat in the open doorway of a vehicle.

The law does not apply to e-cigarettes, a driver aged 17 if they are alone in the car, or a convertible with the roof completely down.

SPORT

During re-decoration at Bromley Public Library recently, high jumper Warrington Flange accidentally sat on a blowlamp and leapt straight into the record books.

NO BIDDING

There was a nasty accident at an auction in a nudist camp recently, when the auctioneer's whole collection came under the hammer.



TEST PASSES

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

Peter Beckett

Geoff May

NEW ASSOCIATES

Due to the ongoing Covid restrictions, the Group are not recruiting any new associates at this time.

HOW TO CHANGE THE ADDRESS ON YOUR VEHICLE LOG BOOK ONLINE

Motorists who need to change the address on their V5C vehicle log book can now go online to update their details, rather than sending paper forms 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 1.5 million paper change-of-address vehicle log book 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."

Online updates for driving licences have been in place for several years: two in three people now use it rather than sending forms in the post.

Motorists can update address details on their log book 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 in the year, an automatic seven-month extension to photocard driving licences was granted to motorists whose cards were due to expire.

This was later extended to 11 months.

MISTAKEN IDENTITY

A woman came home late one night and when she opened the bedroom door she saw four legs sticking out from under the covers of the bed.

She grabbed a golf iron and started hitting them as hard as she could, leaving the two people screaming for help, broken ankles and all.

She then went to the kitchen to get an axe. As she turned on the light she saw her husband sitting at the table listening to music on his headphones.

"Hi, darling," he said. "Your parents came to visit so I let them stay in our bedroom."

DRIVER ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS EXPLAINED

If you look under the safety systems section when buying a new car, you'll be wowed by a vast array of acronyms and impressive-sounding technologies.

Modern cars are quite incredible, with most able to 'see' the world around them and anticipate and react to situations on the road. Understanding what these technologies are, as well as which are most important, can help you decide on which new model you're going to buy.

Here, we outline the most common driver assistance systems and what they do.

Lane-keep assist systems (LKAS)

This one is fairly self-explanatory, but it's important to be aware if a car has this ahead of a test drive, because it can make the steering feel quite odd if you're not expecting it.

In its most basic form, lane departure warning systems will alert you if you're drifting out of lane, while LKAS will actively alter the car's steering and pull you back into the centre.

Advanced cruise control

This is a hugely appealing technology for anyone who spends a lot of time on the motorway. They have various levels of competence, but in their most basic form they will use radar to judge the speed and distance of the car in front and adjust its own speed to match.

Some can also help keep the car in its lane, with Tesla's 'Autopilot' system the best known example.

Parking assist

Parking can be tricky, because cars are getting bigger but parking spaces remain the same size. Fortunately, some cars offer a system that can park the car automatically.

Again, these systems vary, but they should be capable of driving forwards or backwards into a bay, or perform parallel parking on the street.

Front collisions warnings

These systems scan the road ahead and can pick out obstacles in the road, such as other vehicles or pedestrians. If it identifies an object and your closing speed puts you at risk of a collision, it will alert you.

This alert comes in a variety of ways, but most use a flashing icon on the dashboard and an audible alarm. Some cars will also boost brake input to help avoid a crash, but importantly they only warn you of an obstacle – you must take action yourself.

Automatic emergency braking (AEB)

Emergency braking systems take the principle of forward collision warnings, but are capable of taking action to avoid a crash. Should a crash be anticipated, the car can apply the brakes to stop the vehicle quickly.

Some more advanced systems can also scan the opposite lane to see if it is clear, and if it decides it can't stop in time, will steer the car around the obstacle.

Blind spot warning

One of the lessons we learn early in our driving careers is that checking your blind spot is important to avoid accidents. However, many modern cars now have blind spot warning systems that tell you if there's a car off your rear quarter that might have escaped your vision.

continued

They tend to work with an orange light embedded in the wing mirror, so as you check the mirror to see what's behind you, you'll see that you should hold off changing lanes even if you can't see a vehicle without having to look over your shoulder.

Night vision

In the car industry, night vision is still a very new technology. Introduced with the luxurious S-Class, it has slowly filtered down to a few mainstream models such as the DS 7 Crossback.

It uses night vision to display a black and white image, usually in the instrument binnacle, that can see pedestrians or animals far in the distance, ahead of the headlights. While you shouldn't drive by looking at the screen, it's often used to warn of potential hazards before you've seen them.

NUMBER-PLATE CLARITY ON BLACK AND SILVER

Regulations on replacement number-plates are fairly strict for several reasons, all of which are covered clearly under the latest British Standard, BS AU 45d.

Yet, with the number of cars that are driving on the roads with football logos, badly-spaced letters that are supposed to spell-out a word, strange fonts being employed, and even screws being placed strategically to change the appearance of a plate, it is clear that enforcement from both MoT inspectors and Road Traffic Officers is not working.



Apart from not conforming to the regulations, ANPR cameras can struggle to identify the car. While this can be useful for the criminal fraternity, it may cause car owners a problem, if their beloved vehicle is stolen, and the illegal lettering thwarts police attempts to identify its whereabouts, with number-plate recognition cameras.

Another issue rests with black and silver number-plates (pictured) and recent GEM research uncovered a discrepancy between the DVLA and the DVSA, which has now been clarified by both authorities. Under previous regulations, number-plates possessing a black background and silver letters were only accepted on cars registered before 1973. Now, they are accepted on all cars that are in the Historic Tax Class. So, if your vehicle is over forty years-old, you can apply to the DVLA to have its tax class changed to Historic. Not only can it then wear black and silver number-plates legally but no longer will you have to pay for your road tax.

THE ARTS

At the Cement Association's Sculpture Exhibition held recently, the main competition was for carvings of the world's greatest lovers done entirely in limestone.

Casanova won by a long chalk.

CONSULTATION LAUNCHED ON PLAN TO BAN PAVEMENT PARKING ACROSS ENGLAND

Parking on pavements could be banned across England under Government plans to ease journeys for disabled people and parents pushing prams.

The practice is banned in London but elsewhere in the country it is only prohibited for lorries.



The Department for Transport (DfT) is consulting on three options in relation to pavement parking.

These are:

- ◆ Extend the London-style ban nationwide
- ◆ Make it easier for councils to prohibit pavement parking
- ◆ Give councils the power to fine offenders

Recent research from charity Guide Dogs indicated that 32% of people with visual impairments and 48% of wheelchair users are less keen to go out on their own because of antisocial pavement parking.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: "Parking on pavements means wheelchair users, visually impaired people and parents with pushchairs can be forced into the road, which is not only dangerous, but discourages people from making journeys.

"A key part of our green, post-Covid recovery will be encouraging more people to choose active travel, such as walking, so it is vital that we make the nation's pavements accessible for everyone.

"Pavement parking presents a clear safety risk when parked cars occupy the pavement and force vulnerable pedestrians to move into the road."

The DfT stated that any measures will need to "ensure the free-flow of traffic and access for the emergency services".

A report by the Commons Transport Select Committee in September last year called for a blanket nationwide ban on the "blight" of parking on pavements.

Witnesses told MPs that the worst cases of pavement parking were effectively trapping disabled, elderly and vulnerable people, making them "afraid to leave their homes".

Stephen Edwards, director of policy and communications at walking charity Living Streets, said: "We're regularly contacted by disabled and older people who feel trapped in their homes because there isn't enough room on the pavement for wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

"This has impacted more people during the pandemic, with blocked pavements affecting everyone's ability to physically distance."

Justine Roberts, founder and chief executive of Mumsnet, said: "Lots of us have occasionally parked a couple of wheels up on the pavement to leave space on the road without really thinking about how it might inconvenience people.

"It's a topic that comes up regularly on Mumsnet, where wheelchair users and people with buggies share stories about being forced into the road, or having to double back long distances."

continued

But the AA warned of a ban would have “unintended consequences”.

Jack Cousens, head of roads policy for the AA, said: “As we have seen over the past few weeks with road closures and narrowed roads, councils have acted with little consultation and in many cases lost confidence of the communities they serve.

“Local authorities should make a street-by-street assessment and where pavement parking is allowed, markings should show how much pavement can be used.

“While councils have always had the powers to tackle problem parking, it would be typical if the only time they act is when there is fines income to be had from it.”

MOST CAR DRIVERS EXCEED 30MPH LIMIT

The majority of car drivers exceed the speed limit on 30mph roads, new figures show.

Department for Transport (DfT) analysis of these roads across Britain found that 54% of cars were driven too fast during free-flow conditions last year.

This is compared with 50% on motorways and 9% on 60mph roads.

A fifth of cars exceeded 30mph limits by more than 5mph, while 6% were recorded doing at least 40mph.

The average speed driven in the zones – which are generally in built-up areas – was 31mph.

Some 86% of cars were found to exceed 20mph limits but the DfT said this figure should be “interpreted with additional caution”.

This is because many 20mph roads in quieter, residential areas have traffic calming measures, making them unsuitable for the research.

RAC road safety spokesman Simon Williams said: “These statistics are alarming. We know that during the days of strict lockdown there was a real prevalence of speeding in built-up areas.

“Breaking speed limits is illegal and puts everyone using the road in danger. It’s vital the Government’s review into road policing addresses the elephant in the room – a lack of enforcement.”

Road Safety Minister Baroness Vere said: “Speeding is illegal, reckless and puts people’s lives at unnecessary risk. That is why there are tough penalties and strict enforcement measures in place for those who disobey the law.

“We know it’s just as crucial though to change attitudes that lead to dangerous driving.

“Our road safety statement and its two-year action plan include aims to tackle speeding, while our Think! campaign targets risky driving behaviour by challenging social norms among high-risk young men.”



HOW TO MAKE YOUR CAR LAST LONGER

A car is the second most expensive thing most of us buy or finance, after a house or flat. And just as we maintain our properties, so too should you look after your car.

Here's how to keep your car healthy and efficient for longer.

Stick to the servicing schedule

It's advisable to service your car every 12 months, possibly sooner if you cover lots of miles.

That doesn't just simply mean renewing the oil, either. A service may involve replacing multiple consumables, including the oil filter, air filter, cabin filter, spark plugs (if it's a petrol engine) and more.

Servicing an electric car is simpler – and theoretically cheaper – as they have fewer moving parts.

Top up the fluids

You should also keep the car's fluids topped up. From windscreen wash to engine oil, 12 months is ample time for these to run low.

Regular fluid checks are essential to help your car live longer.

Change the filters

Filters help keep the fluids your car uses clean. Oil, air and fuel all have their own separate filters, which need to be changed at varying intervals. Oil and air filters should be changed at every annual service.

Diesel cars also use a particulate filter (DPF), which can become blocked and is expensive to replace. However, most issues can be avoided by simply driving your car. [Click here for advice on DPF maintenance.](#)

Replace the spark plugs

Spark plugs are an essential part of your petrol engine, and generally should be changed at every service.

Is your car running rough? It could be the plugs. Thankfully, they're a relatively easy job to tackle in your garage at home.

Check your tyres

Safety should be reason enough to keep your tyres in tip-top condition, but financial savings are an added incentive.

Keeping your tyres inflated to the recommended pressures will save you money at the pumps. According to Michelin, tyres under-inflated by 15psi will lead to six percent more fuel used.

Keep your car clean

Your car might be running like a watch, but keeping it clean is also good for its health. Road grime, salt, bird mess: it all adds up to, at best, sorry-looking paint. At worst, it will cause corrosion of your car's bodywork and internal parts.

A clean car, both inside and out, will live for longer. It could also protect you from harmful bacteria and disease.

Use your garage

The best way to protect your car from the elements is to keep it away from them. Parking overnight in the safety of a garage will offer decent protection from birds and the weather, not to mention car crime.

It will still need to be washed from time to time, though.

continued

Kick the clutter

Weight equals excessive wear and tear. Clear the clutter out of your car and it'll handle, stop and drive better overall. It'll also use less fuel.

Less weight makes everything better when it comes to cars, as Lotus has been telling us for years.

Drive smoothly

Service, clean, and keep your car safe all you want; if you don't drive it correctly, things will go wrong.

That means avoiding hard acceleration and anticipating stops so you don't have to slam on the brakes. Don't rush the gears or sling the steering wheel around. That said, your engine will appreciate a zesty drive every so often.

Use your car's equipment

Use it or lose it. What's true of your body also applies to your car. Features like air conditioning and electric windows can seize over time. If you drive a convertible, retract its roof every so often.

If nothing else, using certain features will confirm they still work, so you can get them fixed if not.

Keep the battery healthy

Batteries are fickle devices that need to be used to stay healthy. Leave your car for a while and the battery will go flat and degrade, especially in the UK's highly variable climate.

If you know your car will be standing for a while, buy a trickle charger to keep the battery topped up.

Don't scrimp on parts

You'd be upset if you got second-rate organs for a transplant because they were cheaper. So don't cut corners on car parts.

In general, OEM (original equipment manufacturer) parts are best. If you're buying aftermarket items, do your research – and only buy from reputable brands.

Rust-proof your car

Better to prevent now than fix later. Before your car rusts away, before you've even washed it for the first time, it's a good idea to get it rust-proofed.

Paint-protection wraps work well, and touch-ups of stone chips and other exposed metal will keep the orange wolf from your car door. An inspection underneath and, if necessary, a coating of underseal could be a good investment.

Don't modify your car

The original parts that came on your car have all been tested over hundreds of thousands of miles.

If in doubt, keep things standard, or your car may suffer for it. A modified car is likely to be worth less when you sell, too.

MEDICAL NEWS

- ◆ A man goes to the doctor with a strawberry growing out of his head. The Doctor says, "I'll give you some cream for that."
- ◆ A man goes to the doctor and said, "Sometimes I feel like a wigwam and sometimes I feel like a marquee."
It's nothing serious, said the doctor, "You are just too tense."



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 December 2020
The Christmas Quiz
(including buffet)

CANCELLED

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

8th June 2021
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, the Skid Pan will not be opening until the new year. We will advise you of any change accordingly.

In the meantime, please take care and stay safe.

KEEPING YOUR CAR SECURE

The basics:

Take standard, security measures and ensure your car is locked. Keeping keys away from doors and windows to minimise the chance a thief will be able to find and amplify the key's signal is general good practice.

Switch off your key, if possible: Check your manual or speak to your Dealer to find out if your key has this function.

Physical barriers:

Purchase an aftermarket security device like a steering wheel lock, a driveway parking post, or a wheel clamp. Even if thieves are able to access and start your car, these should prevent them from driving away. Also check with your Dealer for security features fitted to your car and to find out how to activate them.

Tracking devices:

Vehicles fitted with a Thatcham tracking device have a 96 per cent recovery rate when stolen.

If you have a garage:

Use it. Ensure the door is secure and consider fitting an alarm.

Bag it:

For keyless entry vehicles, consider buying a "Secured by Design" certified Faraday bag to block the signal meaning thieves are unable to trick your vehicle.

Fob them off:

Check around you when you leave your car and make sure it's locked to stop potential thieves jamming the signal between your car and your fob, potentially leaving it insecure.

HOW TO SAVE FUEL WHEN DRIVING

Here are eight ways to save fuel (and money), courtesy of the RAC.

1. Look after your car

Regular maintenance will ensure your car is working at optimum efficiency, which will improve your fuel economy. Stick to the manufacturer's recommended service schedule, which includes regular oil and filter changes, and be sure to fix any issues as they arise.

You also need to ensure that the tyres are inflated to the correct pressures, so consult the car's handbook or use one of the many online guides for help. Remember to adjust the tyre pressures depending on the load you're carrying.

2. Go easy on the right pedal

feathering the throttle can make a huge difference to your fuel consumption. Slow and gentle acceleration is the key to efficient driving, so avoid any traffic light Grand Prix antics.

Change up a gear as soon as possible, but don't allow the engine to labour. Experience will tell you when your car is ready for a higher gear – there's no fixed rule.

While 56mph is often referenced as the optimum speed for fuel economy, the RAC says cars are typically most efficient at 45-50mph.

3. Maintain momentum

Momentum is the difference between good and excellent fuel economy. The key is to read the road ahead. If you're approaching a roundabout, ease off the throttle and see if you can tackle it without stopping. Equally, on a motorway, maintaining a safe distance to the car in front will allow you to react to sudden braking. Hills are the hypermiler's worst enemy. The RAC says you should accelerate a little before approaching a hill, then ease off as you drive up. Just make sure you're not creating congestion behind you.

4. Use cruise control at the right time

Cruise control will only improve fuel economy on a flat surface, so is best reserved for motorways. Motorways offer the best opportunity to maximise fuel economy.

5. Reduce drag

According to the Energy Saving Trust, an empty roof rack adds 16 percent drag when driving at 75mph, while a roof box adds 39 percent. Neither of these were fitted to the Giulia, but make sure you remove them from your car when you've returned home from holiday.

Opening a window will have a similar effect, especially at higher speeds. In town, at lower speeds, an open window is actually more efficient than using air conditioning.

6. Turn off the air conditioning

Speaking of which... The air conditioning uses engine power and therefore increases fuel consumption. If you're hoping to maximise fuel economy, use it sparingly and when necessary, but be realistic.

Make sure that you use the air conditioning at least once a month, as this keeps the refrigerant flowing and the system lubricated. Failure to do so will result in an expensive repair bill further down the line.

continued

7. Avoid short trips

An engine will operate at its most efficient when it's warm, so cold starts will increase fuel consumption. Is it possible to combine several short trips into one? Could you cycle, walk or use public transport instead?

8. Reduce weight

The heavier your vehicle, the more fuel it will use, which is why many manufacturers have removed spare wheels from their cars.

Remove unnecessary items from the boot, as this will improve your economy. You could also use it as an excuse to leave your mother-in-law at home.

T-PLATES TRIALLED FOR YOUNG DRIVERS WITH TELEMATICS CAR INSURANCE

Young drivers say they feel pressured to drive faster by other motorists. To address the issue, Co-op has begun a trial of T-plates to help those with telematics ('black box') car insurance feel safer.

Almost one in four young drivers aged 17-25 physically feel unsafe when they drive, due to the pressure from other motorists.

Nearly three in four have been overtaken when it wasn't safe to do so – and 43 percent have received rude hand gestures from other drivers.

The nationwide T-plate pilot aims to combat this and help young drivers feel safer on the roads.

"Drivers with black boxes will see their insurance premiums increase, or in some extreme cases, their policies cancelled if they don't drive as they should," said Co-op Insurance MD Charles Offord.

"Yet, currently it's impossible for other motorists to know if another vehicle has a black box fitted.

"Young drivers want other motorists to know this, which is why we're launching the T-plate."

Co-op surveyed more than 24,000 young drivers and six in 10 said the T-plate would make them feel less pressured.

The trial begins today with hundreds of young drivers. The plan is to roll it out to thousands more in the coming months.

The initiative has been backed by road safety charity Brake and driving school RED.

Co-op research shows that more than six in 10 young drivers will look to use telematics car insurance, to help keep the cost of getting onto the road under control.

"The cost of my insurance has come down quite a bit since having the black box installed," said 21-year old driver Callum Smith.

However, "I am often made to feel like I'm in the wrong for sticking to the right speed limit by other drivers.

"If they knew I had a black box, I think they would ease up a bit."



SPEEDING THREATENS ROAD SAFETY AS MUCH AS DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING, SAYS IAM ROADSMART

IAM RoadSmart is calling for speeding to become as socially unacceptable as driving under the influence after discovering that many people see excessive speed as acceptable.

They commissioned a survey of 2,000 people and found that one-in-10 drivers admitted to exceeding the speed limit of 30mph in residential areas, yet despite this, nine out of every 10 drivers surveyed considered that speeding in a residential area was as big a threat to their personal safety as motorists driving under the influence.

Almost half of those questioned believe that it is acceptable to drive 10mph over the 70mph speed limit on motorways – and a quarter of those are willing to go faster, too. In addition, 22 per cent think that it is fine to drive 5mph over the speed limit on a residential street.

One-in-10 thought it was justifiable to drive over the speed limit when passing a school, too.

Neil Greig, policy and research director for IAM Roadsmart, said: “The results of this survey are deeply concerning. Speeding consistently causes more than 4,400 casualties on UK roads each year. That’s an average of 12 people a day killed or injured in some form.

“We need a fundamental shift in attitudes towards speeding so that it becomes as socially unacceptable as drink and drug driving – where public opinion has changed over previous decades.”

The road safety charity also discovered that attitudes towards speeding differed between UK regions. Some 65 per cent of drivers in Yorkshire and Humber, for instance, thought that speeding was more an issue today than it was three years ago, contrasting the national average of 55 per cent.

A fifth of Londoners believe that they drive faster than most others on the roads – compared with a 13 per cent national average – while drivers in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are more safety conscious.

FIRST CLASS MALE?

A married couple went to the hospital to have their baby delivered. Upon their arrival, the doctor said he had invented a new machine that would transfer a portion of the mothers pain to the baby's father. He asked if they were willing to try it out. they were both very much in favour of it.

The doctor set the pain transfer to 10%, for starters, explaining that even 10% was probably more pain the father had ever experienced before. However, as the labour progressed, the husband felt fine and asked the doctor to go ahead and "kick it up a notch."

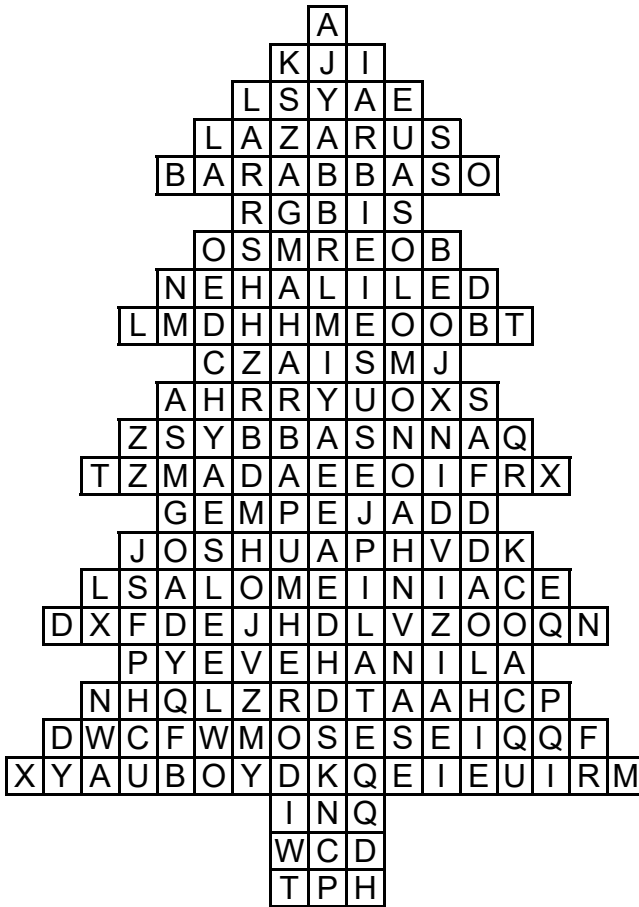
The doctor then adjusted the machine to 20% pain transfer. The husband still feeling fine. The doctor checked the husbands blood pressure and was amazed at how well he was doing at this point, they decided to try for 50%. the husband continued to feel quite well. Since the pain transfer was obviously helping out the wife considerably, the husband encouraged the doctor to transfer ALL the pain to him. The wife delivered a healthy baby boy with virtually no pain. She and her husband were ecstatic.

When they got home, the postman was dead on the porch.

WORD SEARCH ~ CHRISTMAS

Hidden in the grid below are the names of 24 different characters from the Bible.

They may read horizontally, vertically or diagonally, but always in straight lines.



AARON	DAVID	JOSEPH	PILATE
ABEL	DELILAH	JOSHUA	SALOME
ABRAHAM	EVE	LAZARUS	SAMSON
ADAM	GABRIEL	MARY	SAMUEL
BARABBAS	HEROD	MOSES	SOLOMON
CAIN	JESUS	NOAH	ZACHARIAS

THE SOUND OF SIRENS – TIPS ON HOW TO HELP THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

We can be driving to a destination, minding our own business when out of nowhere there's the sound of sirens. We tend to have to locate which direction the sound and vehicle is coming from before we navigate ourselves into a position on the road where we can move out of the way for emergency services vehicles. In support of the recent Emergency Services Day, IAM RoadSmart's Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards, has some tips to remind drivers and riders how to reduce the risks we face in these situations, aid the emergency services, and make the road a safer place for us all.

1. Where to stop

It's important to stay calm when you hear sirens and see blue lights. You will need to find somewhere safe so you can pull over to the left and stop. If in a congested area, try to stay out of bus lanes and avoid mounting on kerbs, pavements and at traffic islands. Don't make any sudden or unexpected moves.

2. Slow down, move over

You may find there can be breakdowns, collisions and lots of congestion on all types of roads. These situations can be very distressing and potentially dangerous – for both emergency services vehicles as well as for occupants of stranded vehicles. When manoeuvring in these situations it's vital to help those involved by slowing down, moving over and passing to the right-hand side of the road.

3. Traffic lights

Emergency services vehicles can find ways to navigate around you at traffic lights. You may need to pull over to the left a little if they are passing through a congested queue. However, if you are first in the queue at a red light, it's important to stay where you are, do not pass the stop line, unless you have been advised to do so by a police officer.

4. Motorways and dual carriageways

When driving on motorways and dual carriageways, pull over to the left while avoiding using the hard shoulder and allow any emergency vehicles to pass in the outside lane. Ideally get ready to do this if you are stopped in a queue behind an incident before the blue lights appear in your rear-view mirror. In slow or stationary traffic, if an emergency vehicle cannot get through, their positioning of the vehicle as it approaches you will signal whether you should move left or right. Once the emergency vehicle has passed by you, stay vigilant and don't move until other vehicles following the emergency vehicle have also passed.

5. Motorway incidents

Highways Traffic Officer and emergency services vehicles are likely to stop in motorway and dual carriageway lanes, when attending to or approaching an incident. They can be protecting other vehicles involved or removing debris which can be blocking the road. When driving, keep an eye out for the overhead red X gantry sign or other instructions which are displayed. These signs aid in smoothing the flow of traffic, help drivers predict there could be an incident ahead and clear the lanes.

continued

6. Stopped emergency service vehicles

If you see an emergency vehicle stopping or has already stopped, you should prepare for people to be exiting the vehicle as they step into action. You will need to slow down, keep your eyes open and anticipate the actions of others. This will give you enough reaction time to the situation at hand, this will give everyone enough time to stay safe.

Richard said: “By following this advice you can do your part to help emergency service teams nationwide and make the roads as safe as possible for all road users. Drivers of emergency service vehicles are trained to a high standard. They do not want you to panic and will not expect you to put yourself in danger or damage your vehicle to make way for them. If you have caused a problem by mistake, stay calm and be guided by them, they know what space they need and will ask you for it.”

GOOD MOTORWAY LANE DISCIPLINE HELPS REDUCE THE QUEUES

Knowing which lane to use on a motorway is key to reducing risk and congestion, according to breakdown and road safety organisation GEM Motoring Assist. The reminder follows the recent announcement that some stretches of motorway are to have their speed limits reduced in a trial to reduce pollution.

In general motorways have three lanes. Every driver on the motorway should plan to use lane one (the left-hand lane). Lanes two and three are for overtaking.

It's important to stay in lane one unless there's a line of slow traffic, in which case you can use lane two – and, if necessary, lane three – to overtake. But your aim should be to move back to lane one when you have completed the manoeuvre.

The only exception to this is on a smart motorway, where you may see a sign to 'stay in lane' when traffic levels are particularly high. This aims to stop drivers from changing lanes every time they see other vehicles moving more quickly.

Speed limit reductions from 70mph to 60mph are due for a trial period on stretches of the M1, M5, M6 and M602 in areas that have seen higher than recommended levels of nitrogen dioxide.

GEM chief executive Neil Worth commented: “When you adopt good motorway lane discipline, you can really do your bit to help the traffic flow. Dangerous lane hogging is inconsiderate, increases motorway congestion and can inconvenience other road users by forcing them to overtake across two lanes.

“All drivers should use lane one unless overtaking. When they have finished overtaking, they should return to the inside lane.

“Understanding and following the rules means the motorway lanes work more efficiently, drivers are at less risk and are also avoiding the risk of penalties and fines.”



TIPS – WORLD REFLEXOLOGY WEEK

It is generally acknowledged that if possible, it's better to stay active when suffering with back problems rather than spending prolonged periods of time lying in bed. Regular physical exercise which involves moving the back, neck and shoulders is an ideal way to strengthen the muscles and keep joints mobile. Unfortunately for many who drive for long periods this means more time sat in the same position and less movement which can have a knock on effects on our neck, spine, shoulders and hips. Over time this might lead to poor posture and pain. To mark the recent World Reflexology Week, Kate Mulliss from the Association of Reflexologists has pulled some tips together for all drivers whether you currently experience any back issues or not.

- ◆ Empty out the back pockets of your trousers or jackets. Sitting on items such as your wallet, keys or phone can move your spine out of alignment and can also be very uncomfortable.
- ◆ Adjust the back of your car seat to touch the back of your bottom and the back of your shoulders. The seat will need to have a slight incline backwards which will support the natural inward curve of your back. Reclining the seat too far back can strain your neck and head as you will keep having to lean forward to see out of your windscreen. It pays to take some extra time to position yourself correctly, especially if taking long drives.
- ◆ Your headrest should be adjusted so that the back mid-section of your head meets the middle of the cushion when you rest your head back.
- ◆ Position your steering wheel if possible, by moving it up or down, to a position that suits you best and so your hands sit at about 10 to 2 on wheel. Sit close enough to the wheel to have a soft bend in your elbows. Sitting too far away can cause you to reach too far, which puts more pressure and stress on the spine, neck, shoulder, and wrists.
- ◆ Position your rear view and wing mirrors correctly, so you do not need to strain your neck by pulling it forward to look and see behind you safely.
- ◆ Your back muscles can tighten and stiffen when seated in the same position for too long so be sure to take regular breaks. You should aim to take a 15-minute break at least every two hours or 100 miles. Use this time to move around and stretch. Breaks can improve your posture throughout the journey and your concentration.

If you feel that you have ongoing back issues, it is advised that you see a doctor because there could be other factors affecting your back.

QUITE THE REVERSE?

A truck driver stopped at a roadside diner for lunch and ordered a cheeseburger, coffee and a slice of apple pie. As he was about to eat, three bikers walked in.

One grabbed the trucker's cheeseburger and took a huge bite from it. The second one drank the trucker's coffee, and the third wolfed down his apple pie. The truck driver didn't say a word as he paid the waitress and left. As the waitress walked up, one of the motorcyclists growled, "He ain't much of a man, is he?"

"He's not much of a driver, either," the waitress replied. "He just backed his 18-wheeler over three motorcycles."

HIGHWAYS ENGLAND TRIALS INFLATABLE ROADWORKS BARRIER

Highways England is to start trials of a new inflatable barrier to help protect road workers through roadworks.

The new 'roadside airbag' will begin tests in the West Midlands.

The organisation hopes it will help cut the hundreds of vehicle incursions into roadworks reported each month.

Described as large, bright and very visible, the Vehicle Incursion Airbag can be inflated in less than 10 minutes, so it can be put into place quickly.

The first trial area is a slip road on the A45/A46 Stivichall Interchange in Coventry: roadworks there begin later in October.

Highways England partner Kier is running the trial. Project manager Mark Sheppard said it "will give us a great opportunity to trial something a little bit different.

"Traffic management incursions are all too common, so the chance to take a different tack to help influence decisions made by some roads users is worth exploring."

Highways England innovation manager Lisa Manc said: "Our road workers report around 240 incidents or vehicle incursions each month.

"It is a far too frequent hazard for our workforce – and the consequences could be fatal.

"We hope these airbags will go some way to protection our workers, but also help change drivers' behaviours."

The inflatable airbag barriers will supplement cones and signs, adding another layer to traditional traffic management.

The trial is costing £95,700 and is being funded through the Designated Funds programme, as part of £150 million Highways England has ringfenced to support innovation through 2015-2020.

THE NEW NEIGHBOUR

Only today a guy stopped me to say he had just moved in recently to a house and on his first day in the house his neighbour spoke to him in the front garden and said he had a vintage car in his garage and would he come and help him start it.

He thought it would be neighbourly thing to do so he agreed and the guy opened the garage doors and went in and sat down on a chair midway down the garage. He said "Please give it a few turns on the starting handle". So as not to upset him, he went and pretended to crank the starting handle a couple of turns. The neighbour on the chair started going "Brmm, Brmm", got up and ran out of the garage and down the street.

He was left standing there wondering what kind of loony he had living next door when the neighbour on the other side appeared in the front garden and came across to talk to him. "Did you help him start the car?" he asked to which the guy replied "Yes". The neighbour said whatever you do don't tell him the car does not exist as he pays me £5 per week to clean it for him.



WHAT IS CHECKED IN A CAR MOT?

The MOT is a legal requirement for all cars over three years old, but around 40 percent of cars fail the test at the first attempt.

Data shows that around half of all faults could have been avoided by carrying out some simple checks before the MOT test. Indeed, 30 percent of faults found during a test relate to lighting and signalling.

It pays to do a little homework before you send your car to be tested, then. Although you won't be able to fix everything at home, you'll give your car the best chance of passing first time.

Remember, the MOT test doesn't cover the condition of the engine, clutch and gearbox. It's not a replacement for having your car serviced. Instead, it's a check that your car meets the current legal standards.

Car parts tested in the MOT

Body and vehicle structure

Make sure the body and structure are free from excessive corrosion or damage. Any sharp edges are likely to result in a fail.

Tow bars

The tow bar will be inspected for security, condition and any inappropriate repairs. Make sure the 13-pin electrical socket is working correctly.

Fuel system

The fuel system will be inspected to check for leaks and that the pipes and hoses are secure. Also make sure the fuel cap fastens and secures – don't forget to supply a key (if necessary).

Exhaust emissions

Emissions-related test failures have nearly doubled since an overhaul of the MOT test in 2018. Diesel vehicles are at greatest risk of failure.

Exhaust system

The exhaust system must be secure and complete, the catalyst must be in place, and there shouldn't be any serious leaks.

Seatbelts

Seatbelts must be in place, suitable for the vehicle, working properly and attached securely. The tester will also check the airbag, seatbelt pretensioner and seatbelt load limiter warning lights.

Seats

The driver's seat must be adjustable, while all seats must be securely fitted with the seat backs in the upright position.

Doors

Check that the latches secure in the closed position, the front doors open from the inside and outside, and the rear doors open from the outside. Also check the condition of the hinges.

Mirrors

Check the condition and security of the mirrors.

Load security

The tester will check that the boot or tailgate can be closed properly.

Brakes

The brakes must pass an efficiency test, while the anti-locking braking system (ABS) and electronic stability control (ESC) must function (where fitted). The ABS, ESC, handbrake and brake fluid lights will also be checked. *continued*

Tyres and wheels

The tyres must be of the right size and type, have the minimum tread depth, and be in good condition. The tyre pressure monitoring system must be working on cars registered on or after 1 January 2012.

Registration plates

The number plates must be in good condition, secured to the vehicle, be of the right colour, with characters correctly formed and spaced.

Lights

All lights must be working and in good condition. The headlights will also be checked for aim and the main beam warning light must be working.

Bonnet

The bonnet must close securely.

Wipers and washers

The driver must have a clear view of the road.

Windscreen

The windscreen will be checked for condition. The driver must have a clear view of the road.

Horn

The horn must work and be suitable for the vehicle.

Steering and suspension

These elements will be checked for their condition, the steering oil level, inappropriate repairs or modifications, corrosion to pipes and hoses, and the steering lock.

Vehicle identification number (VIN)

The VIN will be checked on vehicles first used on or after 1 April 1980. Some multi-stage build vehicles are exempt.

WATCH YOU SPEED

A Police Officer was waiting along the side of a highway waiting to catch speeding drivers. There weren't as many violators this day as usual. The State Police Officer sees an old car pattering along at 22 MPH. He thinks to himself, "This driver is just as dangerous as a speeder!"

So he turns on his lights and pulls the driver over. Approaching the car, he notices that there are five elderly ladies, two in the front seat and three in the back--wide eyed and white as ghosts.

The driver, obviously confused, says to him, "Officer, I don't understand, I was doing exactly the speed limit! What seems to be the problem?" "Ma'am," the officer replies, "You weren't speeding, but you should know that driving slower than the speed limit can also be a danger to other drivers." "Slower than the speed limit? No sir, I was doing the speed limit exactly... Twenty-two miles an hour!" the old woman says a bit proudly. The State Police officer, trying to contain a chuckle explains to her that "22" was the route number, not the speed limit. A bit embarrassed, the woman grinned and thanked the officer for pointing out her error. "But before I let you go, Ma'am, I have to ask... is everyone in this car OK? These women seem awfully shaken and they haven't uttered a single word this whole time," the officer asks with concern.

"Oh, they'll be all right in a minute officer. We just got off Route 215."

SOUTH EASTERN GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

President: Bill Edwards M.B.E.

GROUP OFFICERS

Chairman:	Stuart Dey	020 3260 1036
Secretary:	Peter Gray	020 8462 3140
Treasurer:	John Boreham	01732 763080

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Group Contact/ Welcome Sessions:	Jonathan Eaton	020 8294 1516
Events:	Steve Ewing	01322 380305
	Saby Ghosh	01322 551258
Membership:	Duncan Garrett	07880 541438
Website:	Duncan Garrett	07880 541438
Skid Pan Training:	Michaela Halse	07860 409493

NON COMMITTEE

Auditor:

OBSERVED DRIVES - ORPINGTON CENTRE MANAGER

Steve Ewing 01322 380305 Mob: 07565 904069

<u>Chairman</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
14 Greenholm Road Eltham London SE9 1UH	2 Wentworth Close Hayes Kent BR2 7AW	Copse House Copse Bank Seal, Kent TN15 0DE

Group e-mail: southeastern.group.iam@gmail.com

Website: www.iamsoutheasterngroup.org.uk

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