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## **EDITORIAL**

Hopefully the worst of the weather is now firmly behind us and we can now look forward to seeing some brighter, sunnier days much more conducive to driving pleasure.

With Covid restrictions finally lifted, it is hoped that we can get back to Sunday Drive Mornings and Group Nights shortly.

*Stay safe and enjoy your driving.*

## **VAST MAJORITY OF MOTORISTS WANT TO SEE MORE POLICE PATROLS ON THE ROAD**

The vast majority of motorists are concerned about the lack of police presence on the road, new research has revealed.

According to the survey, 83 per cent of drivers want to see more road patrols, with 79 per cent worrying about how long they would have to wait if they needed help.

The research from publisher Autovia found that 69 per cent would feel safer and more secure with more patrols – and police agree.

In an interview with Auto Express magazine, the Police Federation's national driver training and pursuits lead Tim Rogers, one of the UK's most experienced traffic cops, slammed 'invisible' policing on UK roads.

Rogers said: "People using our roads every day have the right to feel secure and be kept safe. They deserve dedicated, professional, well trained police officers, and it is frustrating to witness them being let down by roads policing that has become virtually invisible,"

In an extensive conversation, the traffic officer said cutbacks had had a negative effect on expertise in all areas of policing thanks to less training and equipment. He added that the Government's commitment to providing 20,000 additional officers was 'just putting back what they've taken from policing over a number of years, and with insufficient thought about the infrastructure that also disappeared as part of those cutbacks, including the investment in training'.

Rogers added that officers were missing out on finding other criminality by not getting hands on. He says that many who commit road traffic offences are involved in other crimes, which are not caught through sending a summons through the post.

"The standard of driving is pretty appalling, but the people you're going to moderate by sending out letters are those like me, who'll take greater care. Is that who we want to be targeting as a police service? Potentially alienating them, while the high-level criminals continue to drive like idiots?"

Steve Fowler, Auto Express editor in chief said: "With over 40 million vehicles on UK roads, the decrease of visible roads policing is a growing concern for all road users. Dash cams and speed cameras can help by identifying offences, but they can never replace an experienced police officer."

**COPY DATE FOR JUNE SEGMENT IS**  
**2nd MAY 2022**

## COUNTRY (RURAL) DRIVING

Driving in country areas is perhaps the most demanding of all driving since speeds are generally high and there can be a hazard around almost every bend. Observation needs to be particularly good and is the key element in the gathering of INFORMATION You need to repeatedly look as far ahead as you can - to see bends looming up in the distance, to see changes of speed limit signs, to see



pedestrians, horses, tractors, side roads etc. A good knowledge of 'observation links' will make your planning a lot easier. An 'observation link' is making an association between what you can see and what you can reasonably expect to happen as a consequence. If you see houses in the distance then expect a reduced speed limit. If the road has a line of trees down one side and the line curves in the distance, you know a bend is approaching. If you see a church in the distance then expect parked vehicles or pedestrians (particularly on Sunday mornings).

POSITION yourself for left hand bends towards the right hand side of your lane on the approach-but don't drive on or over the white centre line. Positioning in this way will give you an early view of any danger at or beyond the bend. However, don't position in this way if there is oncoming traffic (move back to the centre of your lane for safety) or if you might wrongly give the driver behind the impression that you intend to turn right at or beyond the bend. For right hand bends position towards the left of your lane for improved observation but only if there are no nearside hazards such as cyclists or pools of water. Never position yourself so far to the left that you drive over debris in the gutter along the roadside.

As you approach a bend consider whether you will need to reduce your SPEED in order to negotiate it safely using the 'limit point' as a guide. Don't immediately think of reducing speed by using the brakes. You may be able to lose all your unwanted speed by deceleration only. A good 'rule of thumb' to follow is that if you see SLOW written on the ground before a bend it will probably be a third gear bend. If there are 'sharp deviation' chevrons it will probably be a second gear bend. If the road is level and you know your speed is correct for the bend then take your foot off the brake and change to the GEAR (if necessary) that is most appropriate for your speed.

You are now almost to the bend - your position and speed are correct and you are in a responsive GEAR. If your timing has been correct you should have a few seconds to return your left hand to the steering wheel (assuming you changed gear) and prepare yourself to steer into the bend. Use your accelerator pedal to 'drive' through the bend at a constant speed. Do not increase your speed through the bend since this will make your car less stable on the road. Once you have a good view of the road beyond the bend then ACCELERATE away from the bend provided there are no hazards ahead or a reduced speed limit area.

## **'HUGELY CONCERNING' THAT NEARLY ONE IN EVERY 50 VEHICLES IS UNTAXED**

The number of untaxed vehicles on UK roads increased in 2021, taking the number up to almost one in every 50 vehicles.

New government figures reveal the percentage of vehicles dodging vehicle excise duty (VED) is now 1.9 per cent, up from 1.6 per cent in 2019, excluding motorcycles.



Figures suggest this means about £119 million of revenue was lost over the course of a year, though some of this will have been recovered through DVLA enforcement.

The government has concluded from its data that the estimated number of vehicles evading VED “was statistically significantly higher than in 2019”. The estimates have come from roadside analysis of vehicles at 267 sites across the UK.

This has prompted experts to call on the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to ‘step up enforcement’.

Nicholas Lyes, head of roads policy at RAC breakdown service, said: “It’s hugely concerning that we’re seeing ever greater numbers of unlicensed vehicles on the roads with the total number now standing at nearly three-quarters of a million.

“While we’d like to think the abolition of the paper tax disc back in 2014 isn’t responsible, the fact remains evasion has increased significantly since then to the point where a shocking two in every 100 vehicles on the road aren’t taxed.

“We urge the DVLA to step up enforcement and to do all it can to bring evasion down, as it is clearly not fair on those who do pay their fair share to drive on the road.”

When looking at the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on VED evasion, the government notes in its report that during 2020, at the height of the pandemic, it limited enforcement activity.

It also notes that the recent economic recession could be affecting drivers’ ability to afford VED.

The percentage of untaxed vehicles on the road had decreased from one per cent in 2007 to about 0.6 per cent in 2013, before spiking to 1.4 per cent in 2015.

## **PROGRESS?**

If you think that you are smarter than the previous generation, 50 years ago the owners manual of a car showed you how to adjust valves. Today it warns you not to drink the contents of the battery

## **FOWL PLAY**

A man was driving down a country lane and ran over a cockerel.

He knocked on the farmhouse door and a woman answered. “I appear to have killed your cockerel,” he said. “I’d like to replace it.”

“Please yourself,” said the woman, “the hens are round the back.”

## TEST PASSES

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

Sally Leach

Piotr Karman

Andris Jegers

## NEW ASSOCIATES

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

Simon Gambleton

Emma Perry

Louise Perry

## NUMBER OF OLDER DRIVERS REACHES RECORD LEVELS

New figures from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) show the UK has a record number of licensed drivers over the age of 70.

More than 5.7 million people aged over 70 now have a full driving licence, an increase of 10 percent since March 2021.

Fuelling the increase is the 'Baby Boomer' generation, defined as those born between 1946 and 1964. It also comes as the number of younger drivers has decreased, a decline blamed on the pandemic.

### Centenarians on the road

Analysis of DVLA data by insurance comparison website Quotezone shows the very oldest drivers are growing fastest in number.

The number of drivers aged between 90 and 99 has increased by 12 percent during the past year, with almost 133,000 holding licences. More impressively, the number aged over 100 has jumped by 23 percent. There are now 505 centenarians who hold a licence in the UK, with the oldest aged 108.

DVLA rules require drivers to renew their licence every three years once they turn 70. This is to ensure that any changes in health conditions are recorded.

### Premium benefits

There is an added benefit for some drivers aged over 70, according to Quotezone's research.

Based on average quotes, those aged between 70 and 79 pay £303 for their annual insurance premium. Once drivers hit 80, however, this increases to an average of £436 per year. This is still likely to be lower than drivers in their 50s, though.

Greg Wilson, founder of Quotezone, says that older drivers have a number of options to offset rising premiums. These include "switching cars to one with a smaller engine, to help lower costs".

Wilson adds: "Drivers who are tempted to put younger relatives on their policy should remember that they will not only be paying more, but if the younger person does have an accident in their vehicle, as the policyholder, they could lose their no-claims bonus."



## **MORE THAN 8,600 DRIVERS ESCAPE BAN DESPITE RACKING UP 12 POINTS**

Thousands of motorists are allowed to drive despite racking up enough penalty points for disqualification, an investigation has found.

Figures obtained by the PA news agency following a freedom of information



request to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) show there are 8,632 licence holders in Britain with at least 12 points.

Road safety charity Brake said it was “appalling” that they were not banned, and police leaders said laws should be changed to stop drivers being granted exemptions in court.

Points are put on a driver’s licence when they are convicted for a motoring offence, such as speeding (three to six points) and drink-driving (three to 11 points).

Most drivers are disqualified for at least six months through the totting up process if they accrue 12 or more points within three years.

But courts have discretion to allow offenders to keep driving if they are able to prove extenuating circumstances, including when a ban would cause extreme financial hardship.

The figures are a snapshot of the situation on September 4.

Jason Wakeford, head of campaigns at Brake, said: “It is appalling that any driver can remain on the country’s roads despite having accumulated 12 points or more.

“These dangerous repeat offenders have been granted ample opportunity to change their driving behaviour, yet continue to put lives at risk through their complete disregard for the law.

“If drivers who rack up 12 points aren’t banned, it makes a mockery of the system.”

Jack Cousens, head of roads policy for the AA, said motorists who get 12 points have demonstrated “continuous poor driving” and their licences “should be taken away”.

Andy Cox, who leads the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s work on fatal collision investigations, told PA he would “welcome the removal” of the exceptional hardship exemption, describing it as a “glaring example of where the system is out of kilter”.

The message sent by permitting it is “completely wrong” and “we need to change our culture”, he added.

An average of five people die every day on UK roads and 60 are seriously injured. Police believe 90%-95% of crashes are caused by driver error.

Detective Chief Superintendent Cox, who used to work on road deaths and transport crime investigation for the Metropolitan Police and is now head of crime and intelligence at Lincolnshire Police, said: “We don’t have to have that devastation, it is preventable.

*continued*

“More people in the UK die because of a road collision than they do because of murder or terrorism combined.”

Marc Jones, chairman of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, said drivers with 12 points should face an automatic ban. He agreed the exemption should be scrapped and laws reviewed while sentencing guidelines should be updated to ensure “consistency” across all courts.

Mr Jones, the police and crime commissioner for Lincolnshire, told PA: “The point system allows for people making mistakes ... so you’ve had your warnings, you’ve had your flexibility to account for any mistakes. At that point it’s wilful, and you should pay the consequences, which should be to have your privilege of driving – not the right but the privilege of driving – revoked.”

Patchy road crime data needs to improve to understand the true scale of the problem, Mr Cox and Mr Jones said.

The DVLA said drivers with 12 points are only allowed to keep their licence “in a small percentage of cases”, which mostly involve situations where disqualification would cause “exceptional hardship”.

The Government said it is for the courts to assess the evidence in each individual case to decide whether mitigating circumstances justify someone not being disqualified and that a defendant’s record is always considered when dealing with an exceptional hardship application.

Guidelines updated last year make clear “the test should be not inconvenience or hardship but exceptional hardship, for which the court must have evidence”, the Sentencing Council said.

## **SPEEDING FINES ARE DOWN, BUT CARELESS DRIVING OFFENCES INCREASE BY A FIFTH IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

Speeding offences in England and Wales fell by 12.9 per cent in lockdown-affected 2020-21 compared with 2019-20 but fines for careless driving increased by a fifth.

Statistics released by the Home Office today (Dec 14) reviewing offences up to March 2021 also show that the number of drivers who were penalised for using their mobile phone while driving fell by two fifths, while neglect of traffic signs (such as ignoring a give way sign) dropped by a fifth.

However, the number of offences for people not wearing a seatbelt increased by 17.4 per cent and licence-related offences also increased by 10.3 per cent.

Jack Cousens, head of roads policy at the AA, said: “While many heeded the calls to stay at home, some who ventured out on the roads tried to turn empty streets into a racetrack.

“During the first lockdown, several drivers felt that traffic police would be enforcing pandemic related laws rather than the rules of the road. Thankfully they were wrong, and the message was heard loud and clear.

“As we hope for some form of normality in 2022, it is the perfect time to hit the reset button on our driving behaviour. Slowing down, allowing more room for cyclists, horses and pedestrians and locking the mobile phone away are things all drivers must do to ensure safety on our roads.”

The number of people given a fixed penalty notice, driver retraining or court action for obstruction, waiting or parking offences also fell by 33.3 per cent in 2020, too.

## **A ROAD SURFACE THAT CAN CHARGE ELECTRIC VEHICLES ON THE MOVE IS BEING TESTED IN ITALY**

A road surface that could revolutionise electric vehicle charging is undergoing testing in northern Italy.

The Arena del Futuro (Arena of the Future) is a 1,050-metre long circuit built just off the A35 motorway about 40 miles east of Milan. Its purpose is to test whether it is possible to charge an electric vehicle's battery as it passes over the road's surface.



It's a similar theory to wireless smartphone chargers, but previous efforts have struggled to get going as there's such a poor transfer of energy, in part because of the distance between the car and the surface and also because of the need for it to be lined up accurately.

However, this particular research appears to be at an advanced stage and has major backing, including from Stellantis, which owns various car manufacturers including Citroen, Fiat and Peugeot.

Under current tests, an electric Fiat 500 and Iveco E-Way bus have been fitted with the technology to receive charge through the Dynamic Wireless Power Transfer (DWPT) system, with 'more than encouraging results'.

Anne-Lise Richard, head of the global e-mobility business unit at Stellantis, said: "This is a cutting-edge solution to provide a concrete answer to the issues of range and charging, both of which customers are concerned about.

"We're accelerating our role of defining the mobility of the future and, in this sense, DWPT technology seems to us to be in line with our desire to offer a concrete response to customers' requirements. Charging vehicles while they are on the move provides clear advantages in terms of charging times and the size of their batteries."

The technology works by passing a charge through wires in the road surface, with receivers on the cars able to capture this and use it to replenish the battery. Its developers say the technology will be connected, so it can pass messages to other vehicles on the road, for example about hazards ahead.

Earlier this year, a similar project in Sweden called Project Gotland was deemed successful by its organisers. Started in November 2019, it saw trucks charged when driving along a stretch of road, with it even working in snowy and rainy conditions.

## **THE FUNERAL**

A funeral was taking place for a woman who had henpecked her husband, drove her kids half nuts, scrapped with the neighbours at the slightest opportunity, and even made neurotics of their cat and dog with her explosive temper. As the casket was lowered into the grave, a violent thunderstorm broke, and the vicar's benediction was drowned out by a blinding flash of lightning, followed by terrific thunder. "Well, at least we know she got there all right," commented her husband.

## **GOVERNMENT PAUSES SMART MOTORWAY ROLLOUT AMID SAFETY CONCERNS**

The Department for Transport on Wednesday said it will halt the expansion of the motorways, where the hard shoulder is used as a permanent live traffic lane, until five years' worth of data has been collected to assess whether or not they are safe for drivers.

The decision follows a recommendation by the Commons Transport Select Committee which said there was not enough safety and economic data to justify continuing with the project.

In a November 2 report, the committee described the Government's decision in March 2020 that all future smart motorways would be all-lane-running versions as "premature".

Concerns have been raised following fatal incidents involving broken-down vehicles being hit from behind due to a lack of a hard shoulder.

The Government has pledged to improve safety on existing all-lane-running motorways, but relatives of people who have died on the roads have urged ministers to go further by reinstating the hard shoulder.

Claire Mercer, who husband Jason died in a smart motorway collision near Sheffield in 2019, said the Government announcement was a missed opportunity.

Mrs Mercer, from Rotherham, told the PA news agency: "We have had review after review after review into smart motorways and never once have they turned off the first lane while they investigate them.

"Just turn off lane one and you've got your hard shoulder back.

"You just need to throw one switch at eight control centres and you've got your hard shoulder back immediately."

The campaigner said: "They'd take lots more steps a lot more quickly if it was their loved ones that were being killed or maimed."

Her comments were echoed by Conservative MP Sir Mike Penning who claims he was misled when he supported the rollout of smart motorways in his role as roads minister from 2010-2012.

He said: "It seems illogical to me to decide to pause the rollout of new all-lane-running (ALR) sections on the basis that more safety data is needed but to allow existing ALR sections to continue to operate.

"Surely, the existing sections should be rapidly reconfigured to keep the left-hand lane as a kind of hard shoulder."

The Department for Transport said that for existing smart motorways and those already being built, extra emergency refuge areas and technology to identify stopped vehicles will be added where possible.

The department is committing £900 million to upgrade them, including £390 million to install 150 more emergency areas, representing around a 50% increase in places for motorists to stop if they get into difficulty over the next three years.

Carriageways that will now not be turned into all-lane-running motorways, pending the five-year safety data review, include the M3 J9-14, the M40/M42 interchange, the M62 J20-25, and the M25 J10-16.

*continued*

But work will continue on stretches that are already in construction, as they are more than half completed, the Government said, noting that stopping progress on them now would cause disruption for motorists.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: "While our initial data shows that smart motorways are among the safest roads in the UK, it's crucial that we go further to ensure people feel safer using them.

"Pausing schemes yet to start construction and making multimillion-pound improvements to existing schemes will give drivers confidence and provide the data we need to inform our next steps."

The conversion of seven dynamic hard shoulder motorways, where the hard shoulder is open at busy times, to all-lane-running motorways is also being paused, while alternative ways of operating them are being examined.

The Government also agreed with recommendations that emergency refuge areas should be no more than 0.75 miles apart wherever physically possible.

In addition, it pledged to "revisit the case" for installing controlled smart motorways which have a permanent hard shoulder and use technology to regulate the speed and flow of traffic instead of all-lane-running versions.

## **HELPING TO LOWER YOUR FUEL CONSUMPTION**

The ever-fluctuating (and often increasing) cost of fuel is something all motorists would've been noticing over the past year, and that's why IAM RoadSmart has put together their own top tips for driving and riding more eco-friendly, which in turn can help cut the amount of fuel you use.

With the cost of living rising, the average UK fuel prices for petrol at 145.6 and diesel at 149.3 we're on hand to help drivers save money on filling up and to help avoid some of those unexpected costs when it comes to servicing and repairs. Here you'll find IAM RoadSmart's top hints and tips to travelling more economical. After all, every little helps!

### **Greener driving**

Driving smoothly and anticipating situations and other road users as far ahead as possible will help to avoid unnecessary braking and acceleration. Maintain a greater distance from the vehicle in front so that you can regulate your speed, when necessary, utilising acceleration sense and without using the brakes.

When slowing down or driving downhill, remaining in gear but taking your foot off the accelerator as early as possible will reduce fuel flow to virtually zero, in most vehicles.

When accelerating, shift to a higher gear early, even in an auto you can try this where appropriate and always remember high speeds greatly increases fuel consumption too so avoid excessive speed.

### **Offload unnecessary weight**

Removing racks, roof boxes and bike carriers when they aren't in use will significantly decrease air resistance and improve fuel consumption at higher speeds. Try to avoid carrying unnecessary weight on your travels as this will increase fuel consumption –raising your carbon footprint.

### **Avoid busy periods**

If possible, try to avoid driving during heavy traffic. Stopping and starting in traffic needs the use of the first gear and a lot of fuel is used to get the vehicle moving again. So, if you can plan that journey to avoid unnecessary then you could save not only your time, but that expensive fuel as well. *continued*

## **Check your tyres**

Keep your tyres well maintained by checking the condition, pressure and tread depth. An underinflated tyre will use more fuel. When it comes to choosing new tyres, it's worth having a look at ones which are designed for extra economy. If you're unsure on how to check your pressures, then check out Tyre Safe who offer a range of resources for vehicle owners. However, it is always advisable to check the setting recommended by your vehicle manufacturer, and this can be found in your handbook. Consider changing to the high speed or load settings if you are on a long journey.

## **Avoid short journeys**

During colder months, as your engine is trying to warm up it uses more fuel for the first four miles or so. Your engine stays cold when you drive less than two miles, and your car will produce 60% more pollution than a warm engine. The National Travel Survey 2020 found 25% of trips were under 1 mile, and 71% under 5 miles, so could you consider leaving the keys at home and avoid those short journeys where possible?

## **Keep it low**

By keeping your speed low, you can reduce fuel consumption by up to 25%. Try pressing more lightly on the accelerator, often you can maintain the same speed with less pressure on the pedal. You'll soon see the mpg increasing.

## **Read the road ahead**

Look to the road ahead and plan your next move. Instead of being in situations where you find yourself needing to be heavier footed on the brake, try slowing down as you approach the red light or junction, if you can keep the vehicle rolling slowly all the better. It's also recommended to avoid hard acceleration when moving your car from a complete stop, or climbing a hill as it will increase fuel consumption.

## **Limit your use of climate control**

Air conditioning (AC) is the single largest contributor to lower fuel economy during the summer. Under very hot conditions, AC can reduce a vehicle's economy by a whopping 25%. Since air conditioning systems run off the engine, they often sap power and fuel efficiency in the process, so if you don't need it on then you may eke out a few extra mpg if you turn it off. If you do need it then it's worth using sparingly.

## **Richard Gladman, Head of Driving and Standards at IAM RoadSmart, said:**

“Advanced driving techniques lend themselves well to helping with fuel economy, observation, anticipation and planning. Smooth and gentle acceleration and early upward gear changes will also help you to save on your fuel consumption. It's also worth making sure you are not carrying any excess baggage (do you really need your full toolbox in the boot?) or wind brakes such as roof boxes/bars or cycle racks when they are not needed as they will also help to reduce fuel use. At low speeds an open window may work as well as air conditioning and will probably use less fuel, but this will change as speeds increase and drag rises. But of course, the biggest saving of 100% will be if we can cut out the short journeys – that few hundred yards to the shop may just be the start of my new fitness campaign.”



# 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

14th June 2022  
(To be Confirmed)

13th September 2022  
(To be Confirmed)

13th December 2022  
Christmas Quiz  
(with buffet)

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

Their details can be found on page 24.

# WANT TO DRIVE ON THE SKID PAN?



Following the group's successful "Skid Pan Experience" at the Essex Skid Pan in Kelvedon recently, we have booked the following dates:-

**Saturday 11th June 2022 - 1pm to 4pm (3 hour session).**

**Saturday 3rd September 2022 - 1pm to 4pm (3 hour session).**

The cost is £63 per person.

You will be using the skid pan cars which are both front and rear wheel drive. (please see our website for further details).

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

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

Please let Joy Grohmann have your name by email or telephone as stated below.

email: [pandjgrohmann@gmail.com](mailto:pandjgrohmann@gmail.com)

Tel: 01689 874409

**BOOK NOW TO AVOID MISSING OUT!**

## **STREET LIGHTS COULD GAIN NEW TECH TO HELP SELF-DRIVING CARS**

**After a successful trial in the Midlands, smart street lights could form part of digitising the road network across the UK.**

Street lamps will be key to helping prepare the nation's roads for a digital revolution.

That is the message from National Highways, which says new technology such as 5G will allow street lighting to be used for far more than just illumination.

It follows a successful 'proof of concept' trial, which saw intelligent street lighting installed at the M40 junction 15 Longbridge roundabout, near Birmingham.

### **lluminating the future**

National Highways says drivers will have 'been oblivious to the CCTV and communications technology hidden away in the street lamps' at Longbridge. This was thanks to the work being done at the same time as an upgrade to LED lighting.

Conducted over five months at the end of 2021, the trial (fittingly named 'Illuminate') demonstrated the potential of street lighting. The lights were able to communicate data back to remote office equipment and tablet computers.

Illuminate's initial success will now be used to help shape National Highways' approach to managing Connected and Autonomous (CAV) infrastructure.

### **Truly smart roads**

National Highways envisages the ability to communicate information to autonomous vehicles, such as speed limit restrictions, or warnings about hazards. Connected cars would receive these messages directly, rather than relying on drivers seeing overhead gantry signs.

The emergence of 5G connectivity allows the additional bandwidth to connect multiple cameras and wireless access points to street lighting.

National Highways' innovations lead for the Midlands, Lisa Maric, said: "These are exciting times as we progress on our Digital Roads journey with the growth of digital technology and the move to electric, connected and autonomous vehicles that will fundamentally change how we use roads in the future.

"National Highways is committed to ensuring we are at the forefront of this digital revolution and is preparing the way for the greener and safer roads of tomorrow.

"Initial trials such as Illuminate will help us identify new innovations, technology and methods to meet our digital goals. We were pleased with how Illuminate performed as a proof of concept and the useful knowledge gained as we continue to plan for the roads of the future."

## **LUNAR CUT?**

What does the man in the moon do when his hair is too long?

Eclipse it!



# How to get the best driving position

Sitting correctly when driving is imperative for safely operating a car, protecting you in a crash and minimising fatigue

## Arms slightly bent when steering

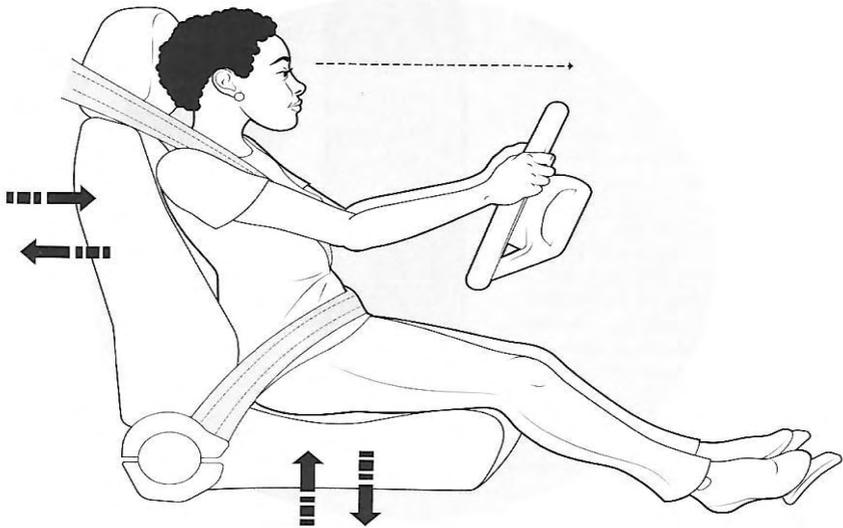
You should be able to rest your wrists on the top of the steering wheel with a bend in your elbows. If your arms are straight you won't have as much leverage for quick steering manoeuvres.

## Position seat so you don't overreach

Sit far enough forward so that your legs aren't completely extended when the brake or clutch pedal are fully depressed. You shouldn't have to overreach to operate the car properly.

## Headrest at ear level

To protect yourself against whiplash, make sure the bulk of the headrest is around ear level and it's as close as possible to your head in your normal driving position.



## Maximise comfort

Electric seats (particularly those with adjustable bolsters, thigh and lumbar supports) can be minutely altered to suit different body shapes, and finely adjusted to maintain comfort and reduce the risk of aches.

## High position for a better view

Seat height is a matter of personal preference, although a higher position will give you a more commanding view of the road. To maximise comfort, try to ensure your hips are higher than your knees.

## Wear your seatbelt correctly

Wearing your seatbelt incorrectly can cause injuries in a crash. It should fall over your shoulder, not your neck. If seatbelt height can't be moved, adjust the seat height until it's at a safe position.

## **COUNCILS CAN ENFORCE MOVING TRAFFIC OFFENCES FROM JUNE**

Local authorities will be given the power to enforce moving traffic offences from 1 June 2022.

This will allow councils outside of London to issue fines for breaking traffic rules such as incorrectly entering a yellow box junction, or making a prohibited turn.

At present, only authorities in London and Cardiff have the ability to enforce moving traffic offences. In all other areas enforcement is left to police forces.

All politics is local

The Government will now seek to implement Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

As confirmed in a written parliamentary response this week, regulations to allow this have now been laid before parliament. Statutory guidance will be issued to local authorities in March, with the new rules coming into force on 1 June 2022.

Where are Clean Air Zones in the UK?

This won't allow councils to instantly start dishing out fines though. Instead, local authorities will have to apply to the Secretary of State for an order to be made. This will then designate the council as the enforcement authority in its area.

The AA is now calling for MPs to have closer scrutiny of the Government's plans, given the experience of drivers in London. It is concerned that cash-strapped councils could see drivers as a way to 'stuff town hall coffers with easy money'.

Checks and balances needed

Research by the AA found that while only two percent of UK drivers received a fine for stopping in a yellow box junction, this rose to 12 percent in London. Other offences are also more commonly given a penalty in London than elsewhere.

The AA also highlights that London traffic penalty adjudicators, who hear appeals, have shown numerous examples of 'bad road layout, or councils ignoring or simply not understanding the rules of enforcement'.

Edmund King, the AA's president, said: "The experience of London with enforcement of moving traffic violations sends a clear message to MPs: the roll-out beyond the capital needs effective checks and balances. That includes identifying, analysing and rectifying the causes of fines hotspots. And, where a traffic tribunal adjudicator identifies a problem that is not just a one-off, the council should suspend enforcement and report back to the adjudicator on how it has been resolved.

"Alternatively, or better still additionally, first-time offenders should be sent a warning letter, as set out by the Government previously. After all, the object of enforcement is to get road users to understand and comply with directions and restrictions – with the deterrence of fines if they deliberately ignore them."



## WORD SEARCH ~ BISCUITS

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

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

|             |           |          |            |
|-------------|-----------|----------|------------|
| ARROWROOT   | GARIBALDI | LINCOLN  | SHORTBREAD |
| BATH OLIVER | GINGERNUT | MACAROON | TARECO     |
| BOURBON     | HAMANTASH | MARIE    | TIRGGEL    |
| DIGESTIVE   | KICHEL    | NICE     | WAFER      |
| EMPIRE      | KRUMKAKE  | PIGNOLO  | WAFFLE     |
| FLORENTINE  | LEBKUCHEN | RICH TEA | WIBELE     |

## NEARLY HALF OF VAN DRIVERS RISKING A FINE AND POINTS ON THEIR LICENCE FOR USING SMARTPHONE SAT NAVS

New rules surrounding smartphone use behind the wheel could be putting almost half of all van drivers at risk of a fine and points on their driving licence.

Research suggests 46 per cent of van drivers use a sat nav app on their smartphone. However, new rules make it illegal to touch your device while driving.



The updated rules, introduced in February, close a loophole in the law that allowed drivers to scroll through social media or take photos.

The research of 1,000 UK van drivers by Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles found almost half could be at risk of breaking the rules now if they update their destination or zoom in on the map, for example.

If caught doing so, they could face a fine of £200 and six penalty points on their licence.

While it's still legal to use a smartphone sat nav, your device must be safely secured to the dashboard or windscreen and must not obscure your view. It must also have hands-free access, either through a Bluetooth headset, voice command or integration with the vehicle's infotainment system.

In total, the research found that 93 per cent of van drivers use some kind of sat nav, whether that's through their phone, vehicle or a standalone product. However, almost half say they only use the instructions as a guide, often ignoring them to take shortcuts.

David Hanna, head of sales operations at Volkswagen Commercial Vehicles, said: "We know that van drivers rely on sat navs to get them from one job to the next, but it's important they do so legally."

Research from Fiat Professional revealed last week that the white van man is going green. According to its survey of 500 van drivers, more than a third are considering the switch to an electric vehicle, while 91 per cent said they think it's important for people to be as environmentally friendly as possible.

## ORIGINS OF IDIOMS

### Turn a blind eye

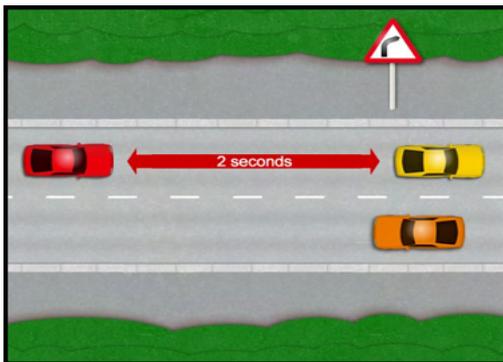
Meaning: To ignore something.

Origin: During the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, the commander of British forces, Admiral Sir Hyde Parker, signalled to Admiral Horatio Nelson to stop attacking a fleet of Danish ships using a system of signal flags. Nelson raised his telescope up to his blind eye and said, "I really do not see the signal" and continued attacking. After his success, Sir Hyde Parker was disgraced and Nelson became Commander-in-Chief of the fleet.

## 2 SECOND RULE EXPLAINED

The 2 second rule is a method used to gain a safe following distance at any speed and is also an easy system for all drivers to remember and to put into action.

The rule is very simple and easy to understand by using the description and diagram right. Remaining at least 2 seconds from the vehicle in front will provide a distance of one car length per 5 mph, at which ever speed you drive. The 2 second rule is



used regardless of speed because the distance between your vehicle and the one in front will extend the faster you travel. Using the 2 second rule helps to significantly reduce accidents or reduce collision damage if one occurs.

Using this rule provides not only a general safer way of driving, but can also help to save fuel, brake wear and paint damage as a result of stone chips occurring due to driving too close to the car in-front. Although the 2 second rule applies at any speed, it should only be used on dry roads with ideal driving conditions. Other rules are detailed below.

### HOW TO DO THE 2 SECOND RULE

You are driving along a relatively straight road. To estimate the minimum and safe following distance, allow the car in front (the yellow car) to pass a fixed object. This can be any object that is easy to distinguish such as a road marking or lamp post, although in this case in the diagram, it's a road sign.

As the rear of the car in front roughly lines up with your chosen reference marker, count to 2 seconds. If before you have reached 2 seconds your vehicle has passed the same reference marker, you will need to increase your following distance and try again. The 2 second rule isn't just for the car in front however. If a car is driving too close behind you (tailgating), you will also need to take their thinking distance into account by leaving a sufficient and safe distance between yourself and the car in-front.

### WHY FOLLOW THE 2 SECOND RULE

By following the 2 second rule, if the car in front of you brakes sharply, you will be able to slow down in good time, but also allow plenty of time for the car behind you to slow down. It's also essential to learn safe braking techniques such as progressive braking. Progressive braking once learned allows for safer driving and less wear and tear on your vehicle.

### WHAT IS THE 4 SECOND RULE?

The 4 second rule is essentially the same technique as the 2 second rule, except 4 seconds are used due to weather / road conditions. Generally if the conditions are wet, the 2 seconds should be doubled to 4 seconds to allow for longer braking distances due to slippery roads.

### WHAT IS THE 10 SECOND RULE?

The 10 second rule should be used for more extreme weather and road conditions where far greater stopping distances are required. Use the 10 second rule where roads are frosty, icy or have snow coverage.

## **RECORD NUMBER DODGE FINES AND LICENCE POINTS BY TAKING DRIVER RETRAINING COURSES**

A record number of drivers are swerving fines and penalty points on their licence by being allowed to take retraining courses.

Around 1.5 million motorists completed a course in 2021 to escape prosecution for minor road offences, according to figures from the National Driver Offender Retraining Scheme (NDORS) obtained by the PA news agency.

That's an increase of 200,000 on the previous year when 1.3 million took courses and is the highest annual total since records began in 2014.

Speed awareness courses were by far the most common type of retraining undertaken last year, attended by 86% of offending drivers.

These are offered to motorists caught exceeding the limit within the 'acceptable' range, and aim to educate them on UK speed limits and the potential consequences of driving too fast.

Other courses taken included ones that focus on motorway driving, the importance of wearing a seat belt and the causes of risky and inconsiderate driving.

Steve Gooding, director of motoring research charity the RAC Foundation, said: "On the face of it, the increase in the number of people doing courses indicates that our driving habits have got worse despite the Covid-induced travel restrictions of last year.

"But there's a message motorists need to take on board: at least 1.5 million got caught flouting the law last year so if you're tempted to speed up, remember the next driver to be caught could well be you."

With data from the Department for Transport showing that speed was a contributory factor in a quarter of fatal collisions on Britain's roads in 2020, educating motorists to stop them reoffending is seen as an important part of the Government's drive to improve road safety.

But critics have branded speed awareness courses too soft on drivers who have broken the law and a 'cash cow' for the police.

Courses are run by private companies and are offered to drivers at the discretion of police forces across the UK. Drivers are only given the option to take a speed awareness course if they haven't previously completed one in the past three years.

Because of the pandemic, most courses are now being held online, with virtual speed awareness lessons costing between £73 and £95, and lasting two hours and 45 minutes.

Many drivers consider this a better alternative to paying a £100 fine and having three penalty points added to their licence.



## **MORE PROVISIONAL DRIVERS CAUGHT WITHOUT INSURANCE, REVEALS DVLA**

DVLA data shows that unlicensed drivers and provisional licence holders account for a large number of those caught without insurance.

The number of provisional licence-holding drivers caught without insurance rose by 16 percent in 2020.

More than 14,000 drivers were stopped behind the wheel without insurance: a notable increase compared with figures from 2018.

This worrying new data was revealed by RAC Insurance, following a Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

### **Unlicensed and uninsured**

Information supplied by the DVLA showed those with provisional licences made up 14 percent of the 105,461 uninsured drivers stopped by police.

Some 15 percent of drivers without insurance were found not to hold any kind of licence at all. The data revealed that 23 drivers were aged just 13 years old, with 121 14-year-olds and 215 15-year-olds also caught.

At the other end of the scale, the oldest uninsured non-licence holders were 70.

The majority of uninsured drivers were at least full licence holders, making up 38 percent of the total. A further 31 percent had expired licences, whilst two percent were non-UK licence holders.

### **Effects of the pandemic**

Despite the substantial amount of people caught, 2020 saw a six percent decrease overall in the number of uninsured drivers. However, as the RAC notes, this can likely be attributed to the pandemic.

RAC Insurance spokesman Simon Williams said: “The fact the number of provisional drivers caught without insurance increased in 2020 may well be a symptom of the onslaught of the pandemic and the impact it had on learning to drive and people’s finances. The shortage of available driving tests due to Covid is also likely to be a significant factor behind the high numbers.

“It’s also the case that younger drivers, who are more likely to have provisional licences, pay a disproportionate amount of tax when they buy car insurance, which makes their already expensive policies even harder to afford. Insurance Premium Tax at the current rate of 12 percent adds a huge £120 to a young driver’s £1,000 annual policy, which may be further reason why so many decide to run the gauntlet of driving with no insurance.”

## **HUMOUR IN MEDECINE**

- ◆ A woman in labour suddenly shouted, “Shouldn’t! Wouldn’t! Couldn’t! Didn’t! Can’t!”  
“Don’t worry,” said the doctor. “Those are just contractions.”
- ◆ A man tells his doctor, “Doc, please help me. I’m addicted to Twitter!”  
The doctor replies, “Sorry, I don’t follow you ...”



## **MOST DRIVERS ARE SCARED TO USE THE HARD SHOULDER ON SMART MOTORWAYS**

Three-quarters of drivers avoid using the hard shoulder when it's a running lane and only five percent think smart motorways are safer.

Almost three-quarters of UK drivers deliberately avoid using the hard shoulder on smart motorways.

A survey of 2,000 adults by Kwik Fit found

73 percent don't drive on the hard shoulder (inside lane) of a smart motorway, even when signs show it as open for traffic.

This makes for a substantial increase from the 56 percent of drivers who answered the same when surveyed in 2019.

### **Scrap smart motorways, say drivers**

Drivers' main fear about using the hard shoulder is colliding with a stationary vehicle up ahead. A total of 31 percent cited this as a concern, with 30 percent saying they do not believe smart motorways are safe.

Only five percent of respondents thought smart motorways are safer than traditional motorways. This follows an announcement that the government will pause the introduction of any new smart motorways for five years.

Some 22 percent of motorists believed pausing the rollout is sensible, given the ongoing safety concerns. However, more than a third (36 percent) said that rather than being paused, smart motorways should be scrapped altogether.

Six percent also thought smart motorways were dangerous, but that the reduced congestion justified the risk.

### **Better understanding, but confusion remains**

The Kwik Fit survey did highlight that drivers feel slightly more confident about the signage used on smart motorways.

In 2019, 29 percent of drivers said they were uncertain on the signs that explained how to use a smart motorway. This has now fallen to 22 percent, but around one in five motorists is still unsure.

Roger Griggs, communications director at Kwik Fit, said: "Smart motorways have been a huge topic of debate and it is absolutely correct for the government to pause their development to both gather data and ensure that the UK's motorways are as safe as possible.

"It is clear that many drivers are yet to be convinced about the safety of smart motorways and therefore there must be clear transparency about all the data being gathered and the evidence on which future decisions are based."

## **NAMED ON TIME**

A girl was visiting her friend, who had acquired two new dogs, and asked her what their names were. The friend responded by saying that one was named "Rolex" and one was named "Timex".

The girl said, "Whoever heard of someone naming dogs like that? "Helllooooo...!," answered the friend.

"They're watchdogs."



## **HOW TO DRIVE SAFELY IN HEAVY RAIN**

**Slowing down and keeping twice the usual distance to the car in front are just two things to remember when driving in wet weather.**

In wet weather, stopping distances are at least double those required on dry roads. This is because your car's tyres have less grip.

The 'two-second rule' for leaving a gap to the car in front no longer applies. Instead, the Highway Code recommends drivers allow at least twice the stopping distance on wet roads. Further advice includes:

If the steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. This is called aquaplaning. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually, maintaining a good grip of the steering wheel. The car will regain its grip as the water clears.

Rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen.

Spilt diesel may make the surface very slippery, especially after a prolonged period of dry weather.

Take extra care around pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders.

Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards at IAM RoadSmart, 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 (tyres and wiper blades) 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."

### **More tips for driving in the rain**

- ◆ If you need windscreen wipers, you need your headlights. Automatic lights may not activate in bad weather, so make a sensible decision about whether these need to be turned on. Daytime running lights are not suitable in heavy rain, especially as your rear lights may not be illuminated.
- ◆ Keep your windscreen clean, the wipers in good condition, and the washer jets positioned correctly.
- ◆ If you approach a flood, ask yourself some questions, for example:  
Can you find an alternative route? If the standing water is more than six inches deep, avoid driving through it. If in doubt, stay out.  
What caused the flood? If it was a burst water main, the road surface may be completely broken up.  
Are other vehicles able to get through? If not, find an alternative route.  
Is the water fast flowing? If it is, do not drive through the flood – there's a danger your car could be swept away.
- ◆ If you drive through standing water, do so slowly. Press lightly on your clutch and add gentle pressure on the accelerator to increase engine revs. Do so without increasing your speed to prevent water from entering the exhaust. When you have passed through the flood, test your brakes to make sure they are dry and operating correctly.
- ◆ Remember, you could receive a fixed penalty and three points on your licence for accidentally splashing pedestrians. Do it deliberately and you could receive a court order and a fine.

## SOUTH EASTERN GROUP OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS

President: Bill Edwards M.B.E.

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