



Wigan Advanced Motorists
Registered Charity No. 518387
Newsletter 329

Welcome to the Jan 2012 edition of the group newsletter.

It's a while since the last edition of the newsletter and I have to report that our ability to recruit new associates for the Skill for Life programme has taken a serious downturn; this has led to a drop off in the number of new associates joining the group. This is a situation that appears to be reflected across other groups that we are in touch with, the reasons possibly due to the heavy rise in fuel costs and a reflection of the downturn in spending by the general public as a whole over the past year or so.

This means that the group's observers are not being utilised to full capacity on Sunday mornings – if anyone would like to have a re-assessment of their own driving in the near future, then please contact Gary using the contact details at the end of this newsletter. This drive check is particularly useful for anyone that passed the advanced driving test several years ago and who may have become a little 'rusty' since then.

I have included in this newsletter two articles from Gary – the first item is a request for a volunteer to take over the role of Group Secretary, the other is a reminder for payment of group subscriptions.

The group's committee wishes everyone a safe and peaceful new year.

Simon.

Group Secretary

John Bolger the current Group Secretary is stepping down and we are now asking for a volunteer to take on this role.

Duties are not very heavy, they include preparing minutes etc for, and attending the bi-monthly committee meeting, acting as a communication point and distributing information from IAM House to the rest of the committee or group, preparation of annual documents for AGM and Group Annual Return and the Charity Commission return.

While this seems a formidable list, much of it is simply a matter of updating forms on line and changing dates and names on templated documents. The Group has a dedicated laptop computer which has all the information, forms, links, lists etc. needed for the job and a full suite of up-to-date software.

When new information is needed, there is always plenty of support and advice from committee members who have a huge amount of experience and skill to put at the secretary's disposal. John is quite prepared to teach anyone the ropes until the AGM but will not continue after that date.

If no volunteer is forthcoming then we will have to consider the future of the group because it would be unconstitutional for us to operate without the officers which the Charity Commission requires.

We cannot run the group without a secretary, if no one steps forward by March we will then have to consider one of two options: either wind-up the group completely or merge with another local group.

Gary Whittaker
Chairman

Final reminder for subscription renewals



Group subscriptions are due on the 1st January every year and some are now overdue.

Your £12 (£18 for a family) helps us with the running costs of the group from room hire for Open Evenings and Observers Training Evenings, the costs of producing, printing and distribution of the newsletter, Group Insurance etc. We are also considering running some Driver Seminars at different venues throughout the borough over the next year to improve recruitment to Skill for Life.

All Observers both car and motorcycle and any member that attends for the Monthly Group Ride must pay membership fees to be insured by the IAM Group Insurance policy. By renewing, anyone that has passed their Advanced Test, car or motorcycle is welcome to come back for a 'Check Drive' of their driving/riding to keep up their IAM standards. This would have to be by arrangement by ringing the Group Contact number 07071 226693

IAM national membership is renewed annually either on the anniversary of your test date, or for newer members the anniversary of enrolling on 'Skill for Life', again all Observers and active members of the group must also be a fully paid up of the IAM.

Thank You if you have already paid your subscription, you will continue to receive this newsletter but we will now be updating our mailing list to paid-up and honorary members only.

Thank you

Gary Whittaker

Cold weather tyres: Save lives, cut costs

Benefits of cold weather tyres

Safety is one of the main reasons to opt for cold weather tyres, although the boardroom decision is often made more on the financial grounds of keeping delivery or emergency service vehicles mobile.

Continental suggests drivers are six times more likely to have an accident during winter. During the 'big freeze' at the start of 2010, more than three million motorists had an accident and 45% had two or more near misses.

According to GE Capital Fleet Services, almost half of all insurance claims for accidents are made during the winter months.

While cold weather tyres can't guarantee an accident is avoided, they offer much better performance than standard tyres during the winter.

Dave Crinson, national fleet sales manager at Michelin, says: "Cold weather tyres offer significantly improved levels of grip and reduced braking distances in cold, wet conditions as well as in snow and icy conditions.

"Compared to standard tyres, cold weather tyres can halve stopping distances on snow, potentially giving drivers the chance to avoid an incident."

Figures from the British Tyre Manufacturers' Association (BTMA) are more conservative but still show a significant improvement in stopping distances on the snow. A car fitted with cold weather tyres travelling at 30mph will stop in 35 metres compared to 43 metres with standard tyres (see panel right).

On icy roads a car travelling at 20mph will come to a halt in 57m using cold weather tyres compared to 68m with standard tyres.

Arguably of more importance from a safety perspective is the five metre difference on wet roads in the winter. A car with cold weather

tyres travelling at 62mph will stop in 65.7m compared to 70.5m using standard tyres.

The BTMA suggests motorists will adapt their driving style when there is snow on the ground or temperatures drop below 0°C, but are unlikely to drive differently in cold, damp road conditions in the winter as visibly they are no different to damp conditions at other times of the year. "It is potentially these latter road conditions which present the highest risks," says the BTMA.

This highlights the benefits of fitting cold weather tyres for the entire winter period – typically October to March/April – and not just during snow or ice.

Survey respondents who fit cold weather tyres say they would recommend them to other fleet operators for safety reasons.

Comments include: "The main reason has to be safety", "they really work and ensure increased safety" and "the better performance is remarkable".

Some respondents comment that cold weather tyres are necessary for rear-wheel drive vehicles. One says: "We have a small fleet of rear-wheel drive vehicles that became useless in the winter snow. Once these had been fitted with cold weather tyres the tendency to become stuck or lose traction was drastically reduced."

Mike Wise, managing director fleet at fleetyres24.co.uk, adds: "They significantly reduce the risk of accident damage, not just in high-speed incidents, but also in the far more common scenario of a driver scraping or denting a vehicle as a result of losing traction while manoeuvring in a car park."

The Highways Agency revises pothole rules

The Highways Agency has revised the rules on potholes in the road. Previously contractors were required to ensure that drivers were given a quiet, comfortable and even ride by making sure that any defects in

the surface of the road were repaired within a 24-hour timeframe.

However, the new rules state that potholes smaller than 15cm wide or 4cm deep are not classed as urgent for repair. The new guidelines refer to trunk roads and motorways.

The massive increase in potholes is a consequence of three severe winters with 2010/ 2011 being the coldest for 100 years combining with years of underinvestment in routine road maintenance.

IAM director of policy Neil Greig said: "This just seems to be storing up larger repair bills for the future. All large potholes start off as small potholes -- it's easier and cheaper to fix them early and reduce the risk to road users.

"The reaction of the Highways Agency to this crisis is worrying because it seems to be an attempt to switch their legal responsibilities to maintain safe motorways and trunk roads from themselves to their contractors, in the hope they will come up with something.

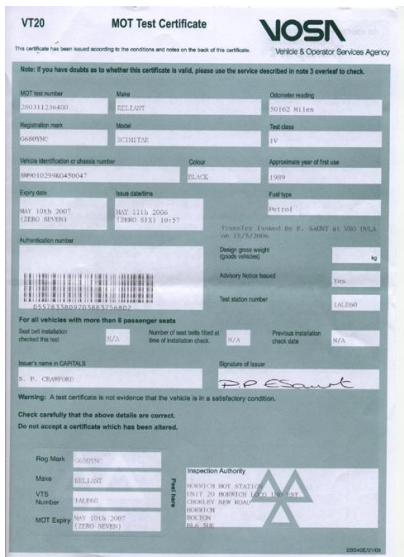
"The Highways Agency's roads are the backbone of the country's transport system which is why the IAM would like to see their risk assessment of this decision to be assured that motorists will not be put at risk."

MOT campaign wins new support

The Unite trade union, Drivers Edge UK and Autoglass have announced that they are to join the Pro-MOTe campaign launched last month to stop proposals to reduce MOT frequency.

There are now 28 organisations supporting Pro-MOTe including the AA, RAC, Brake, British Cycling and the RMI, as well as Kwik Fit, Halfords and Aviva.

Transport ministers have said they want to review the existing frequency of MOT testing which sees cars over three years old tested annually.



Matthew Mycock, managing director at Autoglass, said: "Extending the time between MOTs to two years makes absolutely no sense whatsoever.

"Annual tests are fundamental to guaranteeing the safety of the driver and other road users. They enable garages to trouble-shoot any problems on vehicles before they become a danger.

"There are certain things we all procrastinate over, but delaying MOTs should not be one of them. Working with Pro-MOTe, we are actively reminding motorists to keep their vehicle in a roadworthy condition to help make our roads as safe as possible."

The Pro-MOTe campaign, last month published a report entitled "Dangerous, Expensive and Unwanted: The case against reducing MOT frequency."

It showed that:

- if annual testing is scrapped the number of road deaths is likely to rise by more than 250 each year and serious injuries by 2,200 – and even keeping annual tests but delaying the first test from three years to four risks an additional 35 deaths on the road every year.

- any saving to the motorist in terms of fees resulting from the scrapping of annual MOT tests would be far outweighed by the likely increases in insurance premiums and increased repairs costs.

- 94% of drivers think the MOT Test is very (71%) or quite (23%) important to road safety – and up to 40,000 jobs in the MOT industry, including a large number of apprenticeships, would be at risk if annual testing is scrapped.

More than 40 MPs have signed a motion in Parliament (Early Day Motion 2308) calling for the proposal to reduce MOT frequency to be scrapped.

New MOT rules take effect Wiring, panel lights and HID kits now form part of the test

A RAFT of new rules have come into place on the MOT test.

Around a dozen items are now testable that were not previously part of the test. This is to keep in line with an EU directive that sought to harmonise vehicle testing across Europe.

New items that now form part of the test include stability programmes such as ESP, as well as newer types of tyre pressure monitoring and airbag malfunction –m essentially anything that switches a dashboard warning light on.

Speaking about the revisions last year, Andrew Cattell, a manager at VOSA said: "If a light is on, it means something isn't working properly – meaning there is something wrong with the vehicle. "

Additionally, new rules on lighting mean that only modifications and upgrades, such as HID kits will only be permitted if 'type approved'.

Checks on certain types of towbar electrics, battery security and in inspection for damaged wiring will also now be part of the test.

Swapping penalty points?

Up to 300,000 drivers may have persuaded others to take their penalty points for speeding. Drivers who look for someone else to take the blame and the penalty points for a

speeding offence face a one in eight chance that they will be reported to the police, new AA research reveals. Manual and service workers show significantly more scruple in not perverting the course of justice than professionals.

An AA/Populus poll of 16,961 AA members found that 12% of them would not only refuse to say they were driving at the time of the offence but report the point-swapping attempt to the police.

Overall, only 1% would agree to take the blame and the points for a driving offence. Another 82% would refuse point blank but keep quiet about it.

The survey found that 2% of AA members have had someone seriously suggest they take another driver's points, although 13% say someone they know reasonably well has been involved in points swapping, either as the offending driver or the one taking the blame.

The size of the points-swapping problem is best indicated by the 1% who have persuaded another driver to take the blame and the points for a motoring offence. That is equivalent to around 300,000 drivers among the 31 million UK driving licence holders. Just under half (49%) of AA members claim not to have received a notice of intended prosecution in the last ten years.

Regional differences show that nearly one in six drivers in Northern Ireland would report a request to take someone else's points, compared to around one in 10 in the North East, London and Wales.

Commenting, Edmund King, AA President, said: "Our AA/Populus poll suggests that the equivalent of 300,000 drivers have admitted that they have persuaded other drivers to take their penalty points. The poll also indicates that one in eight drivers might report someone to the police if they were asked to take their points. The AA suspects these drivers may be "passing off" penalty points to avoid getting banned or to avoid getting higher insurance premiums.

"Some drivers don't seem to realise the serious nature of this offence. Often drivers will be charged with perverting the course of justice which typically results in a 4 – 9 month prison sentence or a large fine. The best advice is to stick to speed limits to avoid detection in the first place."

AA Penalty Points Fact File:

- New drivers are disqualified if they get 6 penalty points within 2 years of passing their test.
- Other drivers are usually disqualified with 12 penalty points.
- It is more difficult to pass off penalty points if caught on a forward facing camera where the driver can be identified.
- A nurse was jailed for 6 months after trying to blame her former sister-in-law who lives in the USA for speeding after a DVLA investigation.
- In 2003 an army Captain who said that his car had been exported was convicted after a trial and was given a 3 month prison sentence.
- In 2005 a 60 year old from Bradford was jailed for 4 months after claiming a French friend was responsible for an offence committed by his daughter. Police found that the Frenchman had been at home with a kidney infection at the time of the offence.
- It is rumoured that students in some metropolitan areas have been "buying" penalty points for £150.
- Christine and Neil Hamilton avoided a speeding fine in 2003 by claiming that they didn't know who was driving. Similar cases involved Manchester United Football Club and Hampshire police.

Tough new measures to crack down on drivers who abuse the disabled

parking system - including a new Blue Badge design which is harder to forge - will come into force on 1 January, Transport Minister Norman Baker has announced.

Previously, Blue Badges were made from card and handwritten but from the New Year disabled drivers will be able to apply for an electronically printed badge, much like a driving licence. The new badge will have security features such as a unique hologram, digital photo and serial number allowing parking attendants to check for genuine badges more easily through the windscreen.

Blue Badge fraud is estimated to cost the UK £46 million a year and it is generally accepted that reform is urgently needed. The new badge is part of a wider crackdown on misuse of the scheme to ensure disabled parking spaces can only be used by those most in need.

Other measures include:

- shared administration between authorities resulting in faster renewals, less abuse and operational efficiency savings of up to £20 million a year;
- better customer service for badge holders, including being able to apply for and renew badges online using Directgov, as well as access to a new national helpline number. From April 2012 customers will also be able to report lost and stolen badges online;
- wider use of independent mobility assessments to determine eligibility. To support this local authorities will now have control of National Health Service spend on Blue Badge assessments; and
- extending the scheme to more disabled children under three years

of age and severely disabled Armed Forces personnel and veterans; and removing residency requirements for disabled service personnel and their families who are posted overseas on UK bases.

Transport Minister, Norman Baker, said:

"Motorists who pretend to be disabled to get some free parking are frankly disgraceful. They prevent real Blue Badge holders from using parking bays designed for those genuinely in need and they cheat the vast majority of road users who play fair when they park their cars.

"Our new Blue Badge will be as secure as a banknote and anyone thinking of faking it can forget it. We are also tightening up on enforcement and eligibility so there will be no way to scam the system."

Blue Badges provide a vital lifeline to more than 2.5 million disabled people every year by prioritising key parking spaces close to important services. However, increasing levels of badge fraud have meant those spaces are often full.

Earlier this year, the Government announced the most comprehensive changes to the Blue Badge Scheme for 40 years. The launch of the new badge is the last stage in a raft of measures which have begun to come into force since April.

Helen Dolphin, director of policy and campaigns at Disabled Motoring UK, said: "After years of campaigning for improvements to the Blue Badge Scheme, I'm delighted that changes that make the scheme fit for the 21st century have been introduced.

The new badge design will stop badges being so easily forged and new guidance to local authorities will make the issuing of badges fairer. The Blue Badge is a fantastic scheme and all these changes will help ensure the scheme will only benefit those it was intended for."

Government must act now to tackle drug driving

Road safety charity Brake and Direct Line Car Insurance are calling for the government to push through proposals on tackling drug driving, as a survey reveals one in nine young drivers (11%) has driven on illegal drugs in the past year.

The survey by Brake and Direct Line found that 3% of young drivers (age 17-24) said they get behind the wheel after taking drugs once a month or more. Slightly more young drivers are admitting drug driving than four years ago, when one in 11 young drivers (9%) owned up to this potentially deadly behaviour.

Brake is urging the government to follow through on its promise to tackle drug driving urgently. They are calling for long-needed reform, including:

- A new law making it an offence to drive while on illegal drugs, to rectify the current loophole. Currently it is only an offence to drive while impaired by drugs, meaning police must prove impairment to prosecute.
- Approval and roll-out of roadside drug screening devices, so police can test for drugs at the roadside and immediately following a crash.

Ellen Booth, Brake senior campaigns officer, said: "The risks of driving on drugs are huge, and the consequences devastating - yet a huge proportion of young drivers are taking this appalling gamble with their own and others' lives.

"We need all drivers to pledge to never mix drugs and driving, and we need the government to follow through with its commitment to tackle this problem. For too long the law on drug driving has been totally inadequate.

"We need a ban on driving with illegal drugs in your system, and we need roadside drugalyzers. The longer this takes, the more lives will be violently and tragically lost."

Meg Munn MP wins road safety award for campaign on driver eyesight



Sheffield Heeley MP Meg Munn has been awarded Brake and Direct Line's Road Safety Parliamentarian of the Month Award for her campaign to introduce regular eye tests for drivers.

In 2009, Meg was contacted by constituent Joy Barnes whose niece Fiona Buckley was run over and killed while crossing the road in 2008 by a driver with defective eyesight (see case study below).

This moved Meg to start a campaign for driver eye tests to be carried out by qualified practitioners using a scientifically-recognised method – instead of the current limited number-plate test – and for drivers to be re-tested at least every 10 years, at the same time as applying for a new licence photocard. The campaign also aims to raise awareness among drivers of the importance of getting their eyes tested at least every two years.

Over the past two years, Meg has lobbied government, asking questions in Parliament and leading debates. The campaign has received support from national organisations including Brake, Eye Health Alliance, Specsavers and The Optical Confederation, who recognise the evidence that the current regime is inadequate in protecting the public from drivers with defective eyesight.

In February 2011 the government announced proposals to make the current test even easier, by reducing the distance from which drivers have to read a number-plate to just 17 metres. Meg responded by working with Brake to call on the government to abandon its proposals and listen to public demand for regular eyesight testing.

During Road Safety Week 2011, coordinated by Brake, Meg carried out a media campaign urging drivers to consider whether their eyesight would meet the minimum requirements, including through an interview on BBC Radio Sheffield and coverage in the Sheffield Star and Sheffield Telegraph.

Meg intends to continue to lobby the government until appropriate action is taken to ensure all drivers have the required standard of eyesight for driving on UK roads.

Julie Townsend, Brake campaigns director, said: "As a charity that supports families devastated by road deaths and injuries, we recognise how vital it is to ensure all drivers have good eyesight. Being able to see clearly is fundamental to safe, responsible driving. We hope to see common sense winning through: to make our roads safer we need a scientific eyesight test carried out at the start of your driving career and regularly throughout it. We would like to thank Meg for her continued hard work pushing this vital issue."

Meg Munn MP said: "I'm delighted to have been awarded Road Safety Parliamentarian of the month. Having your eyes tested is such a simple thing, and we know it saves lives. I'd encourage all drivers to have their eyes tested regularly."

Author
Fleet News

Government should impose tougher compensation threshold for whiplash, says MPs

MPs have called on the insurance industry to abandon sharp practices in the management of car accident claims to curb the runaway cost of motor insurance premiums. The cross party Transport Committee has also called for the Government to impose a higher threshold for the payment of any compensation in whiplash cases.

In a report that follows up the Government's response to the Committee's March 2011 report on the cost of motor insurance, the Transport Committee warns that the spiralling cost of motor insurance is primarily the result of market dysfunction and, in particular, the escalation of uncontested claims for whiplash injury.

The warning from MPs comes in the wake of how Ford's no-fee accident management scheme had been targeted by so-called 'ambulance chasing' lawyers.

Louise Ellman, Transport Committee chair, said: "Insurers, solicitors and claims management companies have themselves driven up the cost of motor premiums by encouraging people caught up in road accidents they did not cause to claim for personal injury, car hire, and other legal costs.

"Although we strongly support access to justice, drivers should not be railroaded by cold callers into launching legal action. The insurance industry must abandon sharp practices that push up premiums such as passing drivers' personal data to other parties or taking secretive referral fees from solicitors, garages and car hire firms."

The Committee also concludes that the rise in personal injury claims is the main reason for the rise in premiums.

"Many of these claims are for whiplash, an injury where diagnosis is often subjective and therefore very costly for insurers to challenge," added Ellman.

"The threshold for receiving compensation in whiplash cases should be raised and, if the number such claims does not fall significantly, the Government should bring forward primary legislation to require objective evidence - both of a whiplash injury and of it having a significant effect on the claimant's life - before compensation is paid."

MPs also question the effectiveness of the Government's recent decision to ban referral fees relating to personal injury cases,

particularly once rules restricting the ownership of law firms are relaxed.

"The Government should ensure that the new legislation is implemented in a manner that will prohibit insurers from receiving referral fees across the board rather than simply in relation to legal action," said Ellman.

"Greater transparency is also essential. To expose the 'merry-go-round', the Government must oblige insurers to provide clear information to consumers about how and where they pay referral fees."

The Committee also cautions that numerous factors combine to affect the cost of motor insurance and that tackling any in isolation will not deliver a significant or lasting reduction in premiums.

MPs therefore call on the Government to:

- Review how well the 'pre-action protocol' and 'online portal' established to handle low value insurance claims have operated since their introduction in 2010. Results should be published within six months.
- Establish a cross-departmental ministerial committee on reducing the cost of motor insurance and publish a plan to address each aspect of the problem.
- Send a clear message to the insurance industry that it expects 2008 data protection legislation to be fully respected and impose stricter penalties for any breach.
- Initiate an investigation of cold calling undertaken to generate personal injury claims and then examine the legal and regulatory options for curtailing this activity.

Finally, the committee confirms that previous recommendations related to the cost of insurance for young drivers will be followed up further in a forthcoming inquiry on road safety.

Simon Douglas, director of AA Insurance, said: "We must kill the compensation culture that has sharply driven up car insurance premiums. The recommendations from the Transport Committee are a positive step towards doing that."

Car 'frost jackings' rise as temperatures dive

A cold snap is quickly followed by a rise in 'frost jackings', which sees thieves make off with cars that have been left to de-ice on the drive, complete with the keys in the ignition and the engine running, says Tracker.

The vehicle recovery specialist reveals that one car is stolen every five minutes in the UK and 84% of the stolen cars it recovers were taken using the owner's keys. Leaving the car unattended on frosty mornings could therefore be a costly mistake.

Tracker's Police relationships manager Stuart Chapman said: "Would you leave an open briefcase containing £30,000 cash or more on your driveway or outside the local newsagent on a frosty morning? The answer is undoubtedly no.

"However, unbelievable as it sounds, each morning many motorists leave their car unattended with the engine running, making it easy for thieves to drive off with it with no extra effort.

"Our research shows that thieves are opportunists and look out for cars on frosty mornings, shopping around for the most popular makes and models, as temperatures start to drop. Modern cars use inbuilt security that makes it more difficult to steal them without the keys, so every year thieves exploit the cold snap to target car owners who take the risk on frosty mornings."

Many drivers don't realise that police may even prosecute them, if their car is stolen while unattended with the engine running. They may also find that insurance companies can refuse the claim for the theft, leaving owners seriously out of pocket.

Chapman concludes: "We're urging car owners to use common sense, especially on cold mornings, when thieves could be looking for an opportunity to steal a car from under your nose.

"Fitting a Tracker unit could significantly increase the chance of a stolen car being

recovered, however, never leave your car unattended with the engine running.

"It may take a few minutes more, but a few simple security precautions can save a lot of heartache and expense if your car is stolen."

Tracker stolen vehicle recovery systems work like an electronic homing device. A covert transmitter is hidden in one of several dozen places around the vehicle.

There is no visible aerial, so the thief won't even know it's there. Unlike other tracking systems, the device works even if the vehicle is hidden in a garage or taken abroad, offering car owners the ultimate in peace of mind should the worst happen.

Author: [Fleet News](#)

RoSPA greets announcement of new dangerous driving offence

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is pleased that a new offence of causing serious injury by dangerous driving has been announced for England and Wales.

The new offence, revealed by the Ministry of Justice, will be taken forward as part of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill.

It will carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison, bridging the gap between the offence of causing death by dangerous driving, which carries a 14-year maximum prison term, and other dangerous driving cases, which have a maximum penalty of two years' imprisonment.

Kevin Clinton, RoSPA's head of road safety, said: "RoSPA has previously called for the offence of causing death by dangerous driving to be extended to cover causing serious injury, so we welcome the announcement of a new offence of 'causing serious injury by dangerous driving'.

"Serious injuries often cause life-long disability for the victims of bad drivers and can

fundamentally affect their quality of life and that of their families.

"To ensure this new law works as intended, it will be absolutely crucial to ensure that it is applied consistently in terms of prosecution and sentencing.

"We also believe that the offences of causing death by careless driving and causing death by careless driving under the influence of drink or drugs should include causing serious injury."

Author
[Fleet News](#)

Brake and Direct Line survey reveals three in 10 drivers text at the wheel

A survey has revealed that nearly three in 10 drivers (28%) texts at the wheel and one in 13 (8%) do this at least once a week. Meanwhile, one in 11 drivers (9%) surfs the web, emails, uses apps or social networking sites when driving.

In a large-scale study of commercial drivers, which monitored the impact of them texting at the wheel, their crash risk increased to 23 times that of a driver paying full attention, while studies looking at the impact of talking on your mobile at the wheel have found crash risk is quadrupled, whether you're on a hand-held or hands-free phone.

In the United States, death from distracted driving has been increasing and researchers put this down to increases in drivers using smartphone technology.

A recent Ofcom report warned of increasing levels of smartphone addiction in the UK by users who are unable to go without checking their phone even for short periods or through the night. Over a quarter of adults and nearly half of teenagers now own a smartphone and the volume of mobile data transferred over the UK's mobile networks has increased forty-fold between 2007 and 2010.

- More driver info signs to be introduced to cut jams

The Government is planning to dramatically cut the number of road signs on the UK roads as part of a major review designed to cut bureaucracy and costs.

It will be the biggest review of Britain's traffic signing system for 40 years and the Government hopes it will dramatically reduce the number of signs councils need to use by relaxing rules - such as by removing the requirement for some signs - including those to indicate the start of a pedestrian zone, to be placed on both sides of the road.

The idea is to cut red tape by allowing councils to put in place frequently used signs without needing to get government permission every time. There are also proposals to save councils money by allowing them to publicise their Traffic Regulation Orders rather than forcing them to pay for newspaper advertising.

However, the review also includes plans to introduce new driver information signage including signs indicating parking spaces with charging points for electric vehicles. More signage giving estimated journey times on cycle routes is also proposed.

Transport Minister Norman Baker said: "Sometimes the jungles of signs and tangles of white, red and yellow lines can leave people more confused than informed. This expensive clutter can also leave our roadsides looking unsightly and unwelcoming, so the changes will help councils cut the number of signs they need to use."

The proposals also include the introduction of a new sign warning lorry drivers that a road is unsuitable for their vehicles. This will help to prevent situations where lorries following sat nav systems use inappropriate roads, sometimes causing disruption to the local road network and delays to their journey;

The government plan hopes to reducing costs for councils wanting to use 20mph schemes by cutting the number of signs they need to put in place and making it easier to use variable 20mph speed limits where necessary, such as outside schools. Overall, it is hoped the plan will result in a reduction in signs requiring government authorisation of around 40%.

Wigan Advanced Motorists:

We meet at the Plough and Harrow, Shevington each Sunday morning. Congregate in the car park at around 09:30am for Motorcycles and 09:45am for cars.



From the South: Leave the M6 at Junction 26 (M58) and at the Orrell exit, turn left. At the traffic lights, turn right for Shevington, the pub is a couple of miles on the left.

From the North: Leave the M6 at Junction 27 (Standish, Wigan) and turn left up the dual carriageway towards Standish. At the end, turn right for Shevington, the pub is a couple of miles on the right.

Car parking is available at the rear of the building and there is also a public car park on the other side of the road opposite the pub.

Contact details: Tel: 07071 226693

www.wiganadvancedmotorists.org.uk