



Wigan Advanced Motorists

Registered Charity No. 518387

Newsletter 324

Welcome to the July / August 2010 edition of the group newsletter.

Over the past two months, Wigan Advanced Motorists' has continued to recruit well – mainly via the mature group of drivers and the successful seminars that we deliver in the Wigan and Leigh areas. Many of these associates will shortly be going forward to the advanced test and, if most are successful, we will need to recruit replacements shortly. If you know of someone who my wish to undertake the Skill for Life course, then point them to our website (at the back of this issue. Not only will new associates, driver or rider, be able to access the Sfl, they will also receive a ticket to undertake a session at a local 'skid pan' to experience the thrills that this type of event offers.

As we now have a new coalition government, many changes have been announced that many within road and traffic agencies are considering will be reversals of the tremendous improvements that have been made over the last decade on British roads regarding road safety statistics.

One such announcement from Government is the confirmation that a total review of all vehicle testing will begin later this year.

The announcement comes in the wake of a meeting between the Retail Motor Industry Federation (RMI) and transport minister Mike Penning to discuss MOT testing for cars and commercial vehicles.

Penning is concerned that the industry is testing low mileage, well maintained cars too often, whilst at the same time missing out on cars and light commercial vehicles that have high annual mileages.

According to unpublished Vehicle and Operator Services Agency figures obtained by *Fleet News*, initial failures for class-seven (3-3.5t) vans have risen from 47.9% in financial year 2007/8, to 49.3% in 2008/9 and then 50% in 2009/10.

For some time, the RMI has voiced concerns that these class-seven vehicles have arrived for their first MOT test with more than 150,000 miles on the clock.

It wants the Government to adopt annual testing from year one for such vehicles.

It has also been well publicised that the Government has and intends to further cut funding for roads and repairs already put in place by the previous Government.

There will be arguments for and against from all sides concerning these issues – I will be reporting on these in later issues as data and outcomes become available and evident.

Simon.

Fiat partners with IAM

Fiat Group Automobiles UK has announced an affinity partnership with the IAM, which aims to make advanced driver programmes available to Fiat customers, and offers Fiat Group cars to IAM members at preferential rates.

Under the terms of the agreement, Fiat and Alfa Romeo dealerships will carry literature and information about the IAM.

Special subsidised IAM advanced driving courses will be available to both fleet and retail customers. Linked to the MyFiat loyalty card, IAM members could additionally be able to benefit from other affinity partners and link into the driving, cycling and football initiatives.

“IAM represents an excellent partner into the Fiat Loyalty card programme,” says Paolo Lo Monaco, finance and business development director, Fiat Group Automobiles UK & Ireland.

“The IAM partnership will offer Fiat Group Automobiles the opportunity to attack both the retail and fleet markets, taking advantage of the IAM corporate and retail membership base, while Fiat Group Automobiles will be able to promote the IAM membership to its customers and other partners.”

Colin Paterson, director of marketing and communications, IAM, added: “As the leading independent road safety organisation in the UK, our objective is to reach as many motorists as possible with our ‘advanced driving’ message, and this agreement can only help to strengthen our own market communication, as well as encourage Fiat, Alfa Romeo and Abarth owners to benefit from advanced driving skills.”

Greener drivers before greener cars, says IAM Drive & Survive

IAM Drive & Survive calls for fleet managers and business drivers to invest in eco-driver training to improve their efficiency.

Simon Elstow, IAM Drive & Survive Head of Training said: “Companies no doubt consider green credentials when buying new company cars, but they may not realise how much more efficiently their employees could be driving them.

“Simple techniques such as advanced anticipation, intelligent route planning and speed control can increase your fuel economy by 50 per

cent, as well as getting you from A to B a lot quicker.”

“Ecolution, our fuel-saving driver training course, has increased the MPG of one company’s fleet by nearly 30 per cent: a huge saving in terms of fuel bills. Efficient driving also means reduced wear and tear on the car and a better resale value, and less frequent car replacement which is an eco-burden in itself.”

Employers and individuals, mindful of their CSR and environmental responsibilities, are increasingly seeing their car as a catalyst for green change. A forthcoming IAM report *Motoring Facts 2010* has found that companies are opting for more fuel efficient vehicles, with twice as many new diesel company cars as private cars being registered every year.

Mr Elstow continued: “While companies are looking into providing greener vehicles for their fleet, we advise them to do the job properly and look at how improving their business drivers’ skills could also save them money and reduce their CO₂ emissions.”

Guide to Eco Driving

With petrol prices on the rise, it has never been more important to save on fuel costs, educating drivers on how to maximise the mpg in the vehicles is becoming a top priority with fleets and could potentially save a company thousands.

We here at Fleet News know how important it is to be as economical with fuel as possible to try and save money, we have put together a few tips to economical driving to make your drivers aware of what small changes can effect fuel consumption.

Key Tips

- **Smooth Driving** – Avoiding harsh accelerating and braking can help to improve overall fuel consumption by around a third.

- **Try not to stop unnecessarily** – If you slowly approach traffic lights, queues of traffic or crossings, you could avoid having to stop at all which could help to save fuel.
- **Plan Ahead** – By planning your route well in advance you can avoid known congestion times, giving drivers a quicker and less stressful journey. Equally planning out an unknown route effectively will help drivers find their destination quicker.
- **Slim down** – Unnecessary weight like roof racks or heavy boot loads when not needed will increase fuel consumption.
- **Use appropriate gears** – Using lower gears when travelling over 40mph will make the engine work harder and use more fuel, moving up the gear box early could save fuel.
- **Tyre Pressures** – Driving on under-inflated tyres increase fuel consumption by 3%. Keep checking that they are at the required pressure.
- **Regular Servicing** – By keeping your fleet regularly serviced means the better the cars will run, the easier it will be on the engine which in turn reduced fuel consumption.
- **Windows VS Air Conditioning** – The use of air conditioning increases fuel consumption, having the windows down is more economical unless you are driving faster than 70mph, having windows open when driving at faster speeds increases drag.

As well as driving with fuel economy in mind, you can also help the environment and reduce CO2 emissions, gentle accelerating and braking can help reduce harmful gases as well as keeping the vehicle regularly serviced and making sure the tyres are at the correct pressure.

By implementing these small changes, fleet drivers have seen a significant impact on their fuel

consumption and ultimately saved the company money, which in today's climate is a top priority. Why not see if you could also save on petrol prices and compare today.

New report reveals road tolls could be a costly mistake



A new report shows that the company running the M6 toll road is losing millions of pounds, while the toll road has only brought about a marginal reduction in congestion.

The new report by Campaign for Better Transport said the M6 Toll has been a "costly failure" and the Government should not rely on toll roads to solve transport problems.

Earlier this year transport secretary Philip Hammond signalled an interest in using tolls to pay for future road building schemes, many of which are expected to be halted after the October spending review.

However, the new report shows the 27-mile M6 toll motorway has failed to provide any significant congestion relief for the original M6 and the price, which has been increased significantly year on year, is bad value for drivers who use the toll.

Despite the toll now charging motorists £5 on weekdays, 2.5 times the initial cost, the report shows that operator Midland Expressway Ltd, a subsidiary of the international infrastructure group Macquarie, is losing millions of pounds every year and has written down the value of the road to below its cost.

Meanwhile, M6 congestion is now so bad that the Government is considering spending another

£500m on it to deal with the problems the toll road was supposed to solve.

"The research shows that the toll road has failed to cut congestion on the original M6 and has made big losses for its operator. With Government coffers running empty, it is no surprise that politicians are looking at toll roads as a way to deliver funds for new road building projects.

"But our research shows that private toll roads such as the M6 Toll don't help motorists or the surrounding area, and don't make money for investors either," said Richard George, Campaign for Better Transport's roads and climate campaigner.

"Instead, the Government needs to spend scarce public funds on maintaining the roads we have and giving people good alternatives to car use."

The Road Haulage Association welcomed the report.

"In 2009, road users contributed nearly £50 billion to Treasury coffers", said RHA head of communications, Kate Gibbs.

"£32 billion of that came from fuel duty and VAT on fuel.

"If tolling were to be introduced on strategic routes then the estimated reductions in congestion would of course be welcome. In addition, their implementation would go some way to levelling the playing field in as much as foreign operators would, at last, have to pay for the privilege of using the UK road network.

"This is a case of swings and roundabouts. There must be a compromise in the form of reduced fuel duty for essential users of fuel". If this is not achieved, tolling to lessen congestion will be nothing more than a short-term solution to a long term problem.

"If hauliers are to be expected to pay the ever escalating levels of fuel duty as well as road tolls, congestion will indeed decrease as more and more transport operations are forced off the toll roads on to other untolled, and in some cases, minor roads.

"The knock-on effect of increased journey times and disrupted to delivery schedules will place the providers of transport and businesses which rely on an efficient transport system in an untenable situation".

Key findings of the report:

- the M6 toll road has failed to significantly cut congestion on the M6
- traffic which once used the toll is now returning, making congestion worse at peak times
- traffic has increased dramatically at either end of the toll, causing more congestion
- half a billion pounds of additional capacity is planned to relieve congestion on the M6 that the M6 Toll was supposed to deal with
- journey times on the M6 are only slightly better than before the toll opened
- outside of peak times, journeys on the M6 Toll are not much faster than on the M6
- average time savings were between 7 and 12 minutes in the opening year
- the cost of the toll has risen sharply each January, well above inflation
- the toll road's operators are exploring ways to charge more at peak times
- Midland Expressway Ltd has lost around £26 million a year since the toll opened
- revenue has been in steady decline, as traffic on the toll has been falling since 2006
- the toll road's value has plummeted, from A\$2.2bn in 2008 to A\$412m in 2009
- even when the toll was busiest (when there were major roadworks on the M6), MEL was still losing millions of pounds a year

Fleet News

The UK's uninsured driving hotspots identified

As part of the Stay Insured campaign, the annual list of the UK's top regional hotspots for drivers going without insurance has been released, with Barkerend in Bradford retaining the number one

position over the last 13 years. The top five postcodes for driving without insurance - based on research from Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB) over the same period include:

1. BD3 (Barkerend, Bradford), West Yorkshire
2. M12 (West Gorton, Manchester), Greater Manchester
3. B10 (Small Heath, Birmingham), West Midlands
4. B21 (Handsworth, Birmingham), West Midlands
5. B8 (Saltley, Birmingham), West Midlands

A closer look at the figures reveals significant progress in the fight against uninsured driving, with an overall 20 percent reduction in the number of uninsured vehicles on UK roads over the past four years, from 1.8 million to 1.5 million.

Although regionally ranked fourth, the West Midlands accounts for half of the top ten worst offending postcodes. However, the volume of uninsured drivers in the region is still lower than in previous years and the police are committed to reducing this further, not least in Small Heath, Birmingham which currently tops the 2007-2009 list.

In addition to the postcode rankings, data about the level of uninsured driving in each police region is available. The Metropolitan area is top of the regional list, with 1 in 10 vehicles estimated to be uninsured, making it more than twice as likely for drivers in London to have an accident with an uninsured motorist. The top five worst offending police regions are:

1. Metropolitan (11%)
2. Merseyside (10%)
3. Greater Manchester (8%)
4. West Midlands (6%)
5. West Yorkshire (6%)

Although there has been a significant reduction in

the number of uninsured vehicles on the road in the past few years, with 23,000 people injured and 160 killed every year by uninsured drivers it is clear that there is still work to be done.

Driving without insurance is a criminal offence and police forces across the UK are committed to reducing the numbers of uninsured drivers from the road even further. Using Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) technology, which links to information on the Motor Insurance Database (MID) - the only central record of 34 million insured vehicles in the UK - police are able to detect and seize uninsured vehicles at the roadside. Police report that 180,000 vehicles were seized last year, taking the total to more than 600,000 since laws were introduced in 2005, and last year 194,000 people were convicted in Court for uninsured driving - that is one conviction every three minutes.

In addition to vehicle seizure, the consequences of being caught driving without insurance are severe and include a £200 fixed penalty, six penalty points, £150 car recovery charges and the need for drivers to purchase valid motor insurance in order to retrieve the seized vehicle. If the vehicle is not claimed within 14 days - and 40 percent are not - it can be crushed or sold.

Ashton West, chief executive at MIB said: "The 20 percent reduction in the number of uninsured drivers on the roads is a significant step in the right direction, particularly in key hotspots such as Barkerend in Bradford and West Gorton in Manchester. The level of seizures and criminal convictions demonstrates that uninsured drivers are consistently being caught and removed from the road. But more drivers need to buy a policy to cover them on the road.

"We understand that times are tough and finances may be squeezed but motor insurance is a legal requirement. Even though the number of new claims reported to MIB is reducing, the costs

to the industry and ultimately the honest motorist are just too high.

"There are ways in which drivers can save on costs and stay adequately insured, such as shopping around for quotes, opting for pay-as-you-drive cover or taking advanced driving lessons. "The next development in tackling the unacceptably high levels of uninsured driving in the UK, is the introduction of continuous insurance early next year- which means that the Motor Insurance Database will be used to reach registered keepers of vehicles without insurance. This is expected to achieve the long overdue step change in reducing uninsured driving."

Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) lead on roads policing chief constable Mick Giannasi of Gwent said:

"The removal of uninsured vehicles from the road is key to maintaining safer roads and communities and a 20 percent reduction in the number of uninsured drivers on our roads is encouraging. More enforcement combined with better technology and the power to seize vehicles at the roadside is obviously having an impact. Uninsured drivers are more likely to be involved in other criminal activities and by targeting them and seizing their vehicles we are preventing them from putting other road users at risk. It also builds confidence in law abiding citizens who can see that something is being done to get uninsured drivers off the roads. The sooner drivers realise that the penalties for driving without insurance outweigh the risks, the safer our roads will be for everyone."

Bid to cut sleep apnoea risks



A leading road safety charity is calling on fleets to screen drivers for sleep apnoea before allowing them to drive on business, after research revealed as many as 700,000 people in the UK could be affected by the condition.

Drivers who suffer from sleep apnoea are prone to falling asleep at the wheel, which presents a major safety risk for them and other road users.

Brake is also calling for funding to raise awareness of the condition.

"We want to see professional funding for awareness campaigns, especially for commercial drivers," said Julie Townsend, deputy chief executive at Brake.

"We want to introduce screenings in companies before employees are allowed to drive."

Townsend made her comments at a conference to highlight the issue, which was organised by Brake and Cambridge Weight Plan.

At the conference the organisations urged MPs to invest in raising awareness on the condition that could save lives on British roads.

Obstructive sleep apnoea is a medical condition that makes falling asleep at the wheel much more likely.

The highest percentage of those suffering from sleep apnoea are mid-40-year-old men who are overweight.

The condition is treatable with breathing equipment available on the NHS. It is also treatable through targeted weight loss.

Brake urged MPs to help fund awareness campaigns and work with companies to put in place effective screening methods before drivers go out on the roads.

"It is horrifying to think that so many people who drive for work may be vulnerable to sleep apnoea," said Townsend.

"We need policy-makers to work with companies to ensure employees are not putting themselves and others in danger. But drivers themselves must also take responsibility."

Liberal Democrat MP, Norman Lamb supports the campaign and believes employers can do more.

“We must make sure we work with employers to make sure access to employees is available from charities like Cambridge Weight Plan.”

The road safety charity Brake and insurer Direct Line have joined forces to raise awareness of the issue, which is said to account for one in five fatal accidents in the UK.

Research from the two shows that nearly 75% of drivers admit to driving while tired - a massive rise compared to the 46% of drivers who said they did in a survey six years ago.

According to the Brake/Direct Line survey of 800 drivers, 29% of those questioned admit splashing water on their face when taking a rest in the hope it will wake them up, while 73% ignore safety guidance and drive for three hours or more in a single stint – Fleet News

Police clampdown on drug driving



Police to launch crackdown on drug-driving

Problem is more widespread than figures suggest

Officers to get hand-held drug detectors

The police are to launch a crackdown on drug drivers after a report said the problem is much more widespread than official figures suggest.

Officers are to be equipped with hand-held devices to test drivers to see if they are under the influence of illegal drugs. Trials of these hand-held

drug devices will begin in September with all police stations expecting to be equipped with them by 2012.

The move comes after an report commissioned by the Government stated that the problem of drug driving is 'out of all proportion' with official statistics.

According to official figures from 2008, the last available, 1,644 people were convicted of drug driving compared to around 71,000 who were convicted of drink driving.

The Government is now planning trials of hand-held drug detectors which could be rolled out across police forces within two years. The new devices will either take a sample of hair or saliva to check for illegal drugs in the suspect's system.

This will cut down on the hassle and time involved in the current drugs checking procedure that involves calling a doctor to come to a police station and take a blood sample. This has made detecting and prosecuting drug driving much more difficult than drink driving, hence the suggestion that the problem is far more widespread than the statistics say.

News of the trial comes in the same week as the Department for Transport revealed that drink-drive fatalities had fallen below 400 a year for the first time since records began. In 2009 380 people were killed as a result of drink-driving - down 5% on 2008.

RoSPA welcomes news of a reduction in drink-drive deaths

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has welcomed the fall in drink-drive deaths which has just been reported.

Provisional statistics on accidents reported to the police involving drinking and driving in Britain in 2009, published yesterday by the Department for Transport, show that fatalities have fallen by five per cent to 380, from 400 in 2008. It is the first time drink-drive fatalities have fallen below 400 a year.

Seriously injured casualties fell by nine per cent from 1,620 in 2008 to 1,480 in 2009; slight casualties resulting from drink-drive accidents fell by eight per cent from 12,990 in 2008 to 11,990 last year.

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety at RoSPA, said: "This reduction in casualty figures is very encouraging, and we are pleased that the message that driving while under the influence of alcohol is dangerous and irresponsible seems to be getting through. "However, there is still much more work to be done - 380 people did not return home last year because of a drink driving accident. Now we are in the second half of the year, our thoughts are turning to the fact that Christmas is a key time when it comes to road safety, and it is as important as ever to impress upon people that drink driving should not be an option."

With the cuts in public spending announced recently and being felt across the board, it is important that any reduction in spending on road safety does not reverse this trend. RoSPA is urging the Government to implement the recommendations made by the North Review, published in June this year, which recommended that the drink-drive limit is lowered from 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood to 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

The North Review also concluded that the drug-driving problem was "out of all proportion" to the official figures. This is partly because it is often difficult to test for drug use, meaning many cases go unrecorded.

RoSPA has welcomed news that the Government has given the go-ahead for trialling new drug testing equipment over the next two years.

Clinton commented: "The drink driving campaign has been very successful in terms of reducing the acceptability of drink driving in society; we hope that before too long, the issue of drug driving will be brought front and centre, and that people will begin to see this selfish and dangerous practice as equally unacceptable." [Fleet News](#)

Charity launches international online road safety library

Brake, the road safety charity has announced the launch of its Road Safety Library, an online resource with free access for anyone with an interest in road safety.

Aimed at professionals working in road safety around the world, the purpose of the library is to share research and best practice, helping organisations develop and deliver effective interventions to prevent deaths and injuries on roads.

[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