

## Bringing you important news for business drivers - April 2011

### IMPAIRMENT CRACK DOWN

In the last e-newsletter we mentioned the steps that are being taken to establish a reliable impairment test for drug-using drivers but this is part of a bigger picture, in which a raft of measures will make it even harder for drink drivers to avoid the long arm of the law too.

Imminent changes include:

- No option for a blood test for those tested up to 40% over the limit, due to far more accurate breath test equipment.
- Mandatory remedial training followed by a driving assessment for those caught well over the limit.
- Use of portable evidential breath testing equipment, speeding up the process and freeing up police time.
- The closure of legal loophole allowing high risk offenders to delay medical examinations.
- Streamlining the procedure for testing drink drivers in hospital.

We realise that this not a major problem for those managing business drivers directly but it may be useful information for other drivers that have access to company vehicles.

### MAJOR REPORT ON DRIVER DISTRACTION

The World Health Organisation has recently published a report on the impact of distractions on driver safety, in particular those related to the use of mobile phones [See [http://www.who.int/violence\\_injury\\_prevention/publications/road\\_traffic/distracted\\_driving\\_en.pdf](http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/road_traffic/distracted_driving_en.pdf) ]



They unequivocally state that the use of mobile phones whilst driving, whether hands free or not, leads to drivers being four times more likely to be involved in a crash.

As anybody who has attended an AA DriveTech Mobile Phone Awareness

course will know, it's the cognitive distraction factor that makes using a mobile phone whilst driving so risky, not the physical aspects.

## **FUEL MISERS**

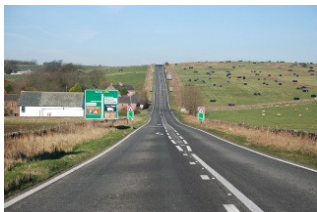
In a recent poll, 64% of 2,700 respondents said that they had changed their driving behaviour to stem escalating fuel costs. If people really are doing what they say then road safety should benefit as well. If drivers really are lifting off the accelerator and thinking about their driving more, it can only have a positive effect on safety across the board.

From a business point of view this makes complete sense. Providing employees are not expected to achieve an unrealistic number of appointments or long distances they should be able to slow down, chill out and save whoever is paying the fuel bills a lot of money.

## **250 CHARACTER TIP OF THE MONTH #1**

Driving tired can be fatal. Avoid fatigue by sleeping well, eating regularly and maintaining fluid level. Opening the window won't work! Stop every 2 hours; walk around; have a caffeine drink. Always tired? It could be narcolepsy – see your doctor.

## **BUSINESS MILEAGE CREEPING UP?**



Amid fears that the fragile post recession period is putting added strain on customer/supplier relationships, it seems that business drivers are piling on the mileage in an effort to impress. A sizable proportion of respondents in a recent survey admitted that they feel under pressure to have more face to face meetings to bolster client relationships, with the inevitable hike in vehicle running costs that accompany them.

Whilst there is obviously nothing wrong with this approach, it's even more important than ever to encourage realistic journey planning and regular breaks from driving.

## **DRIVING ABROAD THIS SUMMER?**

For those of you planning summer holidays that involve driving abroad we thought these tips might be useful:

- Take both the photocard and paper counterpart elements of your valid driving licence
- Take the original vehicle registration document and, if you are not the owner, a letter of authorisation to use the vehicle

- Take the insurance certificate
- Ensure you have adequate breakdown cover
- If you have serious problem the pan-European emergency call number is 121
- Never risk using a mobile phone whilst driving, even in countries where it's not illegal to do so
- Always take, and use, any eyewear that you have been prescribed
- Every time you re-start after a stop, remember which side of the road to drive on
- Display a GB sticker, even if you have number plates containing the Euro symbol
- Reflective jackets and warning triangles are a mandatory requirement in many European countries now – see [www.theaa.com/motoring\\_advice/overseas/countrybycountry.html](http://www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas/countrybycountry.html) for further details of these and other legal requirements
- If there is any chance that you will be driving on the right at night, you must fit beam deflectors to avoid dazzling oncoming traffic
- The use or possession of devices to detect the use of speed-checking radar is illegal in many countries and can lead to an on the spot fine. For complete peace of mind you should de-active the 'Fixed speed camera Point Of Interest' function on your sat nav too, for the same reasons.

Finally, it's worth noting that the national speed limit on highways in Spain has just been reduced from 120 KPH [75 mph] to 110 KPH [68 mph].

## **MORE FUEL THEFT**

According to the RHA, six out of ten members have experienced fuel theft, either from their vehicles or storage tanks in the past 12 months.



Whilst this might not be seen as directly driver safety-related, it could be if the fuel is siphoned from the vehicle itself, as happens in 50% of cases, and the vehicle then breaks down as a result. It could then become vulnerable to damage by other road users or, depending upon the location, even cargo theft.

Apparently quantities going missing are on the up too – until recently a theft was typically in the order of 100 to 600 litres. Now the thieves are getting greedier, with 1000 to 1500 litres being the norm. Also, it seems that anti-siphoning equipment is having little effect – thieves have no issue with cutting off the cap or filler neck, resulting in the owner having to pay for an entirely new tank in many cases.

## **COMPLIANCE ISSUE**

Operators and drivers who ordered their first digital tachograph company and driver cards back in 2006, when digital tachographs were first introduced, are being reminded that they are due to expire this year.

Renewal applications can be made to the DVLA up to three months before the cards expire.

## **250 CHARACTER TIP OF THE MONTH #2**

Distraction can kill. Let mobile go to voicemail. Never text or adjust sat nav when driving. If driving situation becomes high risk, turn off radio/music, tell passenger to shut up! Secure loads properly to reduce noise, vibration and irritation.

## **THE TOWN WITH A MISSION**

The 45 residents of the town of Speed in Australia were so enthused by a presentation on road safety given by the Victoria Transport Accident Commission that they agreed to change the town's name to SpeedKills.

Australia is experiencing the same problem as the UK – the most dangerous roads in terms of serious injuries are out in the countryside, and SpeedKills certainly qualifies on that count.

## **...and news from AA DriveTech itself:**

### **AA DRIVETECH CLIENT WINS MAJOR SAFETY AWARD**

Johnson & Johnson has received a Prince Michael International Road Safety Award for its global SAFE Fleet programme.

In the UK AA DriveTech has assisted in deploying the programme, which globally has seen a 37% reduction in crashes per million miles driven.

## **COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SHOW**



AA DriveTech had an exhibition stand at the recent Commercial Vehicle Show at the NEC, in order to promote its rapidly expanding portfolio of Driver CPC courses. This was the first time the AA had exhibited at this show and, such was the interest, that employees

manning the stand barely had time to catch breath during the three days.

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