



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

## Bringing you important news for business drivers ~ JUNE 2008

### Licence to kill

Driving licences are back in the news again, after several high profile reports in the media about a resurgence in fake licences, some of which it is believed could be being used by those who drive for work. Several rogue websites are offering to supply fake licences at around £350 a time and they're all but indistinguishable from the real thing. "The fleet industry needs to be aware that these websites exist", said DCI Paul Lambotte, Head of the Police National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service.

The only way to ensure a licence is genuine is to carry out a DVLA check, something which DriveTech has been doing for several years now.



Incidentally, DriveTech has extended its service and can now offer

- Notification of expired vocational licences (LGV, minibus, coach)
- Notification of imminent licence expiration (3 months to go)

For any enquiries regarding DriveTech's licence checking service, please contact your account manager or email [tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk) with your contact details.

### The customer is always right

As some of our readers will know, DriveTech canvasses the opinion of its customers on an annual basis and always tries to implement product and service refinements in response. These are some of the initiatives that have come about as a result:

- A regular Fleet Customer Newsletter. You're reading it! Please feel free to circulate any information in it to your drivers. Equally, if you want us to stop sending it, drop us an email at [unsubscribefleet@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:unsubscribefleet@drivetech.co.uk)
- Mini Workshops - we're introducing a series of mini workshops, or 'Pit Stops' as we've termed them - that we can deliver at clients' premises during the day e.g. the lunch hour period or break periods. These are on a variety of driver safety-related topics and are equally applicable to company car or non company car drivers.
- In response to the escalating price of fuel, we're strongly advocating our Eco Real World Combination course, as a result of which drivers can expect to see a fuel consumption improvement of at least 10%.
- Although 58% of you said you always received your training reports promptly, 37% said that you 'often' received them promptly, which wasn't good enough for us. As a result, we've re-designed the form and it is now sent electronically to

both drivers and client contacts. In the long term we are intending to have reports visible in real time online.

- We've improved the way that we generate our joining instructions and these are now emailed directly to the course participant.
- We've improved the way that we communicate and record client objectives when it comes to implementing risk management programmes, so that everybody in the process is aware, not just those who have direct customer responsibility.

## The eyes don't have it

According to Specsavers, 30% of motorists would fail the eyesight test. This is particularly worrying when you consider that you can legally drive if you are blind in one eye and have tunnel vision in the other! Although over 90% of motorists think that regular eye checks are a good thing, many of them actually fail to follow their own advice.



Although it is obviously incumbent upon employers to encourage their driving employees to have two yearly eyesight checks, it is just as important to point out that they need to be mindful that there is a 3 in 10 chance of the guy coming the other way not being able to see you. Good defensive driving demands that you compensate for the inadequacy of others, whilst not letting it get to you!

## They don't care

A care worker was recently convicted of causing death by dangerous driving after he ran into and killed an eighty year old motorist, although his employer has escaped prosecution, despite being heavily criticized by a judge in a recent court case for "leaving no time for him to get from job to job".

"The company you worked for gave no leeway between you seeing one patient and another", continued the judge. "It put pressure on the employee to take shortcuts either with his patients time or, sadly, to drive too quickly to get to another appointment."

The company may have got away with it this time but are paying a heavy price in terms of negative publicity in the trade, regional and electronic media.

## Driving up standards?

Many of you will have seen the press reports on the proposed overhaul of the driving test, in an attempt to reverse the tragic trend of adolescent deaths and serious injuries. However, part of the same announcement made reference to the possible introduction of courses and qualifications specifically aimed at business drivers. The DfT press release states:



'New opportunities to take extra training post test; working with the insurance industry and employers in the driving for work sector we will develop new courses and qualifications to be taken after the driving test that could lead to lower premiums and a better chance of securing a career in the driving for work sector.'

DriveTech is ahead of the game here, having already developed, in co-operation with RoSPA, the ROADTest product (RoSPA Occupational Advanced Driving Test).

Any customers wishing to explore this opportunity and thus be ahead of the game should email [tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:tellmemore@drivetech.co.uk)

### Hot topic

We've had a few tantalizing glimpses of spring sunshine in most of the country but nothing to really get hot under the collar about. Here are some tips in preparation for the summer that may yet come:

- Modern cars rarely have problems with overheating, so if you see a puddle of water under the car it's more likely to be the aircon condenser overflow. If you have to, don't EVER release the radiator filler cap if the engine has been running.
- Do make sure tyre inflation pressures are as they should be. Warm weather puts even more strain on tyres and they become more puncture prone if under-inflated but always check them cold.
- If it's really hot, beware of the really black, often newly laid, tarmac surface on some roads which is prone to partially melting. Strangely you will find very little grip available on a tarmac surface in this state and it's akin to driving on ice. Keep up an active scanning routine, look for changes in surface colour or reflections and keep the speed down.
- Summer evenings are great for leisure pursuits so, particularly in rural areas, keep a look out for joggers, walkers, horse riders and dogs.
- Always carry some form of fluid in the car for yourself, in case you're trapped in traffic for a long time, and even on a traffic-free journey, make sure you re-hydrate at least every two hours to fight off fatigue and aid concentration.
- Make sure the washer bottle has some form of proper additive to help remove fly squash.
- Use the aircon sparingly – it's hard on fuel consumption.
- Temperatures in vehicles left parked in full sun for over an hour or two can exceed 40 degrees so don't leave anything in the cabin which can melt and allow the temperature to drop before driving off.
- Make sure you have sunglasses handy, particularly for the mornings and evenings.
- If you do have the misfortune to break down, try and park the vehicle somewhere safe and warn oncoming traffic if necessary. On motorways always leave the vehicle and retreat to a safe point well away from the hard shoulder (where the average life expectancy is 30 minutes).
- You will inevitably come across caravans, particularly on Friday and Sunday evenings, so make sure they can see you, and you can see the road ahead, by staying well back and as close to the crown of the road as is safe to do on right hand bends and well to the left on left hand bends, rather than tucking back in their blind spot. Give them plenty of time and space.....and don't get overheated yourself.

### Parent power.

The latest Think! Road safety campaign is aimed at parents, whose bad driving habits are thought to have a major influence on the behavior of the drivers of the future.....their children.



“Copycat learning is one of the key ways that children form skills and establish their behaviour” says Liz Brooker from the Local Authority Road Safety Officers Association, “so setting a bad

example when it comes to road safety can have serious consequences.”

You might think that this has little to do with occupational road risk but one day most children will be driving for at least part of career and, as parents, we have a responsibility to contribute to the development of this vital life skill.

### **On the receiving end**

A paramedic who was injured after a van driver overshot a red light and collided with his ambulance, as received a £62,856 payout. North East Ambulance Service paramedic David Fenwick, 55, suffered a serious shoulder injury that required two operations. At the time of the accident in June 2005 he was in the passenger seat of the ambulance.

Although we are not told the cost of the operations, an educated guess would put them at £5,000 each, all of which the NHS or other medical provider can claim back against the insurer, which also presumably picked up the tab for the personal injury compensation.

Hardly surprising then that insurance premiums are once again on the ascendant!

### **Issued by the DriveTech Communications Department.**

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