

## Bringing you important news for business drivers - June 2010

### DISEASE RISK

Some of you may have read in the national media about the report from the Health Protection Agency, which suggests that 20% of all reported cases of Legionnaires' Disease in England and Wales might be linked to bacteria in windscreen washer reservoirs.



Apparently a genuine risk exists that, whilst topping up the reservoir, one can inhale the bacterium. It is also possible to be infected by using the washers when the windows are open, particularly if you're on the move at the time. Research has confirmed that professional drivers are five times more likely to contract the disease.

There is however an easy answer – use proper windscreen washer additive. It's been proven to eliminate the bacterium.

### INCH PERFECT

There is a little known ruling in the 2004 Traffic Management Act that requires motorists to park no further than half a metre from the kerb, in the interests of keeping the traffic flowing in narrow streets.

Although rarely enforced, unless in exceptional circumstances, Stoke on Trent City Council is throwing the book at anybody who doesn't comply and fines of between £30 and £70 are possible. Be warned – it could catch on.

### 250 CHARACTER TIP OF THE MONTH No. 1

Tyre pressures always matter but especially in summer. Inflate above correct level on the forecourt but check with your own gauge and then re-adjust. Correct pressure helps handling, braking, economy + slows heat build up that can cause punctures.

### HAYFEVER HAZARD

A study by Kwik Fit suggests that during May and June in the UK a total of 9.3 million miles will be driven by hayfever sufferers with their eyes shut as a result of sneezing. Apparently 28% of all drivers suffer from this seasonal affliction and, as pollen counts hit a record high, it's worth re-iterating the warning about taking medication to prevent the effects. Try to avoid remedies that cause drowsiness.



As we've said in these pages in the past, always read the label and, if in doubt, seek professional advice about how over-the-counter drugs may affect you as an individual driver.

### WORRIED OF WHITEHALL

Thanks to sterling work by the fleet media, there is a strong possibility that two major government departments will invoke regular licence checking procedures for those who drive for work reasons.

As a result of pressure from Business Car magazine, ex Government Minister Stephen Ladyman brought ACFO's best practice guide on licence checking to the attention of the then Minister of State for Energy and Climate Change, Joan Ruddock, which quickly led to Transport Secretary of the day Paul Clark undertaking to adopt the practice within the Department of Transport.

We now await a similar undertaking from the new Secretary of State for Transport, Philip Hammond. AA DriveTech is ready and waiting to help Mr. Hammond!

### **HOLE LOT OF TROUBLE**

According to Surrey County Council there has been an epidemic of gully and drain cover thefts this year – 536 have gone missing so far. This obviously presents a potential hazard for all drivers, particularly those in small or medium size vehicles, where the chances of severe suspension and tyre damage is a very real prospect.



All we can advise is to be extra cautious in Surrey and look well ahead to try and spot surface discolourations that might suggest a missing cover in the road ahead. Treat every blind bend as if it's concealing such a hazard and obviously report any such occurrence to the authorities to prevent another incident behind you.

### **250 CHARACTER TIP OF THE MONTH No. 2**

Journey planning pays. Check traffic online before leaving on [www.highways.gov.uk/traffic/traffic.aspx](http://www.highways.gov.uk/traffic/traffic.aspx). Use mobile phone traffic info services and radio reports. Select RDS on radio for local info. Don't rely on sat nav – always take a map book too.

### **AA DRIVETECH EXPERTISE TO THE FORE**

One of AA DriveTech's many subject experts, Jason Vallint, is taking part in the SMMT's launch of its Ultra Low Carbon Truck Strategy in London on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Jason will be one of a select few on a panel that will contribute to the debate and Q and A session that concludes the event.

### **VOLVO PROMISE**

"Nobody will be killed or seriously injured in a new Volvo by the year 2020". So said the firm's chief operating officer recently, having revealed a host of new, clever active and passive safety systems shortly to find their way into all of the Swedish company's new models.

An ADAS (Advanced Driver Assist System) equipped Volvo plus an AA DriveTech trained driver would appear to be the utopian vision of the future.

### **THATCHAM PREDICTION**

Following on from the story above, The Insurance Research Centre at Thatcham (an AA DriveTech customer), predicts a future where on board technology will offer real benefits for the business driver: "We're at the beginning of a collision avoidance revolution where new technologies have a huge potential for injury and damage reduction", says Matthew Avery, Thatcham's Crash and Safety Manager.



Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB), which automatically applies the brakes to avoid a front end collision, is such an example of new technology. First generation systems use radar to predict a collision and apply the brakes at a point beyond which recovery of the situation would be impossible by the driver. Second generation systems will use cameras to increase efficiency even more.

According to Thatcham research, 26% of all insurance claims involve rear end shunts, so this type of technology should have a major influence on collision avoidance.

## FTA WARNING

The Freight Transport Association has issued a stark warning to those responsible for running fleets that include light commercial vehicles: "You don't find vocational van drivers", said spokesman Mark Cartwright. "The vast majority are tradesmen who just happen to drive a van, which can then lead to management issues. It can be difficult to discipline a driver when he might have many other skills needed by your organisation but poor driving by vans (sic) can have an impact on your operators licence."

## PHONE BAN

The ongoing debate about the use of legal hands-free mobile phones whilst driving rumbles on and, as a leading driver risk management supplier, AA DriveTech has made its feelings on the topic well known in the pages of this newsletter in the past.

The latest company to ban the use of all phones in vehicles is Pirelli. Employees' reactions to the ban were positive, with only one in 90 drivers expressing concern that it would adversely affect business.

## TAKING THE COMPANY CAR ABROAD?

Always check the legal requirements for the country that you are visiting well ahead of your trip.



You may need additional items that will be impossible to buy at the port of departure. Some countries demand first aid kits, spare headlamp bulbs, warning triangles, high visibility jackets and even spare spectacles or contact lenses be carried in the car. You will also require permission from your employer, suitable insurance cover and may also need to carry copies of all relevant vehicle documentation.

The best place to check what is required is:

[www.theaa.com/motoring\\_advice/overseas/countrybycountry.html](http://www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/overseas/countrybycountry.html)

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

Did you realise that AA DriveTech can manage all aspects of your young, non-driving employees becoming responsible driving licence holders? We can not only arrange learner driver tuition, the theory test and the test itself but also give them a real head start when it comes to thinking like an experienced occupational driver.

An additional bonus is that corporate rates are available and coverage is virtually nationwide. Tracey Bass on the Fleetsafe team has more details on 01256 495732 or via [tracey.bass@AADrivetech.com](mailto:tracey.bass@AADrivetech.com)

Once qualified they can then join your existing driver risk management programme, where we can offer defensive driver training targeted at the young driver, post incident targeted development training and also monitor on your behalf if driving licences remain as unblemished as the day they were issued.

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