

Bringing you important news for business drivers – March 2010

EMPLOYEE PAY OUT

The well known construction and highway repair organisation AMEY has had to make a substantial payout to an employee, after he crashed and injured himself despite having complained about the defective brakes on his van repeatedly before the incident.



Although the brakes had been checked three times before the crash, the inspection had failed to spot that two of the disc brakes on the vehicle had completely seized, something that was only picked up when the driver instigated a post crash investigation of his own, having been notified of disciplinary proceedings being taken against him by his employer.

Although we tend to highlight stories that are associated with driver knowledge, attitude and skill, avoiding collisions will always be dependent upon having a roadworthy vehicle in the first place. Perhaps this incident demonstrates a renewed appetite for the authorities to look towards the employer when it comes to apportioning blame.

DRIVER ERROR COSTS TOO

A leading vehicle re-marketer has identified that the average vehicle damage reparation cost at the end of a lease period is now £350.00, a 14% increase over the year before.

Apparently 38% of vehicles returned suffered in excess of the fair wear and tear guidelines agreed by the BVRLA. Unsurprisingly the most common types of damage were kerbed alloy wheels, scuffed bumpers and windscreen cracks or chips.



As most of our readers will no doubt know, those drivers who complete regular refresher training are not only far less likely to incur such cost but can also achieve savings in the region of 10% on fuel, 5% on other wear and tear items and of course dramatically cut the chances of being involved in a collision.

EASTER CHAOS?



It may only be a best guess but the boffins behind arguably the best known British traffic analysis system reckon that this Easter will see hordes of motorists flooding the UK highways and byways. This is apparently in reaction to the easing of the recession and the desire to break free after the gloom of our sub zero winter.

With most business drivers reverting to mere motorists again over the holiday period we thought it useful to arm our readers with some tips to minimise the stress associated with Easter travelling:

- Thursday April 1st is predicted to be the peak time for traffic density so plan accordingly
- 20 million vehicles in total are predicted to be on the move over the Thursday, Friday and Saturday – is there another way of managing your journeys?
- Most road works are suspended over the holiday period but significant delays could occur between junctions 16 and 19 on the M25, northbound on the M1 (particularly between junctions 10 and 13, and 26 and 29), southbound on the M6 at junction 12 and westwards on the M5 from junction 15.
- It's worth checking the traffic situation before you set out on www.highways.gov.uk and then activating the TA function on your radio to allow regular reports via the local BBC radio stations
- If you are able to, choose a route which gives you options if delays do occur. Motorways are great but if you come to a stop you are trapped with no get out. Try the AA's route planner, which can be found at www.theaa.com/route-planner/index.jsp
- In case you are delayed for a significant amount of time, take plenty of fluid in the car and don't forget your mobile phone charger

EuroNCAP LATEST

The New Car Assessment programme has recently published its latest list of new cars that have achieved the highest rating for crash-worthiness, a factor that should be high on the specification shortlist when it comes to replacing that fleet vehicle next time around.

The Kia Venga, Nissan Cube and SEAT Exeo all received a four star overall ranking, but all were eclipsed by the Toyota Verso, which received the only five star accolade on this occasion.

RIDDOR REJECTION

At a recent road safety conference there were renewed calls for the government to extend the RIDDOR system (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) to require companies to report road death and injury but road safety minister Paul Clark admitted again that there were still no plans to do so.



When HSE released its latest workplace fatality figures in October 2009 it said: 'Statistics show there has been a significant reduction in the numbers of people killed, injured or suffering work related ill-health from April 2008 to March 2009.....workplace fatal injuries fell from 233 in 2007/08 to a record low of 180 in 2008/09.' However, as the minister admitted, the HSE is basing this on a small fraction of the work-related deaths total. Workplace deaths in road-related, marine and air accidents are not currently included in the HSE statistics. Quite frankly we think they should be.

MONEY-SAVING INFORMATION

There's a mine of information on the AA website that could of use to drivers of all kinds. Follow the link below for the latest addition to the site:

<https://shop.theaa.com/freedownload?redirect=/content/money-saving-motorist>

FLEET NEWS AWARD

AA DriveTech was a finalist in the Training Award category of the 2010 Fleet News Awards, arguably the most prestigious in the industry. The glittering event will be covered in outline in the March 18th issue and in detail in the March 25th issue.

CLOCKING ON



As the clocks go forward on March 28 we thought it would useful if we mentioned a few points that drivers should be thinking about around that time:

- Expect different road usage patterns in the lighter evenings – watch out for, particularly on rural single track roads, joggers, cyclists, horse-riders and farm vehicles working later than during the winter.
- Expect the unexpected around every blind bend. Be particularly watchful for larger animals, like deer, crossing the road in front of you without warning.

- Be optimistic and expect brighter, sunnier mornings but be prepared for them by cleaning the inside of both front and rear screens to improve vision.
- Even with a clean screen, expect glare to obscure your vision, particularly if travelling east in the mornings and west in the evenings. Always have a pair of sunglasses in the car.
- Even spring days can produce enough sun to raise the cabin temperature significantly in a parked car left in direct sunlight so consider anything inside that might deteriorate as a result.

TICKING OVER

Did you know that it's illegal to park up with your engine running for longer than is deemed necessary? It's a provision of the Motor Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations (Reg 98 – 'failing to stop the engine when the vehicle is stationary other than through enforced stoppage in traffic') which is a little known piece of legislation that councils are now increasingly keen to implement as they come under the cosh on regional emissions targets. In several urban areas traffic wardens are being instructed to issue warnings and then fixed penalty notices for repeat offenders.



We know that this is not directly associated with driver safety but where employers are still paying for fuel for their drivers it is a potential cost-saving area. However, drivers should be reminded that if they are parked up to make a mobile call without a hands free kit, they **MUST** switch off the engine, otherwise they are also in contravention of the 2006 Road Safety Act and there have been prosecutions under these circumstances already.

...and news from AA DriveTech itself:

Although AA DriveTech already has a portfolio of innovative courses for professional drivers of Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs) and Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCVs) wishing to remain compliant with the new driver training requirements introduced over the last 18 months, the division is keen to extend its presence in this new market by making full use of the enormous resources that the AA Group can bring to bear.

To demonstrate its commitment to this vital sector of the market the division has recently appointed Jason Vallint as Business Development Director with special responsibility for the division's Driver CPC activities.



Prior to joining AA DriveTech, Jason was a director at BiS Henderson, the transport and supply chain recruitment specialist. He has held senior positions at the Transport Research Laboratory and the environmental consultancy AEA Technology plc, where he was responsible for initiating driver

development schemes such as the Safe and Fuel Efficient Driving (SAFED) programmes on behalf of the Department for Transport.

“The AA is synonymous with quality driver training in many different guises,” says Jason Vallint, “and I am looking forward to the challenge of making it the number one choice for Driver CPC courses too. We have immense expertise at hand within the group, and of course a trusted brand with national reach, so I am confident that we will make our mark.”

Anybody wishing to discuss their Driver CPC requirements with AA DriveTech can contact Jason Vallint on jason.vallint@AADrivetech.com, direct line telephone 01256 4956791 or mobile 07976 622250.

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