

Bringing you important news for business drivers - October 2011

INFORMATION FOR DRIVERS

LOSING AN HOUR



Drivers need to think about the implications of the clocks going back one hour on Saturday October 29th because we will then be entering a much more risky phase of the year.

- Regular commuters need to prepare mentally for driving back from work in the dark from Monday 31st. For some, this may be the first driving in the dark for several months.
- In urban areas, particularly look out for pedestrians in dark clothes and without any reflective material; in rural areas, expect a tractor or combine around every corner as farmers take advantage of any good weather before winter sets in.
- It's essential, even on a company supplied car, to check that all the lights are functioning correctly and that includes the beam setting.
- Use this opportunity to clean the inside of all vehicle glass, not just the windscreen, to aid visibility especially with the lower sun in the mornings.
- The weather will obviously deteriorate from now on, so check the condition of your wipers, the washer bottle level and tyre inflation pressures, even if the vehicle is serviced at your employer's expense. As the driver, you still have personal responsibility for safety-related items on the vehicle. It's you that gets the fine, not your employer!
- Never drive off in winter before wiping clean both the front and rear lights, and also check that your number plate isn't obscured by dirt.

A final thought on this topic – the most dangerous time of the year for road collisions is between **3pm and 6pm on Fridays in November**. Be prepared!

250 CHARACTER TIP OF THE MONTH #1

Research proves that drivers often speed up in fog due to lack of reference points. Use a scanning routine, alternating between road edge and middle distance looking for red rear lights. Dip beam often gives better view than head beam. Concentrate!

WATCH THAT TEMPERATURE GAUGE

7 degrees C. If your vehicle has an outside temperature reading, that's the figure you should be constantly checking for as we slide inexorably towards what is predicted to be another freezing early winter period.

7 degrees C is the crucial temperature at which the grip level of most all season tyres starts to drop off alarmingly, so you need to allow for greater stopping distances and cut your speed in corners too. You will also find the traction control will cut in more readily below this temperature so be gentle with your standing starts and smooth with all your control inputs.

250 CHARACTER TIP OF THE MONTH #2

Urban risk management 1. Look for: feet under parked cars; drivers faces in door mirrors of parked cars; pedestrians on mobiles; prams; kids running/playing with balls; old people who might be deaf, visually impaired; cyclists coming up nearside.

SATNAV RAGE



A recent survey has confirmed that six in ten drivers have suffered 'sat nav rage' as a result of being sent in the wrong direction or on a longer route than they expected. 40% of the interviewees also said that they would never buy a dedicated sat nav device again in future, preferring instead to rely on the more user friendly sat nav guidance built into their smartphones.

While this is clearly what the future holds, there are some obvious safety implications here. Most dedicated sat nav devices have some form of mounting to bring it within the eye line of the driver. Most smartphones don't, with many being consigned dangerously out of sight to the armrest storage area, cup holder or even the shirt top pocket.

If you're going to rely on your smartphone for sat nav info, we'd plead for drivers to use a suitable bracket that contains the phone securely and allows them to see the screen without being unduly distracted.

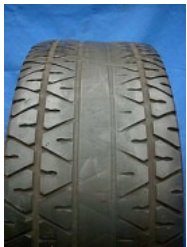
GENERAL DRIVER RISK MANAGEMENT-RELATED NEWS

NEW OFFENCE

A new criminal offence of 'Causing serious injury by dangerous driving' is to be introduced as part of the forthcoming 'Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders' Bill. It will carry a maximum custodial sentence of five years, compared to the current two years for lesser dangerous driving offences.

Andrew Howard, The AA's Head of Road Safety commented: "Dangerous drivers who do so wilfully, choose to take risks and should face the consequences of their actions. These law changes should make sentences more proportionate to the devastation dangerous driving causes and should also deter people from driving badly."

TYRE SAFETY IMPACT



Figures recently released by the DfT confirm that defective and under-inflated tyres were directly responsible for 1,210 casualties in British roads last year. The number of fatalities directly attributed to defective tyres in the last five years now stands at 164.

As alarming as these statistics sound, tyre-related on-road incidents are dropping steadily year on year, thanks largely to the work of TyreSafe and other charities in bringing this crucial safety issue to the attention of the media.

WINTER TYRE CHOICE

For those of you whose road journeys are most likely to be affected by snow and ice and who might be considering fitting a set of winter tyres, Auto Express magazine and its German counterpart have conducted a seemingly well planned and executed back to back test of the current offerings on the market. The top three products in performance terms were:

Continental ContiwinterContact TS830

Goodyear Ultragrip Performance 2

Dunlop SP Winter Sport 4D

When ordering tyres, don't forget to specify not only the correct tyre size but also the **load rating** required for your particular vehicle. Don't be fobbed by the tyre supplier trying to sell you a cheaper tyre with a lower load rating – it's just not worth the risk.

SPEED MERCHANTS



Recent research, by the respected automotive publication Autocar, reveals that 94.6% of readers that responded to a recent survey admit to speeding. While the percentage of habitual speeders amongst the motoring population as a whole is unlikely to reach this figure, the government has recently announcing a consultation on the raising of the motorways speed limit from 70 to 80 mph which the AA broadly supports as long as the new higher limit is enforced.

ROAD CASUALTIES

The road casualty statistics for 2010 have recently been published, the headline figure of 208,648 total road casualties reported to the police being some six per cent lower than the previous year. Fatalities were significantly down however, with 21 per cent fewer for car occupants and 19 per cent for pedestrians.

Despite the improvement, the DfT estimates that the economic welfare cost of reported on-road incidents is still an astronomic £15 billion annually.

...AND NEWS FROM AA DRIVETECH ITSELF:



The MPG Marathon the only national, competitive fuel economy event now left in the motoring calendar. This year's two day event, which started and finished near Cirencester, took in a 360 mile route on all types of roads and attracted some 37 entries from 19 different

manufacturers.

The official AA DriveTech entry, driven by Steve Johnson and Steve Heyworth, managed to win the Hybrid and Electric Vehicle class by some considerable margin. They were in a Toyota Prius T Spirit kindly loaned by Toyota UK.

AA DriveTech used the event as a platform to announce a brand new course specifically aimed at drivers of hybrid and electric vehicles. The course can be delivered on a one-to-one half day or two-to-one full day basis, and comprises both workshop-based and practical coaching. The aim is to equip drivers to get the very best out of their vehicles in a safe and efficient manner, as well as dispel some of the myths that surround these vehicles of the future.

Those wishing to find out more about this course should contact fleetsafe@AADrivetech.com or call The Sales Hotline on 01256 495732.

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steve.johnson@autoproactive.co.uk.

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