



Working together to eliminate road death and serious injuries

## Bringing you important news for business drivers ~ September 08

### DriveTech falls into line with the General

We're pleased to announce that DriveTech has been approved as a driver risk management supplier to GM UK Fleet, which represents the Vauxhall, Saab, Cadillac, Chevrolet, Hummer and Corvette brands.



VAUXHALL

DriveTech will be providing GM fleet customers with a wide range of products and services, not only to assist with their compliance on driver duty of care issues but also to help reduce fleet running costs.

GM fleet customers wishing to take advantage of the preferential rates on offer should contact the GM Fleet UK call centre on 0870

010 0651 (email [gmukfleet@uk.gm.com](mailto:gmukfleet@uk.gm.com)) or direct to the FleetSafe Account Development Manager, Kelly Robertson, on 01344 467886 (email [kelly.robertson@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:kelly.robertson@drivetech.co.uk)).

### Green is for GO!

DriveTech is both exhibiting at, and sponsoring an Award in, the 2008 Green Fleet Awards, which take place at Twickenham Rugby Ground on September 25<sup>th</sup>.



As the name suggests, the event celebrates a wide range of activities that focus on making fleets more environmentally friendly and less costly to run. With its track record in being at the forefront of the Eco-driving crusade, DriveTech has a lot to

shout about in the daytime exhibition event and might be even be in with a chance of an Award itself during the evening proceedings.

Those customers wishing to visit the exhibition and presentations during the day, or are considering taking a table at the Awards event in the evening, can find more information at [www.greenfleet.net](http://www.greenfleet.net)

### Vision one

According to The Which? Car study, drivers claim that visibility is getting worse in new cars.

“Conventional safety assessments, such as EuroNCAP crash tests, don't consider visibility. But increasingly we receive negative feedback from owners who have bought a

car, only to find its poor visibility a constant cause of irritation,” said Which? Car magazine.

Your DriveTech newsletter editor was recently asked by Fleet News to comment on the situation:

“With over 65% of drivers having uncorrected eye defects already, this report effectively compounds an already worrying trend. Regular scanning routines by drivers are essential if they are to keep out of trouble but very often they are hampered by the thickness of A and B posts, which have steadily grown in size to accommodate vital passive safety systems,” explained Steve Johnson, Director of Communications at DriveTech.

“Sadly, if drivers’ vision is being obscured they’re even more likely to need those safety systems, so it’s a bit of a chicken and egg situation. At the end of the day there is no substitute for concentration, anticipation and, most vital of all, observation.”

### Vision too

Delegates at a recent seminar were told that legislation, passed in the EU Parliament in 2006, is set to be introduced in 2011.

The current proposal is that holders of commercial licences will have to have their eyes tested every five years, and holders of private licences every 10 to 15 years. Each EU country has until 2013 to transpose the directive into national law.



Mark Raines, director of corporate and retail development for Specsavers said: “The only eyesight requirement of drivers at the moment is that they can clearly see a number plate at 20 metres in front of them, and this was passed in the 1930s.

“Driving today requires so much more, including good peripheral vision and the ability to refocus between different distances such as from driving instruments in the car to objects on the outside road. Any directives that ensure a driver’s eyesight is good enough for driving is excellent news.”

DriveTech would urge every employing organisation to follow its own policy, which is to encourage that drivers have their eyes tested every two years.

### New NCAP rating

Fleets will soon be able to assess the overall safety of new cars after EuroNCAP, which tests all new cars for crash safety, confirmed it is going to launch a new rating system next year.



The maximum rating in the new system will continue to be five stars. However, the new ratings will reflect the protection offered to adult and child occupants as well as pedestrians and will, for the first time, consider the safety potential of driver assistance technologies, such as electronic stability control.

“EuroNCAP is concerned that many manufacturers set out to achieve high scores for adult occupant protection to attract consumers, whilst compromising safety investment in other areas,” said a spokesman.

Whilst this development is very laudable, it is still important that drivers have an understanding of both the benefits and limitations of such chassis aids, something of course that DriveTech is well placed to assist.

### Fit to drive for work?

Every year, over 87,000 motorists are disqualified for drink-driving or driving while under the influence of drugs. Estimates would suggest that over 4,000 of these were driving for work at the time.

Whilst it's not practical to test one's employees before they driver for work purposes, it does confirm the need to have a robust driver policy that specifically refers to such behaviour being unacceptable and potentially a disciplinary offence if verified. That way the onus of responsibility falls squarely back on the shoulders of the offending driver in the event of an incident and the employer should be in the clear.

### The boys up in the blue

Essex police now have a 'spy in the sky' that can catch even the most determined speeder. The force has just deployed a helicopter equipped with a speed detection device and automatic number plate recognition that has a range of 700 feet.



Norman Hume, chairman of the Essex Casualty Reduction Board, which aims to lower road casualties, said: "We are seeing accidents in Essex dramatically reduced as a result of our intervention and education campaign but need to make more impact on motorcycle accidents. There is a perception it is sometimes easier for motorcyclists to evade detection of

offences because of the speed they travel at. We feel signs warning of the likelihood of detection by air will be an extra incentive for motorcyclists in particular, and all motorists, to drive safely."

### Licences

Fleet managers have been advised to introduce rigorous driving licence checks after it emerged that hundreds of fraudsters are producing high quality fakes. The fake licences, which can cost as little as £350 over the internet, are indistinguishable from the genuine documents.

DCI Lambotte, head of the Police National Vehicle Crime Intelligence Service warned that companies could find themselves under investigation for lax licence checking. "It's a crime for someone to use fake documents and companies could be considered to be aiding and abetting an offence or even causing one," he said. "Companies must follow up on the information given by drivers and prove that they have taken all reasonable steps to check details."

DriveTech can of course provide a driver licence verification service for its customers and recently uncovered an unusual case of a business driver who had been driving illegally since **1987** because his licence had been revoked by the DVLA but he didn't know.



The reason he didn't know was because he'd moved house but hadn't told the DVLA (a criminal offence that can lead to a £1,000 fine). He was subsequently prosecuted for speeding but didn't return his licence to the DVLA for updating. The reminder letters went to his old address and, because he didn't comply, after 12

months his licence was revoked by the DVLA.

FleetSafe Account Development Manager, Kelly Robertson, can provide further details about DriveTech's licence verification service and can be contacted on 01344 467886 or at [kelly.robertson@drivetech.co.uk](mailto:kelly.robertson@drivetech.co.uk)

## Dealing with the dark

As we approach the time when the clocks change again, we are more likely to be driving in the dark again on a more regular basis so here are a few hints and tips on staying safe at night:

- Always keep the inside of the windscreen clean. Have a pack of proper screen wipes handy in the glove box
- Although it's not yet a mandatory requirement in the UK, it's a good idea to have a fluorescent jacket ready in case you need to stop on an unlit piece of road. Keep it in a place that you can reach it without leaving the driver's seat
- Always have a small torch handy in the door pocket or glove box (and make sure you check it from time to time for battery strength)
- Avoid looking directly at maladjusted headlights on vehicles approaching you. Focus instead on the nearside road edge until they have passed
- When leaving a brightly lit urban area, allow time for your eyes to adjust to any unlit rural area you are entering
- Avoid using rear fog lights in the rain. It causes a lot of dazzle for following motorists and can conceal hazards ahead
- Always specify when having your car serviced that the dealer checks the headlamp alignment, as it's not something easily done without specialised equipment
- You should always check your lights are working correctly before you set off but, if you forget, look for reflections in shop windows as you pass

## Black, round and....quite interesting

For useful guidance on the safe and efficient use of tyres served up in an engaging way, have a look at the 'Animated tyre information guides' at this website:

[www.tyresafe.org/videos/](http://www.tyresafe.org/videos/)

## Tailpiece



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