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New Road Safety Website – Open up a Wealth of Life-Saving Information

A new free online bank of key road safety facts and research has been launched.

[The Road Safety Observatory](#) will provide easy access to independent road safety research for both road safety professionals and members of the public. It will cover a wide range of road safety topics, including fitness to drive, drink driving, seatbelts, driver telematics, child restraints in cars and many others.

The research is presented in varying levels of detail (key facts, summary and a full review for each topic) so that the reader can choose how much detail suits their purpose, and is written in a non-academic style.

The Observatory also provides links to the hundreds of research reports on which the reviews have been based for those who want to see the original evidence.

For more information about this new website, read RoSPA's [press release](#).

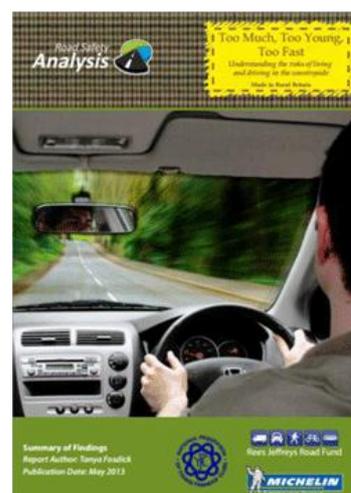
Too Much, Too Young, Too Fast

A new study, **Too Much, Too Young, Too Fast, Understanding the risks of living and driving in the countryside** produced by [Road Safety Analysis \(RSA\)](#) and funded by RoadSafe sponsor Michelin Tyre PLC and the Rees Jeffreys Road Fund has revealed young rural drivers are almost twice as likely to be involved in a collision than young urban drivers.

The study shows that where young people live and learn to drive can make a worrying difference to their risk factor with young rural drivers 44% more likely to be involved in an injury-causing collision.

Previous research by Road Safety Analysis identified that 16 to 29 year old rural young drivers were 37% more likely to be involved in an injury collision than their urban counterparts. This report extends that research by using collision data to compare the factors identified in incidents involving rural young drivers; urban young drivers; rural adult drivers; and urban adult drivers, with a view to determining why rural young drivers are at higher risk. By refining the age group to 17 to 26 years old, it has shown that rural young drivers are 44% more likely to be involved in an injury collision than their urban counterparts. The research found that many of the attributes of young driver collisions are far more over-represented amongst rural young drivers than urban young drivers.

[Read the report in full here](#)



Car Insurer says Young Driver Curfew would be 'Unworkable'

The car insurer 'insurethebox' has published a paper in which it says that a curfew on young drivers is not a 'workable or fair solution'.



In March, the Government confirmed its intention to launch a Green Paper in a bid to improve the safety of young drivers. The paper will look at a range of options for improving the safety of newly-qualified drivers and will be published later in the summer.

The insurethebox paper is in anticipation of changes for young drivers likely to feature in the Green Paper.

insurethebox, a leading provider of telematics, says that it welcomes the debate on young drivers and supports measures such as a redesigned driving test, restricting passengers, and a longer learning period. However, it does not see a curfew on driving at night – such as that [put forward by the Association of British Insurers](#) – as workable or fair, and nor does it believe the move would reduce motor premiums for young drivers. The car insurer adds that the best way to make driving safer in the long term is to educate young drivers, not ban them.

In its paper, insurethebox says: "The ABI's statistics show that young drivers have more accidents at night and that they represent a greater proportion of accidents at night than during the day. However, this is an over-simplification of the true picture.

"Because we record details of when and where our customers drive, we have been able to analyse more than 600 million miles of motoring. Our data shows that 19–23 year olds drive the highest percentage of their total miles at night. When you take this into consideration, analysis of night-time accidents show a far smaller difference by age group. In other words, the main reason young people crash more often at night is that they drive more often at night, not that they are much more dangerous. In fact, drivers of all ages are more likely to crash at night."

A curfew could also increase risks to young drivers, according to insurethebox. The car insurer claims that young drivers could be encouraged to rush home in order to meet the deadline.

It says: "A delay, poor planning or simply poor time keeping would be a regular occurrence and those individuals would feel pressure to drive faster. Encouraging inexperienced drivers to speed on our roads is very dangerous and would likely result in increased serious accidents around the curfew. A curfew might encourage young people to take risks with personal safety, such as accepting a lift with someone they would not otherwise trust, using unlicensed mini-cabs, waiting for infrequent night buses or walking home alone."

[Click here](#) to read the insurethebox paper.

THINK! Biker

The DfT has produced a series of 6 short films that aim to remind motorcyclists of essential riding skills to help stay safe. The clips cover the following situations:

- Entering the motorway
- Anticipating other road users
- Negotiating roundabouts
- Positioning on bends
- Overtaking
- Separation distances

The videos can all be viewed on the [THINK BIKER facebook](#) page, or by following [@THINKgovuk](#) on Twitter

Drink Drive Rules Tightened-Up

The most dangerous drink drivers will now have to pass a medical before they are allowed back on the roads under a change in the law announced on the 2 May by Stephen Hammond, road safety minister. The changes, which came into force on 1 June 2013, mean that high risk offenders will need to pass a medical confirming they are no longer alcohol dependent at the end of their disqualification, before they are permitted to start driving again.



Currently, all high risk offenders must pass a medical examination before they can be issued with a driving licence following their disqualification. However, drivers can start driving as soon as they have applied for their driving licence.

The DfT says that evidence suggests that some high risk offenders delay their medical in order to continue driving.

The changes also mean that drink drivers who refuse to give permission for a blood sample to be analysed will now be classified as high risk offenders.

Stephen Hammond said: "Drink drivers are a menace and it is right that we do everything we can to keep the most high risk offenders off the road.

"These changes will tighten up the law on drink driving and will mean that the most dangerous offenders will have to prove they are no longer dependent on alcohol before they are allowed to get back behind the wheel.

"The new measures will also see those drink drivers who obstruct the police by refusing to allow their blood samples to be analysed treated the same as other high risk offenders."

Endorsing the move, Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: "Persistent drink drivers are a menace on our roads and these new rules will be welcomed by the law abiding majority.

"Numbers of repeat offenders are still far too high and the Government should urgently consider bringing in a vehicle forfeiture scheme like that in Scotland. This has been a success with the strong sanction of having your car sold acting as a real deterrent.

"Enhanced drink drive rehabilitation courses may also be an option for these problem drivers but ultimately their selfishness means that they deserve the strongest possible punishment."

[Click here](#) for more information.

New THINK! Road Safety Resources for Teachers and Parents

The THINK! team has launched a new online resource centre to help teachers plan road safety lessons for school children.

The THINK! Resource Centre brings together a wide range of road safety materials for children and teenagers in one place. It is designed to help teachers, road safety officers and anyone teaching road safety to plan lessons easily and effectively.

Launching the resource, Stephen Hammond road safety minister, said: "Road deaths are at a record low and child casualties have fallen considerably in recent years, but we know there is room for improvement and I am determined to reduce casualties even further.

"THINK! education resources are already highly regarded, but we wanted to make them much easier to use in road safety lessons. This new online resource will be used by teachers across

the country to give children the skills and knowledge they need to stay safe on the roads."

The materials are organised into 25 themed lesson packs and aimed at all ages, from early years to Key Stage 4.

Each Lesson Pack is clearly labelled by Key Stage and includes a lesson plan and a range of teaching resources, such as online games, posters, stories, films and ideas for activities both in and out of the classroom. The packs also include information and activities for parents and carers, to ensure children are taught consistently at school and at home.

The Resource Centre can be used by teachers in Personal, Social, Health and Economics lessons and to provide examples for core curriculum subjects such as maths and science. The Resource Centre is also intended be useful for road safety officers and out of school groups such as Rainbows, Beavers, Brownies and Cub Scouts.

[Click here](#) to visit the THINK! Resource Centre website.

DSA and VOSA to Merge



The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) and Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) are to merge into a single agency under changes announced on 20 June by Stephen Hammond, roads minister.

Making the announcement, the Government said that as a result of the move "motorists and businesses will benefit from more convenient and cost effective motoring services such as driving tests and goods vehicle testing".

A transitional board, under the leadership of Alastair Peoples, VOSA chief executive who will head the new agency, will start work next month to determine the structure of the organisation. Rosemary Thew, the DSA chief executive, will leave her post at the end of June. The new single agency will come into force in 2014.

Stephen Hammond said: "We need to make sure that we continue to keep pace with customers' needs and deliver services in a way which is both convenient and cost effective.

"These changes will put customers at the heart of the services they rely on and allow for a more coherent approach to service delivery. By bringing testing and standards services into a single organisation we will make life easier for customers and potentially reduce the fees we charge.

"Staff at the DSA and VOSA do a great job in delivering for customers every day and we will work closely with them to support them through these changes."

The announcement follows the consultation on the Motoring Services Strategy which ran from 13 December 2012 to 7 March 2013. The strategy proposed rationalising the roles and numbers of agencies to provide an improved and more efficient delivery of motoring services to customers. Respondents to the consultation were generally supportive of this proposal, recognising the benefits that such a move would bring, but were keen to protect the quality of services.

[Click here](#) for a summary of responses to the consultation. Decisions on the other proposals detailed in the Motoring Services Strategy, will be announced in due course.

Fixed Penalty Notices for Careless Drivers are a Welcome Deterrent

Issuing careless drivers with new on-the-spot penalties will serve as a stark reminder that negligent driving behaviour puts people's lives at risk, says the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

RoSPA welcomes the announcement that police will be given the power to issue fixed penalty notices for minor careless driving, such as tailgating or middle lane hogging. The Government aims to bring the changes into force in July, following extensive public consultation with police forces and road safety groups, including RoSPA.

Kevin Clinton, head of road safety at RoSPA, said: "We supported the proposals in last year's consultation because we believe that they will make it easier for the police to enforce careless driving laws, and so discourage such driving.

"However, there is a certain amount of subjectivity in deciding what constitutes 'careless driving' and what is sufficiently minor and suitable for a fixed penalty and what is more serious, meriting prosecution in court. There must be as much consistency as possible in the use of this new power. Therefore, we hope to see a clear definition of the sorts of 'careless driving' that may result in a fixed penalty notice and the reasons why, publicised widely. Training for police officers in the use of this new power, and a robust monitoring system, will be needed to ensure consistency in the application of fixed penalties for careless driving.

"RoSPA strongly supports the use of remedial driver training as an alternative to the fixed penalty notice. It is better to seek to change offenders' behaviour and help them to improve their driving or riding so they are less likely to re-offend."

The fixed penalty for careless driving will be £100 with three points on the driver's licence. The most serious examples will continue to go through court, where offenders may face higher penalties. In addition, existing fixed penalty levels for most motoring offences - including not wearing a seatbelt and using a handheld mobile phone while driving - will rise to £100, bringing them into line with the penalties for similar non-motoring fixed penalties.

Kevin Clinton said: "The increase in fines will boost the deterrent effect of the fixed penalty notices, and make paying to take the alternative option (when offered) of a remedial driver training course a more attractive option than simply paying the fine. This would provide an opportunity to help offending drivers to improve their driving and avoid repeating their offending. This would help to reduce road casualties."

Pass Plus Cymru Quarterly Draw Winner



A young Ebbw Vale motorist is the first Blaenau Gwent winner of the Pass Plus Cymru quarterly draw. Conor Jones, a student at the Blaenau Gwent Learning Zone, was presented with a cheque for £250 by Road Safety Officer Maria Barsi-Mills after his a feedback form was entered into a free prize draw. Conor's name was drawn from a list of all participants throughout Wales who returned their evaluation form on completion of the Pass Plus Cymru Workshop.

Young people are over represented in Welsh road accident statistics and so Pass Plus Cymru is aimed at 17 to 25 year olds who live in Wales and have recently passed their driving test. For more information visit dragondriver.com

Contact the Compiler

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