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Pass Plus Cymru

A major initiative aimed at tackling the high rates of young drivers and passengers killed and injured on Welsh roads was launched at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Ruthin on 1 June.

Pass Plus Cymru is a driver training scheme aimed at providing young drivers with additional driving skills and experience to help reduce their risk of being involved in road traffic collisions. Of 130 drivers and passengers killed on Welsh roads in 2005, 59 were between the ages of 16 and 25, representing 45% of total deaths.



Many of these fatalities were caused by simple driving errors made as a result of a lack of skills and experience, and Pass Plus Cymru has been developed to combat this problem. The scheme, an enhanced version of the Driving Standard Agency's Pass Plus scheme, will involve an interactive three-hour theory session and a day of practical in-car training and will be available to anybody over the age of 17 in Wales, preferably within the first year of passing their driving test. Pass Plus Cymru courses are being heavily subsidised by all local authorities in Wales thanks to dedicated funding from the Welsh Assembly Government. The scheme, managed by MAC Driving Excellence has also attracted support from Direct Line Insurance. Drivers can book on a course by logging on to www.dragondriver.com and clicking on the Pass Plus Cymru logo.



pass plus cymru

BikeSafe Cymru



Police Motorcyclists from all four Welsh Police Forces converged on Cardiff Bay on Thursday 11 May to emphasize to motorcyclists and their relatives and friends the need for all bikers to obtain appropriate training and skills.

BikeSafe - Bridging the Gap, an initiative undertaken by the four Welsh Police Forces, supported by Central and Local Government, helps to assess and advise motorcyclists on how to get the best from their riding, whilst maintaining safety. Motorcyclists are 40 times more likely to be killed

than a car driver; therefore it is vital that riders take the opportunity for extra training to ensure they are able to protect themselves on the road.

Since 1 January 2000 nearly 200 motorcyclists have been killed on Welsh roads. The majority of fatal crashes have occurred on rural roads and generally no other vehicles were involved. Many have been visitors to Wales. Unfortunately too often riders didn't appear to have the skills to handle their bikes. The rural roads of Wales are very attractive to bikers, particularly those with the more powerful machines.

The Welsh Assembly Government's Deputy Minister for Enterprise, Innovation and Networks Tamsin Dunwoody donned her motorcycling gear to lend support to the initiative.

www.bikesafe.co.uk

Belt-up blitz nabs 3,000 motorists



A police blitz has found the number of people breaking seatbelt laws in Wales has more than doubled. More than 3,000 were caught and given a £30 fixed-penalty notice compared to 1,115 in a similar drive in 2005.

The two-week campaign launched on 14 March, dubbed Buckle Up Wales, involved all four Welsh police forces. Chief Inspector Phil Davies, of Dyfed-Powys Police, said, "Unfortunately too many people believe that wearing a seat belt is a matter of personal choice." Drivers and passengers not wearing seatbelts need to realise that not only can you be seriously injured in a crash but you can die."

Rise in drivers caught on the phone

The number of motorists caught driving and using mobile phones has risen by nearly 75 per cent in a year.

Figures from 45 of Britain's 52 police forces show that the number of fixed penalty notices issued to drivers caught using phones on the road has risen from 80,000 in 2004 to more than 140,000 last year.

Although patrols remain the most common method of catching drivers, the implementation of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) has also contributed to the rise in fines.



Motoring offences hit record levels



The number of motoring offences in England and Wales has hit a record 13.5m.

Home Office figures show that more than 11m fixed penalty notices were issued in 2004, 7m by parking wardens. The statistics confirm a huge increase in the past decade, rising from 8m offences in 1994 to 13.5m in 2004.

Keeping Britain driving longer and safer

Recently published research that shows that Britain's growing number of older drivers can continue to drive safely well into old age.

The number of older drivers is set to grow massively with the research showing that by 2050 40% of licence holders will be aged 60 or over, with a quarter over age 70. The ABI states that the increasing numbers of older drivers will be one of the big motoring issues this century and that the insurance industry is already responding positively. The average age limit for new older customers is 82, compared to 74 ten years ago.

Copies of the research; *Responding to an ageing population: road safety, mobility and insurance*, can be downloaded by clicking on the following link:



http://www.abi.org.uk/Display/File/Child/611/Older_Drivers_Doc.pdf

Drug driving

Drug drivers escape arrest.

More than a third of motorists who drive after taking illegal drugs pass roadside alcohol tests, according to a study.

The government - commissioned study by Glasgow University found that police were unable to spot any impairment in 36% of drivers who later gave samples of blood, urine or saliva that tested positive for illegal drugs.



Medicine warning to drivers.



More than three million motorists use medicines which could impair their driving, according to the RAC Foundation.

The Foundation has called for simpler warning labels on medicines that don't mix with driving. It claimed more than a hundred over-the-counter medicines can affect driving, including decongestants and antihistamines.

London MP Andrew Dismore has presented a Bill to Parliament calling for better information for drivers about the medicines they may be taking.

The RAC Foundation has previously called for a traffic light system, which shows a red light on drugs likely to affect a driver's reactions, an amber light on drugs which may make it advisable not to drive, and a green light on drugs which are considered safe for motorists.

http://www.racfoundation.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=362&Itemid=35

Driver certificate of professional competence

Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) is an important piece of legislation being introduced throughout Europe as a road safety measure for lorry, bus and coach drivers.

New rules on qualifying and training to stay qualified are being introduced in 2008 for bus and coach drivers and in 2009 for lorry drivers.

Existing drivers will not have to pass the initial qualification, but will be subject to a five yearly periodic training requirement. Professional drivers will have to keep their certificate valid by completing a total of 35 hours periodic training every five years. There will be no additional test to take.



For further information go to: www.dsa.gov.uk



Details of proposed new regulations aimed at improving road safety through more appropriate use of child restraints have been announced by Road Safety Minister Steven Ladyman.

Dr Ladyman said "Most people make sure that children use some kind of restraint when travelling on the road, but it is vitally important to use the right one; and not to use the adult belt before the child is big enough. We estimate that these changes could prevent over 2,000 child deaths or injuries each year."

Investigators at Loughborough University's Vehicle Safety Research Centre say that the new regulations will save lives. They have concluded that currently children move too soon from one restraint to the next or to an adult seatbelt, the consequences of which are unnecessary serious, and sometimes, fatal injuries.

In summary the new requirements from Monday 18 September are:

- All children under three years old must use an appropriate child restraint when travelling in any car or goods vehicle (except in the rear of a taxi if a child seat is not available)
- Children aged three or more years old and up to 135 cms (approx 4 ft 5 inches) in height must use an appropriate child restraint when travelling in cars or goods vehicles fitted with seatbelts (few exceptions are permitted)
- Rear-facing baby seats must not be used in seats with active frontal air-bag
- Where seatbelts are provided, the number of people carried in the rear of vehicles may not exceed the number of seats available fitted with seatbelts or child restraints (to apply from May 2009)

Penalties for offenders remain at a £30 fixed penalty notice or a maximum fine of £500 if the case goes to court.

Still too fast

The Department for Transport has published national statistics of vehicle speeds in Great Britain in 2005.

The statistics relate to the speeds at which drivers choose to drive in free-flow conditions generally across the road network. The latest figures show the proportion of motorists exceeding the speed limit in 2005 changed very little from 2004 although driving in excess of the speed limit remains at a high level on all types of road.

On roads with a 30 mph speed limit

- 50 per cent of cars exceeded that limit in 2005 compared with 53 per cent in 2004
- 21 per cent travelled faster than 35 mph, compared with 22 per cent in 2004.

On roads with a 40 mph speed limit

- 25 percent of cars exceeded the limit, with nine per cent exceeding 45 mph, a reduction from the 27 and 10 per cent respectively recorded in the last three years (2002-2004).

On other roads (non built-up)

More than half the cars on motorways and 48 per cent of cars on dual carriageways traveled faster than the speed limit; 19 per cent exceeded 80 mph on motorways and 13 per cent on dual carriageways.



Road Deaths are not falling fast enough in the EU member states to meet the target of a maximum of 25,000 deaths per year by 2010.

The poor progress has been attacked by the European Transport Safety Council which says the mid-term review of the 3rd Road safety Action Programme is a disappointment as the European Commission has not kept its promise to propose legislation if there was not a significant drop in the numbers of deaths. Despite some laudable isolated national achievements, EU road safety policy is far from a success story and the gap between the best and the worst performing Member States is widening, says ETSC. In 2005, the Commission estimates that approximately 41,600 people were killed on European roads, which means a reduction of only 17.5% since 2001, so way off the 25% needed for the EU to be on course to achieve the target of halving road deaths by 2010.

The European Commission figures show considerable progress has been made in some Member States. In 2005 there were 8000 fewer road deaths than in 2001. But not enough progress has been made and more effort will be needed, at national and European level, to achieve the objective of halving the number of road deaths by 2010. At the present rate, there are likely to be 32,500 road deaths in the European Union by 2010, not a maximum of 25,000.

www.etsc.be

The hidden epidemic of global road traffic injuries

- 1.2 million people worldwide are estimated to be killed each year on the roads - more than 3,000 people per day.
- 50 million people worldwide are estimated to be injured in road crashes each year, 15 million seriously.
- The economic cost to low and middle income countries is estimated at US\$ 65 billion-\$100 billion, more than all incoming development aid.
- For men aged 15-44 road traffic injuries rank second (behind HIV/AIDS) as the leading cause of premature death and ill health worldwide.
- By 2020, unless action is taken, road traffic injuries are predicted to rise overall by around 65 per cent.
- Low and middle income countries account for more than 80 per cent of global deaths from road traffic crashes.

Log onto: www.globalroadsafety.org

Contact the Editor

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