Welcome to the newsletter for August 2014.

FATIGUE AT THE WHEEL

Falling asleep at the wheel is clearly exceptionally dangerous, and even feeling sleepy seriously affects a motorist’s ability to drive safely.

Driver fatigue is becoming an increasing problem that is regrettably adding to the thousands of road collisions that occur each year. And while it is not possible to accurately calculate the number of accidents associated with driver fatigue, research shows it could be a contributory factor in as many as to 20 per cent of all road accidents and 25 per cent of fatal and serious collisions.

FATIGUE AT THE WHEEL

Working for long periods, or not sleeping well at night, and then driving for a long time can increase your risk of being involved in a road traffic accident. Driving when you would normally be asleep, particularly in the early hours of the morning, driving in the dark or driving in the early afternoon, especially after eating a large meal, can also increase the risk.

You may feel that you will not fall asleep at the wheel, but tiredness slows your reaction times and will also impair judgement, all of which increases the risk of crashing. Listening to the radio on the highest volume, singing out aloud, using the air conditioning or opening all the windows will not help keep you awake even in the medium term but could give you enough time to find a safe place to stop. If you are tired, you will fall asleep - even if you are driving.

Road accidents are generally caused by human error, so it’s important that you organise your journey so that you are comfortable and refreshed along the way.

Plan and prepare yourself

The first thing you should do is ensure that you are well and in good enough health to undertake a long drive. Drivers who begin a journey not feeling well, and then find themselves sitting in intense traffic with the sun beating down, will quickly feel even worse.

Ask yourself honestly if you feel well enough to drive? Are you taking medication that advises you not to drive? Are you having any treatments which have led your doctor to advise you not to drive? Have you rested enough and geared yourself up for the journey?

Plan and prepare your route

You may be surprised to learn that not many drivers take the time to map out a route prior to starting their journey and do not realise how much time they could save. Through early planning, you could also avoid risky situations.

Before setting off, always plan your route. Check the travel news to give you an idea of the best routes. Allow extra time so you do not feel under pressure if there is a traffic problem. Plan regular breaks of at least 20 minutes every two hours.

For more information visit rospa.com/roadsafety/adviceandinformation/driving/driverfatigue/holiday-drive.aspx
Staying safe and enjoying your motorcycling ride means being able to cope with whatever obstacles, challenges and surprises you might come across. Make sure you are prepared by attending a FREE half-day training course on 10 August at Dunstable Fire Station aimed at helping you improve your skills and meet like-minded riders.

Ride Free includes:
- Observed rides
- Slow riding skills
- Taster session of the ‘Biker Down’ first aid course
- Law
- Advice on riding in all weathers.

For more information or to register go to: www.motorcyclingmatters.org/ridefreeskills

MORE 16 and MORE DRIVE

Sixteen-year-olds and 17 to 30-year-olds (with a full driving licence) have another opportunity to attend our successful MORE 16 and MORE Drive young driver training courses.

The next courses are on 7 September at Millbrook Proving Ground. Email roadsafety@luton.gov.uk to request an application form.

For more information go to: www.luton.gov.uk/Transport_and_streets/Road_safety/Driving/Young%20Drivers/Pages/MORE-young-driver-training.aspx

Registered keepers of offending vehicles are written to by the police, informing them that they were detected exceeding the speed limit and giving the details.

Persistent speeders receive a second letter, and if there is a third occasion motorists can expect further action to be taken by police.

Schemes can be set up in any ward, village or parish governed by a 20, 30 or 40mph speed limit and where a group of at least two trained volunteers exists.

For more information go to www.drivesafely.org/community-speed-watch-545/

Speed Watch

Are speeding motorists an issue in your neighbourhood?

Do you want to help do something about it? More volunteers are currently being sought for the Community Speed Watch scheme that is supported by the Bedfordshire and Luton Casualty Partnership. Community Speed Watch enables volunteers to work within their local area to raise awareness of the dangers of speeding and help control the problem.

People who register undertake training run by Bedfordshire Police covering the use of speed indicator devices and radar guns, conflict resolution and an option for basic first aid. Equipment is delivered by local policing teams, and the volunteers then run sessions noting the date, time, colour, make, model and registration number of any vehicle exceeding the speed limit.

Editorial information

This newsletter has been produced by the road safety team. For more information or queries please call 01582 546861 or email roadsafety@luton.gov.uk

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please email roadsafety@luton.gov.uk

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