



NEWSLETTER Winter 2007/8

Spreading the message!

Over the last year, Speed Choice teams have been invited to visit several more organisations to talk to staff who drive as part of their work. Managing road risks can have considerable benefits for both employees and companies, with fewer crashes and injuries as well as lower repair bills and insurance premiums.

The clients included organisations involved in science, heavy industry, the environment, the military sector, mental health and high street retailers. The consistently positive reaction within these groups has been most rewarding and encouraging. The teams have also visited schools to talk to young people, who are the motorists and motorcyclists of the future, and are delighted with the response.

If you are connected with an organisation, school, or any association, and would like to talk to us about what we could offer, simply go to the 'contact us' page on the Speed Choice website at <http://www.speedchoice.org.uk/>

Attitudes shifting

By the close of 2007, a total of 80,000 motorists had opted to attend a Speed Choice driver education workshop rather than accept a fixed penalty and endorsement. Our tutors continue to report a positive trend in public perceptions about speed, as shown by the excellent reactions to the workshops. Comments such as 'most informative and thought-provoking', 'made me more aware on the road', 'came out reformed', 'pleasantly surprised', and 'must be saving lives', along with remarks on the tutors such as 'respectful and professional', 'courteous and competent' and 'impressed by their attitude', give tremendous encouragement to us in maintaining our efforts to reduce road casualties through education.

Reducing that 'carbon footprint'

Environmental awareness has never been more pronounced and there are things we can do as drivers to limit our CO₂ emissions. Here are a few tips to consider. A fuller version of these can be found on the Department for Transport website; just follow the link <http://www.dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2>

Tyre pressures Under inflated tyres make your engine work harder, so more fuel is used and more CO₂ produced.

Less Clutter Reduce clutter and you reduce your engine's workload, burning less fuel and cutting CO₂ emissions.

Driving at an appropriate speed Staying within the speed limit increases driver safety. It also reduces CO₂ emissions and saves money on your fuel costs. At 70mph you could be using up to 9% more fuel than at 60mph and up to 15% more fuel than at 50mph.

Less stopping and starting Stop - start driving in traffic queues uses more fuel, producing more CO₂. If you look well ahead at the traffic you are able to slow more gently with the car still in gear. The traffic may be moving again by the time you approach the vehicle in front so you can change gear and be on your way.

Over revving accelerates emissions Modern car engines are more efficient from the moment you switch on, so revving like a Formula 1 car on the grid, wastes fuel and increases engine wear. Using your gears wisely will help. If you drive a diesel car try changing up a gear at 2000rpm. For a petrol car change up at 2500rpm.

Idling is wasting fuel When the engine is idling you're wasting fuel and adding to CO₂ emissions. If you're likely to be at a standstill for more than 3 minutes, simply switch off the engine.

Is winter still lying in wait?

So far this winter days of driving in harsh conditions have been few. However, drivers need to be prepared for adverse conditions. Here are a few points to remember ...

- On cold days, it is comforting to have a heater in the car. But as we tend to keep the windows closed, the 'in-vehicle' environment can become stuffy and cause drowsiness.
- Darker mornings and evenings mean increased use of headlights and this places added demand on our observation skills as drivers.
- Road surfaces will generally offer less grip, most especially when frosty conditions prevail. It is important to reset our thinking about managing space around our vehicle.

Now here are some specific recommendations...

- Make sure you have a good scraper, and possibly de-icer, in the vehicle. When removing frost/ice, clear the entire surface of windscreen, windows and side mirrors.
- On wet roads, double the gap to four seconds from the vehicle in front.
- In ice and/or snow:
 - select major roads, which are more likely to have been gritted.
 - consider an appropriate place to suspend the journey.
 - slow down and keep a 10 second gap from the vehicle in front.
- Alert company of your whereabouts, as well as actual or expected delays.
- Consider having your vehicle dealer or a garage carry out a winter check, especially if you are planning long journeys. In any event, make sure that your cooling system has the correct additive anti-freeze.
- As mentioned above, having the windows closed preserves warmth in the vehicle but good air circulation and ventilation are equally important so use the environmental controls in the vehicle as appropriate.
- Carry provisions for your safety in the event of a breakdown or hold-up in bad weather – a blanket and warm clothing and perhaps a flask of hot soup or tea/coffee especially if travelling long distances. When snowfalls are expected, a spade or shovel can come in useful if conditions become severe.