

Dorset IAM RoadSmart



November Newsletter - 2021 (edition 79)

Time for those winter checks

We all know that being an advanced driver we should be conducting regular checks of our vehicles to ensure they are safe and also to maximise our visibility which in turn aids our observation. I digress slightly, when I was out running last night, along Radipole Park Drive in Weymouth in the dark at approximately 1745 on the shared cycle path/footpath. This road doesn't have any street lights, but that isn't the issue (I was dressed in light colours and have reflective strips on my gloves, etc). The cars approaching me seemed to have a strange concept of what is appropriate lighting. Some cars only had one functioning headlight, while others seemed to believe that using front fog lights was the best way to illuminate the road in front!

Not only should we check that our cars have a full set of working bulbs, but also that the lenses are clean; so as not to impede the distribution of light as intended by the manufacturer. Following on, ensure that your windows are clean both inside and out. While the outsides of windows probably get regular cleans the insides may be forgotten. Modern cars seem to be designed to always have the fans on at a low speed. This seems to aid the build up of a lay of dirt on the inside. You may not notice this if you only drive during the day, but for anyone who is driving during the night, or towards the rising (or setting) sun you will know what I'm talking about. 5 minutes and a bottle of glass cleaner with some paper towels will soon get you sorted out. While you have the cleaning materials in your hand don't forget your mirrors, both internal and external. Now that the temperatures have dropped I'll be fitting my winter tyres this weekend. Hopefully my fingers won't freeze!

Last Wednesday I was due to visit the offices in Farnborough, so I carried out my pre-drive checks the day before (AGM day, more on that in a bit) – checked

the tyre pressures, cleaned all the windows (as above), and topped up the oil a bit. I duly set off nice and early on Wednesday morning, leaving home around 0530. Upon starting the car it gleefully reminded me that it was due a service in the next 30 days – thanks after I've just fed it ¾ of litre of expensive oil! As I heading along beside the Drax Estate my satnav piped up with a "change of route". It seemed to believe that some road works were still in play somewhere along the way, but thankfully nothing appeared. The Satnav detects this stuff from some form of traffic broadcasts and can list them all on the screen, and must use it when adjusting routes, etc. I'm not sure how this technology works, so maybe I should dig into that in due course. The rest of the trip was pretty uneventful and I arrived at Farnborough at my expected time, parked up and hoped I could remember my way around the maze of corridors!

My return trip started around 1700, and all was going well until I was on the M27 and the overhead signs were illuminated with the slightly cryptic message of "A31 closed after end of M27". There was no indication if this was temporary, or an overnight closure, or if there would be a diversion to follow. I'm not massively familiar with the roads around the New Forest, and certainly not in the dark. I also did not fancy meeting some of the wildlife as it randomly wandered onto the roads! Decision made: get off at junction 2 and take the A36 to Salisbury and head back down from there. I am sure that I could have found a shorter route, but at least this was on roads I was familiar (from Salisbury onwards). The road closure made the BBC Radio 2 traffic announcement, but again with no further detail, so I would have had to play it safe and cut out the ensure A31 and aim for the A35. My extended detour did mean it took me a bit longer to get home, but better to arrive safe and sound!

The Group held its AGM in Dorchester earlier this month, sadly it wasn't attended by many. However,

email groucontact@dorsetiam.org.uk

web www.dorsetiam.org.uk

facebook www.facebook.com/IAMRoadSmartDorset

disclaimer The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Dorset Group of Advanced Motorists. The editor reserves the right to edit any articles submitted for publication.

from those who read these newsletters you will know that the Group has been training up new associates and has a good number of passes over the last few months. Our Chair, treasurer and secretary all agreed to stand for another year, but as always, we happy to welcome new members to join the existing trustees.

I realise it has been a while since I wrote in detail about running or cycling, but worry not, both are still being partaken regularly. I have a marathon to train for early in 2022, so currently I'm running two medium length runs weekly, covering about 26 miles a week (including parkrun). Sundays have still been reserved for cycling, although it is fair to say that the temperature drop makes it a bit more of a challenge to get out of bed! Last week I had to look out my full-fingered gloves and merino wool socks. Shorts are still part of the wardrobe though! So far I've covered 1011 miles by foot, and 2094 miles by bike this calendar year. Hopefully has counteracted the coffee, pasties and cakes I've consumed!

If you are wondering what to buy the kids (or grand-kids) for Christmas don't forget to read the IAM Press release on e-scooters – otherwise you could be making a costly purchasing error!

Matt Ames
Newsletter Editor

The Sound of Sirens

We can be driving to a destination, minding our own business when out of nowhere there's the sound of sirens. We tend to have to locate which direction the sound and vehicle is coming from before we navigate ourselves into a position on the road where we can move out of the way for emergency services vehicles. In support of the recent Emergency Services Day, IAM RoadSmart's Richard Gladman, head of driving and riding standards, has some tips to remind drivers and riders how to reduce the risks we face in these situations, aid the emergency services, and make the road a safer place for all.

Where to stop

It's important to stay calm when you hear sirens

and see blue lights. You will need to find somewhere safe so you can pull over to the left and stop. If in a congested area, try to stay out of bus lanes and avoid mounting on kerbs, pavements and at traffic islands. Don't make any sudden or unexpected moves.



Slow down, move over

You may find there can be breakdowns, collisions and lots of congestion on all types of roads. These situations can be very distressing and potentially dangerous – for both emergency services vehicles as well as for occupants of stranded vehicles. When manoeuvring in these situations it is vital to help those involved by slowing down, moving over and passing to the right-hand side of the road.

Traffic lights

Emergency services vehicles can find ways to navigate around you at traffic lights. You may need to pull over to the left a little if they are passing through a congested queue. However, if you are first in the queue at a red light, it's important to stay where you are, do not pass the stop line, unless you have been advised to do so by a police officer.

Motorways and dual carriageways

When driving on motorways and dual carriageways, pull over to the left while avoiding using the hard shoulder and allow any emergency vehicles to pass in the outside lane. Ideally get ready to do this if you are stopped in a queue behind an incident before the blue lights appear in your rear-view mirror. In slow or stationary traffic, if an emergency vehicle cannot get through, their positioning of the vehicle as it approaches you will signal whether you should move left or right. Once the emergency vehicle has passed by you, stay vigilant and don't move until other vehicles following the emergency vehicle have also passed.

Motorway incidents

Highways Traffic Officer and emergency services vehicles are likely to stop in motorway and dual carriageway lanes, when attending to or approaching an incident. They can be protecting other vehicles involved or removing debris which can be blocking the road. When driving, keep an eye out for the overhead red X gantry sign or other instructions which are displayed. These signs aid in smoothing the flow of traffic, help drivers predict there could be an incident ahead and clear the lanes.

Stopped emergency service vehicles

If you see an emergency vehicle stopping or has already stopped, you should prepare for people to be exiting the vehicle as they step into action. You will need to slow down, keep your eyes open and anticipate the actions of others. This will give you enough reaction time to the situation at hand, and this will give everyone enough time to stay safe.

Richard said: "By following this advice you can do your part to help emergency service teams nationwide and make the roads as safe as possible for all road users. Drivers of emergency service vehicles are trained to a high standard. They do not want you to panic and will not expect you to put yourself in danger or damage your vehicle to make way for them. If you have caused a problem my mistake, stay calm and be guided by them, they know what space they need and will ask you for it."

Original publish in IAM RoadSmart, September 2020

Winter motoring tips

Driving during winter can be a challenge even for experienced drivers, especially when snow and ice are involved.

1. Keep your distance

Your stopping distance on snow and ice increases significantly from what it usually is. This means that driving too close to the person in front of you is a terrible idea because you simply won't be able to stop in time. Make sure you keep plenty of distance between you and the car in front.

2. Drive in a high gear in snow and ice

Driving your car in a higher gear will help you to

keep control. If it's icy and you're struggling to get started, try pulling away in second gear. This should make it easier to get you going, as pulling away in first gear on ice won't give you much grip.

3. Check your lights

The winter doesn't only see us hit with cold weather; we also see the days getting much shorter which means you'll be using your lights much more. Before setting off on every journey, check all of your lights are working correctly.

4. Check your tyres

Your grip will be seriously reduced in the winter, so ensuring your tyres are in good condition is essential. Whilst law requires you to have your tread depth at a minimum of 1.6mm, grip starts to reduce on anything under 3mm, so make sure you keep an eye on your tyres and replace them if needed.

You can also get your hands on some winter tyres which, as the name suggests, will give you a better grip and traction during winter. If your budget allows this is something we would suggest you look into.

5. Take your time

The last thing any driver wants to be is in a rush. Add in wintry conditions, and a lack of experience on the road, and waiting until the last minute to leave will cause you so much unnecessary stress. When driving in winter, you have to take your time so give yourself as much time as possible by leaving even earlier than you usually would.

6. Black ice

The two words that will strike fear into the hearts of many motorists – Black Ice! It's invisible on the roads, but potentially deadly. It makes driving a worrying event and it's incredibly difficult to identify and therefore, avoid.

The most obvious advice here is that if you're driving in freezing conditions, you need to take it slow and steady and avoid doing any risky manoeuvres.

7. Recovering from a skid

If you do end up hitting some black ice, there are things you can do to recover from it.

When you lose control of the car, keep both hands on

email grouppcontact@dorsetiam.org.uk

web www.dorsetiam.org.uk

facebook www.facebook.com/IAMRoadSmartDorset

disclaimer The views expressed in this Newsletter are those of the contributors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Dorset Group of Advanced Motorists. The editor reserves the right to edit any articles submitted for publication.

the wheel and avoid braking. You should also try to steer into the skid – this should help get you straight and back on track.

We realise in the moment of losing control of your car, you may go into a panic and forget what you need to do. Try your best to keep calm, be aware of your surroundings and use the techniques above.

8. Prepare for rain, wind and fog

It's not just snow and ice we have to deal with in the winter – heavy rain, wind and fog also make an appearance, and can make driving just as difficult. There are lots of little tips and tricks to keep in mind when driving in these conditions which you can see in our dedicated blog on driving in wind and rain. Our best tip would be to keep your speed down, keep calm and keep both of your hands on the wheel. Not only will the rain impact the road surface, but it will also affect vision. Pair this with fog and wind, and it's a very difficult situation to manage.

9. Keep your fuel topped up

Any other time of year, you may be a bit careless when it comes to how much fuel you have in your tank but running out of fuel and breaking down in winter is much more hazardous than doing so in the summer. Keep your tank topped up to at least halfway so you're not left out in the cold if you run out.

10. Carry a breakdown kit

Keeping the essentials in your car should it breakdown may not be a priority, but you'll thank yourself for it if you do find yourself at the side of the road with a car that doesn't work! Take a blanket (no car power means no heater), torch, fully charged phone, some food and any other essentials you think you may need if you find yourself waiting for to be recovered in winter.

What are the rules around e-scooters? Confusion reigns! from the IAM RoadSmart Newsroom

- E-scooters are limited to private land unless in a government trial area
- This has led to confusion on where trial areas actually are, with one third of IAM RoadSmart members not knowing if they are in a trial area or not

- Riding an e-scooter outside of rental zones could land you with a £300 fine, six points on your licence and your e-scooter could even be impounded by the police

The UK's largest independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, is calling for more to be done to control the number of e-scooters being used illegally on public roads.

This comes as a web survey of over 1,400 of the charity's members has revealed that e-scooter users could be unknowingly riding them illegally with around a third of those surveyed thinking there was a trial in their area when there wasn't.

As it stands, the only e-scooters that can be used on public roads are those rented as part of government-backed trials. More than 50 areas are currently operating rental schemes – including major cities such as Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, and selected London boroughs.

Such lack of public awareness has led to e-scooters being let loose in towns and cities across the length and breadth of the country without proper regulation.

Neil Greig, Director of Policy and Research at IAM RoadSmart commented: "Alarming, e-scooters have become a relatively common sight on the roads in locations which are not participating in the official government-backed rental scheme.

"Clearly more needs to be done to educate those who wish to use e-scooters, which is why we wish to remind e-scooter riders that they are only permitted to be used on public roads where government-backed trials are taking place. If our members who are road safety conscious and observant are confused, then it doesn't bode well for the rest of the country!"

Neil went on to warn that those who continue to ride e-scooters on public roads could be slapped with hefty fines: "Education should be the preferred method to take e-scooters off the UK's streets in areas they are not permitted. But in cases where the message is not getting through, we support deterrents and penalties such as fines, seizing of vehicles and penalty points on driving licences."

Indeed, e-scooter culprits could face fines of up to £300 and six points on their licence if caught by the police. It only takes six points accumulated within the first two years of passing a test for a new driver's licence to be revoked.

Neil concluded: "As the use of e-scooters surge, so do the safety challenges. For those who reside in an area where an e-scooter trial is being conducted, we urge riders to take as many safety measures as possible such as wearing a helmet. For the government we once again urge them to complete the pilot studies that have been running for over a year and clarify the law on e-scooters once and for all."

Forget Android Auto – parking sensors top the list of most wanted features for young drivers from the IAM RoadSmart Newsroom

When drivers consider the best gadgets to have on their next car, it is great to see safety concerns are at the top of the list for young motorists. Added to the risk of damage to their car, cost of repairs and lack of spaces, maybe it's no surprise that many motorists go to great lengths to avoid reversing into tight and tricky parking spaces.

But according to research by the UK's largest independent road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart, young drivers are ready to kick parking problems to the kerb once and for all as they look for vehicles fitted with parking sensor technology.

In a survey commissioned by IAM RoadSmart of more than 1,000 drivers aged 17-24, young drivers were asked to rank a number of optional extras from 1 to 10, with 10 being the most important and 1 being the least important, when purchasing a new car. Indeed, parking sensors took top spot on young drivers' wish lists, with an average score of 7.5 while Android Auto was surprisingly the least important.

Neil Greig, Director of Policy and Research at IAM RoadSmart, commented: "Having grown up in an age of mobile phones and social media, 17-24-year-olds are a demographic who have embraced how technology can make everyday decisions and activities easier, and clearly this is no different when it comes to keep-

ing it between the lines or squeezing into tight spaces.

"Crucially, parking sensors, also make Britain's roads a safer place to be, as poorly parked or protruding vehicles can often obstruct the vision or restrict mobility of other road users."

However, Neil went on to warn young drivers that parking sensors should not be a substitute for practising good driving habits: "Parking sensors don't always work and still need the back up of looking all around, checking mirrors, signalling and expecting the unexpected."

The survey also revealed that parking sensors are not the only form of technology that young drivers are looking for when purchasing a car. According to the research, Bluetooth connectivity (7.23), satellite navigation (7.19) and autonomous emergency braking (6.85) rank as the next most important technology features young drivers look for when purchasing a car.

Meanwhile, Android Auto (5.32) and perhaps surprisingly, the once popular sunroof (5.78) was ranked as the least important features by young drivers.

Neil concluded: "Technology will play a vital role in improving road safety in years to come, so it's great to see that young people are looking for features which either directly or indirectly help with making Britain's roads safer. Always buy the most modern car you can afford to make sure you reap the benefits of recent safety engineering improvements. We all think we are five-star drivers, but a five-star car could save your life when you make that one critical mistake."

Feature	Rank
Parking sensors	7.55*
Bluetooth	7.23
Satellite Navigation	7.19
Autonomous Breaking	6.85
Fast USB Charging	6.63
Heating seats	6.20
Lane departure warning	6.13
Apple CarPlay	6.04
Sunroof	5.78
Andriod Auto	5.32

* 1st most important