

DSA ezine for road safety professionals

## Better enforcement and education to cut road deaths

**Transport Secretary Philip Hammond has set out plans to improve road safety education while taking tough action against the small minority of dangerous drivers.**

Careless driving will be made a fixed penalty offence to allow the police more effectively to tackle reckless driving that puts other road users in danger, while disqualified drivers face having to take a new test before regaining their licence.

There will also be more educational courses that can be offered in place of a fixed penalty and points in appropriate cases as well as a new post-test qualification for novice drivers, under plans set out in the new Strategic Framework for Road Safety.

Philip Hammond said:

“This report marks a sea change in how we tackle road safety in this country. We are determined to differentiate between wilfully reckless drivers and the law abiding majority who sometimes make honest mistakes, or who have allowed their skills to deteriorate.



“We will focus relentlessly on cracking down on the really reckless few who are responsible for a disproportionately large number of accidents and deaths on our roads.”

The new Strategic Framework for Road Safety includes plans to:

- make careless driving a fixed penalty offence to allow the police more effectively to tackle reckless driving that puts other road users in danger
- require offenders to pass a test before they regain their licence after a serious disqualification
- increase the use of police-approved educational courses that can be offered in place of fixed penalty notices to encourage safer driving behaviour
- launch a new post-test qualification for new drivers to replace the current Pass Plus scheme
- create a new website to allow local people to easily compare the road safety performance of their local area against similar areas
- launch an annual road safety day.

Read the full Strategic Framework for Road Safety [here](#).

## DSA meets the motorcycle industry

**DSA has been working with trainers and motorcycle industry representatives to explore how the process of learning to ride could be improved.**

Meetings between DSA and motorcycle industry representatives have identified some clear principles for improving the learning to ride process:

- the need for clear, transparent standards for riders and trainers
- keeping things streamlined and simple
- recognising that we cannot increase overall burden
- moving towards user paying facilities for the different services provided, rather than only charging for the sale of compulsory basic training (CBT) certificates.



DSA is now working to define clear proposals from the discussions and consider how these can best be implemented.

### CBT syllabus

One of the areas being looked at is the CBT syllabus - mainly in terms of defining what learners need to know and how competence should be evidenced.

The groups also considered whether the five CBT elements could be restructured into three

units. Delivering more theory in the first unit may provide approved training bodies (ATBs) with greater flexibility in the delivery of instruction, particularly where learner riders already have a reasonable level of knowledge. It also addresses the need to ensure new riders have a better knowledge of the Highway Code and the theory of safe riding. Other areas considered have been: learning materials, training ratios and duration and restrictions on automatic machines.

## Registration options

DSA is also exploring how it can make improvements to the registration process for bike trainers. The working groups have reviewed the following themes:

- how and where trainers qualify
- how their standards checks (check tests) will operate
- improvement to arrangements for site inspections
- the role of the ATB
- potential registration arrangements
- how transition would take place to ensure new arrangements are introduced fairly.

The working groups are due to meet again in July to review progress. For updates and more information, visit the [motorcycle news area](#) on the DSA website.

## Uninsured driving crackdown moves a step closer

**A new system to tackle uninsured driving moved a step closer last month as Road Safety Minister Mike Penning laid the final regulations in Parliament.**

The introduction of new Continuous Insurance Enforcement regulations will make it an offence to keep an uninsured vehicle, rather than just to drive when uninsured.

The regulations will allow DVLA to take action against those who ignore warnings to get their vehicle insured.

Mike Penning said:

“Uninsured drivers injure 23,000 people each year and add £30 to every responsible motorist’s premium so we need to do everything we can to keep them off the roads.

“These new powers will help us to take targeted action while freeing up police time to deal with the hard core of offenders.”

### Under the new system:

- the DVLA will work in partnership with the Motor Insurers’ Bureau to identify uninsured vehicles
- motorists will receive a letter telling them that their vehicle appears to be uninsured and warning them that they will be fined unless they take action
- if the keeper fails to insure the vehicle they will be given a £100 fine
- if the vehicle remains uninsured - regardless of whether the fine is paid - it could then be clamped, seized and destroyed. The regulations laid in Parliament would give the DVLA the powers to take this action
- the vehicle will only be released when the keeper provides evidence that the registered keeper is no longer committing an offence of having no insurance and the person proposing to drive the vehicle away is insured to do so.

Vehicles with a valid Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN) will not be required to be insured.

It is planned for the first insurance advisory letters (which warn individuals that they appear to be uninsured) to be sent at the end of June following a publicity campaign to raise awareness of the CIE scheme.

The Motor Insurance Database (MID) will be used to identify registered keepers of vehicles that appear to have no insurance. All drivers can check their vehicle is recorded on the MID for free - visit [www.askMID.com](http://www.askMID.com).



## CIECA - Working for safer driving across Europe

DSA's director of corporate support, Paul Butler, talks about his role with CIECA - the International Commission for driver testing..



**Q:** What is CIECA?

**A:** CIECA is an international association representing driver testing organisations. It has 48 members in 37 countries - mainly in Europe.

**Q:** How does the organisation work?

**A:** CIECA's purpose is technical and professional - sharing and developing knowledge and experience for the benefit of its members. CIECA works with other important organisations such as the European Commission and bodies such as the International Road Transport Union (IRU) - the international body representing road freight and passenger transport operators.

**Q:** What is your role in CIECA?

**A:** I was elected a Vice-President in 2004 and since last year I have had the role of Secretary General-Treasurer. My key tasks have been:

- oversight of CIECA resources - ensuring CIECA's financial security and delivering good services for our members
- developing CIECA's strategy for 2012-16 and looking forward to 2020
- updating the CIECA statutes and other rules to enable the strategy to be delivered and the association to operate in an effective and efficient manner.

**Q:** What can we expect to see from CIECA in the coming years?

- A:**
- a broader appreciation of driving standards including driver education and remedial intervention
  - a membership structure that allows the involvement of other types of membership, enabling their intellectual and financial support
  - contributing to the European Commission's new Road Safety Framework.



**Q:** How does DSA benefit from CIECA membership?

- A:**
- different jurisdictions face common road safety issues - such as new driver safety. CIECA offers the opportunity to learn from each other. We can learn from experience abroad
  - much of UK domestic road traffic law - including driver testing - is Community based and the Commission sees CIECA as an important source of technical advice. Participating in the debate, influencing arguments and forming international partnerships is an essential part of the job.



## New theory test questions checked for autism sufferers

New questions being introduced into the theory test question bank in January 2012 are being checked by experts on Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC).

Driving Instructor Julia Malkin, who suffers from autism and Asperger's Syndrome, was recently featured in Despatch after receiving an MBE for services to people with special educational needs.

Julia has agreed - along with Mac McDade, Director of Ideas4ADIs Ltd - to help with the wording of the theory test questions so that ASC sufferers are not disadvantaged when taking the test. Mac's company sponsored Julia when she received the ADI Industry Achievement Award in 2010. A former driving instructor, Mac's son has Asperger's Syndrome.

Peter Weddell-Hall, head of e-assessment at DSA, said: "We have acknowledged some of the shortcomings of existing questions for candidates with ASC, and our intention to address these. We have arranged to send samples of the new questions to both Mac and



Julia so they can see the changes we have made, hopefully to the benefit of those with ASC.

"New learning materials are also being produced and we would welcome comments on those. We are delighted that Mac and Julia

From 2012 the multiple choice questions and answers used in theory tests will no longer be made public.

This is designed to help ensure that new drivers learn the principles behind driving theory rather than just learning answers.

In September 2011 DSA will change the format of books and other learning materials available to help people prepare for theory tests, at the same time as more challenging case studies are introduced to car and motorcycle theory tests.

Then, from 1 January 2012, DSA will create theory tests using questions which will not be published.

Practice questions and answers, not used in the actual theory tests, will still be available to help candidates with revision.

are on board with this project and welcome their input."

Mac McDade said: "I am grateful that DSA has offered Julia and me the opportunity to be part of this process."

## A round up of this month's news

### Theory test centre closures

Due to over-capacity within its network of theory test centres, DSA has decided to close 11 theory test centres.

The centres will close on 31 August 2011 and will merge with neighbouring theory test centres which also have over-capacity and which have good transport links.

The test centres that will close are: Basingstoke, Bath, Birkenhead, Clydebank, Colchester, Dunfermline, Durham, Motherwell, Runcorn, Solihull and Workington.

DSA relies for income on the fees it receives from customers and it has a duty to spend that money responsibly. Theory and practical test centres are entirely separate and delivery of the practical test remains unaffected.

### Independent driving pass rates

DSA has published a three month review of pass rates following the introduction of independent driving in October 2010. The **report** shows that there has been little or no change in pass rates since the introduction of independent driving.

### Changes to motorcycle tests and training

On 16 April, DSA changed the way that motorcycle related incidents are recorded, reported and dealt with.

DSA has also introduced a number of changes to the module 1 motorcycle test in advance of the findings from the government's review of the motorcycle test.

To find out more, visit the **motorcycle news area** of DSA's corporate website.

### Driving test fee refunds

From 1 June 2011, DSA will no longer reimburse driving and riding test fees for any candidates who cancel their tests with less than three working days notice.

In the past, DSA has reimbursed fees in certain cases as a gesture of goodwill, but there is no legal obligation to do this and it costs the agency around £1million a year.

No longer reimbursing candidates who don't give the statutory three working days notice will help to keep the cost of the driving and riding tests to a minimum for all candidates.

## Get in touch

For the latest DSA news and information visit [dft.gov.uk/dsa](http://dft.gov.uk/dsa)

Information for candidates is available on [direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://direct.gov.uk/motoring) and driver and rider trainers can visit [businesslink.gov.uk/transport](http://businesslink.gov.uk/transport)

Book and manage your test appointments at [direct.gov.uk/drivingtest](http://direct.gov.uk/drivingtest) or [businesslink.gov.uk/transport](http://businesslink.gov.uk/transport)

A list of useful contact details can be found at [dft.gov.uk/dsa](http://dft.gov.uk/dsa)

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