



Summer Driving Tips

As the days are getting longer and the average temperature warmer, this brings a number of hazards that we don't normally have to deal with in the winter. See below for our top tips to staying safe this summer.

Get the Sun Glasses out

A clean pair of sunglasses can make driving much safer if driving when the sun is low in the sky. Good drivers will have a pair to hand in the front of the vehicle and use them to avoid becoming momentarily blinded by the sun. Look ahead so you can get the sun visor down in position BEFORE getting blinded.

If you find yourself driving into the sun without sun glasses and trying to clean bugs off the screen with the wipers and just water in the washers (as opposed to screen wash) and the windscreen wipers just smear a mess across the screen, your best option is to STOP and clean the screen properly (and wiper blades) by hand so you can get good forward vision. Before you drive away just think how easy it would have been to spend a few seconds more preparing yourself and your vehicle!

Beware of Cyclists

Summer sees an increase in the number of cyclists using the roads, many of whom get knocked over and injured by other vehicles. I don't want to get into the discussion about "who is right and who is wrong". It is a fact that when cyclists are hit, it can change their life forever! To reduce the possibility of turning across the path of a cyclists, ALWAYS check your wing mirror JUST before turning left or right.

Take an extra look

You may have noticed the grass and hedgerows have put on a lot of growth in the last few weeks. This means views could be much more restricted than normal at junctions and on the approach to some roundabouts, many of these could be on roads you know. Thousands of crashes are caused each year by drivers not being able to see clearly and making a decision to move before knowing it is safe! NEVER make snap decisions, ALWAYS hold back until you are sure it is safe to go, and if necessary creep forward a few inches to get a better view before making a decision to go.

Don't risk a BBQ driving ban

We all should be well aware of the risks of drink-driving at Christmas, but drink-drive casualties actually peak in the summer. When enjoying a leisurely lunch time or evening barbeque with friends and family the measures are likely to be larger and the drinks stronger than those served in a pub, and it's easy to get carried away. Follow my advice, if you drive DON'T DRINK, if you drink DON'T DRIVE, and remember, after an evening's drinking you could be well over the drink drive limit the following morning!



Bugs Sap and Bird Poop

This time of year means our windscreens, other windows and paintwork tend to get covered in all sorts of sticky mess that restricts our view. Remember to keep windows and mirrors clean as view can be reduced by over 50% due to dirty windows or mirrors. If you have a choice, don't park under trees as tree sap makes a mess of your screen and paintwork, as do pigeons!

Vehicle Checks

Are just as important in the summer as they are in winter, in fact tyres are likely to take more punishment in the summer because of the higher temperatures. Any small defects not spotted may cause a puncture or a blow-out when you least expect it so give all your tyres a thorough check now and don't forget the tread depth on the inside edge of the tyre (which should be showing, the centre $\frac{3}{4}$ should be at least 1.6 mm).

Driving abroad this summer?

Some of us are lucky enough to visit other parts of the Europe and take our company or private vehicle with us. The following information should be followed by all to help you enjoy your holiday.

- To prepare your vehicle for the extra mileage and weight to be carried you must prepare your vehicle well beforehand. An easy way to do this is by taking your car in for a service, if it's due. You should ensure your tyre pressures are set at the higher load carrying pressure and there is enough tread depth to make the return journey, as well as topping up oil and coolant.
- Be sure to plan comfort breaks after every two hours of driving to combat fatigue, if you don't need them then fine but don't ever get into the situation of having to drive for many hours nonstop otherwise you will miss the ferry! This is often when crashes happen.
- It might sound stupid, but don't forget you'll need to drive on the right hand side of the road. It could be worth asking your passengers to remind you of this each time you start to drive.
- Don't forget to take appropriate documentation to comply with requirements of immigration and customs: driving licence, driving licence counterpart, vehicle registration document (V5), insurance certificate and passports (for those travelling). For those driving company vehicles, a letter giving permission to take the vehicle abroad can be useful if stopped by police.
- You must display a GB sign on your vehicle. Failure to comply could result in an on-the-spot fine. If your number plates include the GB euro-symbol, you will not need to display a GB sticker within the EU. Most countries require drivers to carry reflective jackets and warning triangles and if you're driving through France you are obligated to carry a breathalyser.



- Finally, ensure you adjust the light beam pattern to suit driving on the right so that the dipped beam doesn't dazzle oncoming drivers.

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