

BACK ON THE ROAD



DORSET & WILTSHIRE
FIRE AND RESCUE



As we ease out of lockdown, the roads will start to get progressively get busier. If you've been working from home, you will only have made trips to the shops, perhaps for the school run or to care for a vulnerable loved one. It would therefore be perfectly natural for you to feel a little nervous getting back on the road more regularly, especially with the increase in traffic. Your vehicle may also need a little more TLC than usual, particularly if it's the second family vehicle, your young driver's run-around, or a fleet vehicle you have access to at work. For whatever reasons you are returning to the roads, we have written this digital leaflet to help keep you as safe as possible.

Your vehicle

Your vehicle should have a current MOT, but it's still important to check your vehicle is roadworthy before each journey.

Here's a little help for the most basic checks. They form the acronym "FLOWER" to help you remember:



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- F FUEL:** Check you have enough fuel for your journey.
- L LIGHTS:** Are they working? (*remember your indicators*).
- O OIL:** Rather than relying on your warning light—check regularly to avoid damage to your engine.
- W WATER:** Check the coolant level and screen wash to ensure visibility.
- E ELECTRICS:** Whilst you're under the bonnet, check the battery is connected but also check your onboard computer when you start the engine. Refer to your manual if you see a light you don't recognise.
- R RUBBER:** Check the tyres for tread depth, bulging, wear and the pressure! Low air pressure can drastically affect the way your vehicle turns corners and brakes.

Once we've checked our transport, we should check our habits and behaviour on the road. Did you know...

**£1.35
MILLION**

1.35 million people are killed every year in road traffic collisions worldwide (WHO)



On average 5 people die on our roads in the UK every day (Brake)

**£2.2
MILLION**

Each Road Traffic Collision costs the British economy approximately £2.2 million (Statista)

Known as the “FATAL 4” the following are the main reasons people are killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions

In no particular order:

1 MOBILE PHONES

Part of the bigger umbrella of distraction, mobile phones remain one of the top four killers on our roads. Our brains are so attuned to the “PING”, “CHIME” or “RING” of this precious resource, we can't help being triggered every time we hear it. All the hours of the day we are not driving, we have developed a habit of responding... Who wants us? Who loves us? Who needs us? Even on silent, how many times are you compelled to check? At what cost might that be whilst driving?



Add to that the additional stresses of the current climate...

“Is an employer trying to offer me a job?”

“Has something happened at school?”

“Does my employer need to get hold of me?”

“Is my family safe?”

We understand the temptation – but please consider the consequences. If you ever want to challenge a driver reaching for their phone, check out one of our favourite ads from New Zealand.

Whilst mobile phones remain one of the biggest distractions on our roads, be mindful of others. Studies have proven that hands free systems are just as distracting as holding a mobile phone.



Also consider other distractions like stress and disruptive passengers. As a driver, you're in charge... stop the vehicle and address the situation to keep everyone safe. Each of these distractions extend to other users too, from the pedestrian crossing the road talking to a friend on the phone to the cyclist listening to music! As a good driver, try to avoid blame culture and stay alert.

If you feel the temptation is just too much, try switching the phone off during your journey or popping it in the glove compartment or the boot where you can't reach for it. Or maybe ask your passenger to be your PA?

2 NON-USE OF SEATBELTS

Yep! If you can believe it, people still don't “CLUNK & CLICK”. There are still misconceptions and false senses of security about whether a seatbelt is necessary depending on how far you are travelling, where you are sitting in the vehicle and even who is driving. There's also the age old excuse “it's uncomfortable”... we're confident it's more comfortable than a missing limb or the loss of a loved one!

Check out this powerful advert:



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3 SPEED

You may have noticed yourself that there has been a significant increase in vehicles caught speeding since the UK lockdown. Whilst most drivers were remaining cautious, sadly, some drivers have taken advantage of the quieter roads across the country. Remember, other people make mistakes and speed plays a part in every collision. It's hard to perceive that a slight increase in speed is really so damaging but a crash at 30 MPH involves twice as much energy and destructive potential as a crash at 20 MPH (Brake).

More people are taking to the roads as cyclists and pedestrians are having to step out on to roads for space adhering to social distance rules. As you return to the road, please look out for these changes in the use of our roads and remember that the speed limit is the limit, not a target.



An Average speed reduction of

1mph

reduces crash frequency by 5%

4 DRINK/DRUG DRIVING

Most people would never consider driving after drinking, but many people don't realise quite how long alcohol stays in your system for. We are all aware that **legally** there are limits to the number of units of alcohol we are permitted to drink and drive. The fact is however, that alcohol affects everyone differently; and any amount of alcohol will impair your judgement and adversely affect your reaction times. We therefore advocate "*none for the road*".

Also remember that the effects of alcohol last for hours, often into the next day. If you are not sure if you are safe to drive the next morning, make alternative arrangements. We know how difficult recent times have been for everyone and if you need help

Always check the label and if you have any doubt at all—just don't take the risk.

As we ease out of lockdown, please remember that all road users may have become a little complacent on the quieter roads. Essential workers who have driven throughout lockdown may also be a little frustrated as traffic increases again. Please remain sensitive to this, stay alert and be kind to yourself and others on the road. Also be mindful our young passengers and future drivers learn from us.

have some great advice.

Naturally, we do not condone the use of recreational drugs at any time. Have you considered the effects of prescription drugs and over-counter medicines?

By keeping yourselves and your loved ones safe on the roads, you are helping to avoid an incident which may involve the Fire & Rescue Service, The Police and the NHS.

We thank you for your support.

Why not get the family involved and test your knowledge on this leaflet?

and ask a young person in your household to quiz you—it's never too early for our future drivers to learn the risks on our roads.



@DWFRSRoadSafety



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