



ROAD TRANSPORT FORUM

DVSA announces a crack down on defective fuel systems

The DVSA has announced that, from the 1st September 2014, it will be “taking a more robust approach to vehicles with defective fuel systems”. The DVSA believes that it is “not acceptable to contaminate the road surface or to drive a vehicle in such poor condition that a fuel spill is likely”.

Following a Highways Agency report on the effect of diesel fuel spills on the road network, the Department for Transport asked the DVSA to review the roadside sanctions it imposes for vehicles with defective fuel tanks and systems.

Last year the Highways Agency reported that 255 fuel spills resulted in lane closures and significant delays. The risks to road safety are obvious. However, what people may not appreciate is that it takes on average 5 hours to clear a fuel spill.

The DVSA has stated that, during roadside checks between 2013 and 2014, DVSA examiners detected 2,390 fuel system defects and issued over 1,500 prohibitions to vehicles with defective fuel systems.

The DVSA has reviewed its sanctions and agreed some changes with the Department for Transport. The main difference is that the DVSA will now only issue immediate prohibitions for defective fuel systems and leaks. An immediate prohibition will be given for:

- Missing or ineffective fuel cap or sealing arrangement
- Fuel leak caused by a defect, contaminating the road surface
- Insecure fuel tank where detachment is imminent

For further advice on any transport law issues, contact Jared Dunbar on 01829 773 105

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Highways agency officers to be given stop powers

Highways Agency officers are being given the same powers to stop vehicles as the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

In a four-month pilot project starting on 1 September in the West Midlands, the Highways Agency's Incident Prevention Scheme will be working with the DVSA. The pilot scheme will take place at the Doxey Check Site (M6 Junction 13 Stafford South) and will involve one Highways Agency vehicle and three Highways Agency staff.

They will be trained in Stopping Officer duties and will supplement DVSA stopping capabilities. They will have appropriate badging to prevent confusion among drivers. Whilst they do not have the law enforcement powers of the DVSA and Police, they do have the power to close roads and direct traffic.

The aim of the pilot is to assess whether on-road working can enhance DVSA's existing stopping powers capability and increase the utilisation of Highways Agency Officers.

Six point for a mobile phone offence? September 2014

It has recently been announced by the Transport Secretary, Patrick McLoughlin, that the penalty for drivers who use a mobile phone at the wheel could be doubled to six points. It was stated that the high death toll from accidents caused by drivers texting or making calls had prompted him to consider the changes.

'The amount of casualties has been absolutely appalling,' he said. 'We've got to change this. We've got to get that message across.'

Apparently, the latest figures showed that mobile phone usage contributed to one road death every fortnight.

The new rules would mean that a driver could be banned from driving after two mobile offences over three years. Whilst a newly-qualified driver could be banned after only one offence because their threshold for a ban is six points.

For further advice if you've been prosecuted for a mobile phone offence or for advice on any other transport law issues, contact Jared Dunbar on 01829 773 105

DVSA says no driver cpc amnesty

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) expects the large majority of lorry drivers with acquired rights to complete their first block of periodic training by 10 September 2014 and there will certainly be no excuses accepted from those who fail to comply.

Before the Driver CPC (DCPC) was introduced, industry stakeholders were asked how many professional PCV and HGV drivers would need it. The estimate was 500,000-750,000. This figure was revised after an exemption covering 75,000 valets and fitters to 425,000-675,000 drivers. Current figures show that 800,000 PCV and HGV drivers (including dual licence holders) are doing or have done Driver CPC (DCPC), 564,000 of whom have completed their 35 hours' training.

Just driving professionally without carrying a driver qualification card (DQC) carries a £50 fixed penalty. Driving without a Driver CPC qualification may also lead to prosecution proceedings —with a £1000 maximum penalty — for both the driver and the operator. Such offences will also be referred to the Traffic Commissioner, which could result in the suspension of the driver's and/or the operator's licence