

Network



NOVEMBER 2011

‘produced for Reps, Activists and interested parties’

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily the views of the
Motorcycle Action Group (MAG UK)

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EDITORIAL

I recently purchased a new helmet, not that I needed a new one but it was considerably reduced and fitted like a glove. The fact that it happens to be matt black can only help towards my "growing old as disgracefully as possible" ambition.

We all know that the French politicians seem to have forgotten the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" - so maybe it should have come as no surprise to read in the booklet provided that 'whilst riding in France, the reflective stickers provided must be stuck to the helmet in the places indicated!' However, good news reported is that due to the demonstrations the French riders have been staging all across their country, French politicians may be re-thinking their proposed draconian (and in my humble opinion, discriminatory) measures against, not only French riders but those who visit France. The idea of a ban on older bikes Cities seems to me a very destructive route for one's economy.

There has been much publicity recently on the subject of an increased speed limit on motorways. I deliberately haven't included any information on that because there are conflicting and otherwise quite boring reports going around. I felt it far more appropriate to us, as riders, to include a vast amount of prose from FEMA. The latest in the press, as I go to copy on 19th October, is that this new higher limit will apply to electric cars so we have to wait and see exactly what comes out of all this. I was pleased, however, to see that HGV speeds will not be increased and probably, like most of you, a bit disturbed on the Governments reported decision to increase weight limits on HGV. I've always been of the opinion that goods should be put onto rolling stock with suitable lorry parks at main stations where sensible sized transport takes goods to the final destination.

Following the resignation of Liam Fox there has been a cabinet re-shuffle and we now have a new Transport Minister - Justine Greening - look forward to her working with our Guys and moving forward on the motorcycling front.

Ride safe & free, see you next month, A.

[**Acknowledgements:-** George Legg. Paddy Tyson. Rowan Public Affairs. Nich Brown]

EU TYPE APPROVAL PROPOSALS (Anti-'Tampering', compulsory ABS, etc.) LATEST NEWS:

STOP PRESS: CRITICAL EURO VOTE ON TYPE APPROVAL POSTPONED - AGAIN!

The crucial committee vote by the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee of the European Parliament (IMCO) has been postponed yet again, to the 5th December.

MAG welcomes the fact that so much attention is being paid to this piece of legislation at the Committee stage. After many months of lobbying by MAG members and FEMA member organisations, including many readers of 'Network'. It shows that the lobbying tactics are working.

The postponement comes as no surprise as the vote date had already been postponed several times and we had said this further delay was always a real possibility.

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The committee received 305 proposals to amend the new regulations, this has led to a lot of horse-trading and the MEP in charge of the IMCO discussions, Wim van der Camp, is trying to negotiate revisions that will be acceptable to the Parliament and to the member states.

The postponement came soon after news that the European Commission has failed to meet an (already extended) deadline to provide sufficient evidence for its proposals on Anti-Tampering and Automatic Headlights-On. Earlier this year, the European Ombudsman found the Commission had a case to answer after UK rider Jon Strong exposed their failure to follow EU procedures that should ensure we are protected from unnecessary regulations.

Meanwhile, the UK government's independent 'impact assessment' showed the financial and social costs of many of the Commission's proposals would outweigh the expected benefits.

These events add weight to MAG's position that much of the TA Regulation is ill-conceived and highlights the difficulties that our politicians face if they choose to support some of the Commission's more outlandish ideas.

Remarkably, there have been several attempts at spoiler campaigns to undermine this position, but the battle goes on. Thanks to all of you for completing the recent UK consultation document and supporting the 25th September protests, which all adds support to our cause.

MAG voices support for MCN protest in Brussels, 22nd November 2011

Those of you who read Motor Cycle News will know about their protest ride to the European Parliament.

The numbers expected may not be high and the date has arguably lost its meaning (the MCN protest was timed to coincide with the IMCO vote, see above), but we are essentially fighting for the same thing. If you fancy a run over to Belgium for a five-mile ride around the EU skyscrapers with MAG President Ian Mutch it should be a great opportunity to physically show your opposition to the Anti-'Tamper', compulsory ABS, compulsory AHO, etc.

NB: at the time MCN announced their planned protest (about a week after we showed what could be achieved on 25th September) there were a number of reasons why MAG could not voice its immediate support. We set-out our principle concerns to MCN early on and it is good to see that eventually they were able to make answer those concerns positively. So, let's not get too hung-up about MCN's reporting of our own protests, or the ongoing misrepresentation of MAG's position on aspects of the current crop of Euro-regulation, or the flak from a certain MCN journo on FaceBook.

IAM backs compulsory ABS proposals (reported via Road Safety GB)

The IAM is supporting calls to make anti-lock braking systems (ABS) compulsory on all new motorcycles more than 125cc by 2015.

MEPs will soon debate the proposals which have a deadline set of 2017, but the IAM is calling for the deadline to be brought forward by two years.

Despite motorcyclists making up just 4% of road users, in 2010 the number of motorcyclists involved in fatal accidents in the UK came to 403 – 21% of all road deaths, according to DfT figures.

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Based on recent research by the FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile), and from experience in Italy – where nearly a quarter of all new large bikes already have ABS – the IAM estimates that compulsory introduction would save 1,500 lives a year across Europe.

Neil Greig, IAM director of policy and research, said: “ABS is available now on many new bikes and the evidence is clear from across Europe that it is delivering fewer deaths.

“Carefully crafted legislation making ABS mandatory for all large road motorcycles would make motorcyclists safer, although we do still have concerns about the long term reliability of some ABS systems.

“On motorcycles ABS is still prone to faults because it is more open to the elements and repairs can be very expensive. Compulsory fitment will bring down unit costs and allow all riders to enjoy the safety benefits.”

[Ed = How can the IAM support ABS on 2 wheels when, in the last para of this piece above, Mr Greig's own words question its reliability??? How is it even logical that any 'road safety' organisation can condone fitting a 'certain something' to any vehicle if, in its own words, that 'certain something' is unreliable? Can someone please point me in the direction of the 'evidence' to which Mr Greig refers? I am not joking – if 'evidence' is to be quoted then let us see the actual evidence referred to please?]

FEMA – 20th September

New type approval insights from the European Commission

As the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers start looking into the new type-approval regulation, its original author, the European Commission, tries to throw in some last-minute changes and revealed some interesting insights in anti-tampering research. FEMA attended the stakeholders' meeting on Friday, and deciphers the legal and the technical for riders. The Commission treated representatives of the Member States and interest groups to additional information on its regulation on the type-approval of motorcycles on Friday, during a Motorcycle Working Group Meeting (MCWG) in Brussels. The working group, a platform for information circulation and stakeholder input, had not convened since January, and its members awaited eagerly the results of investigations on technical aspects of the regulation, mostly on durability and engine tampering, commissioned for the occasion.

The new type-approval regulation, a recast of existing directives with additional requirements in terms of safety equipment, environmental performance and market surveillance, was presented late last year and has been a point of interest for FEMA and its members ever since. The current draft, proposed by the Commission, is now under scrutiny of the Parliament and the Council of Ministers, who can amend the text before taking a final vote that will turn it into law. Until then, everything is possible.

Untimely afterthoughts

The general principle in European Union law is that the European Commission is in charge of drafting proposals for new laws (directives and regulations), which are then handed to European Parliament and Council of Ministers for amendments and approval by vote. Once the text lands on the MEPs' desks, it ceases to be the Commission's brainchild and starts a life of its own.

This is why it came as a surprise to everyone involved that the Commission forwarded to the Council of Ministers a "clarification" last week, in the form of an updated calendar for the implementation of emissions control measures, different from the proposal currently discussed. The new suggestion basically moves forward by one year all the dates for the introduction of Euro 3 and Euro 4 emission regulations for mopeds and motorcycles, respectively.

The motorcycle industry promptly reacted, claiming that the Commission is "changing the rules in the middle of the game". ACEM, the association of motorcycle manufacturers, complained from the beginning that the original calendar for the introduction of the various environmental (on-board diagnostics, durability, CO2 labelling, sound levels) and safety (automatic headlamps on, ABS/CBS) requirements was unrealistic, extremely tight, and would result in high adaptation costs for manufacturers.

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The Commission's latest "clarification", halfway through the legislative process, is apparently even more threatening, prompting ACEM to call it a "nightmare scenario". An example: all motorcycles put up for registration by January 2014 should comply with Euro 4, the technical details of which are expected to be published by the Commission... in December 2012, at best! This would leave all motorcycle manufacturers just over one year to design, develop and put in production new engines and new motorcycles, while selling their entire stock of previous-generation vehicles.

FEMA asks Commission for clarification

Aline Delhaye, General Secretary of FEMA, took the floor during the meeting to request an explanation from the Commission, voicing the users' opposition to any measure that would unnecessarily create additional costs for the manufacturers, and therefore, for users themselves. In particular, FEMA alone came in support of small manufacturers, who would be hit the hardest by an overly tight schedule, and the massive investments required to cope with it. Should they disappear, it would mean less choice for the consumer, less variety and innovation, and a market more closely concentrated into the hands of large companies.

Questioned by FEMA and the industry, with the support of FIGIEFA, ETRA and FIM, the Commission claimed that the calendar was now in the hands of the Parliament and the Council, as it should be, and that it was merely "suggesting" a new calendar for the reflection of the Council of Ministers.

Among its "clarifications", the Commission asked the Parliament and the Council to keep their changes, in the form of amendments, within the scope of the regulation - type-approval and market surveillance. In particular, the European executive asked not to include irrelevant topics such as protective clothing, licensing and training, periodical technical inspections, or day-glo clothing for riders.

Durability debate endures

The role of the Commission is certainly not over at this stage. In line with the usual practice, the regulation contains provisions for leaving the more technical aspects of type-approval to the Commission, once the Parliament and Council have voted on the general principles. This is meant to save MEPs the trouble of dealing with very technical and administrative points, which in Member States are likewise left to the government's civil servants.

In order to prepare such "delegated acts" the Commission ordered a report from an independent source on durability of exhausts and anti-tampering measures. The conclusions of the UK Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) were presented at the meeting on Friday, in the hope of gathering input from participating interest groups, including FEMA.

The report tried to answer the question of how to measure the durability of exhausts. The regulation gives durability thresholds for exhausts on motorcycles and scooters, but how do we go about testing if the products comply? TRL compared three test cycles, the US EPA, the European SRC used for passenger cars, and an entirely new cycle; in order to find one that best represents actual use on roads. The best solution was deemed to be a motorcycle version of the SRC, using elements from the existing World Motorcycle test Cycle (WMTC) with soaks and cold starts. This combination is expected to provide challenging deterioration with high speeds while reflecting real-world use.

Anti-tampering hanging from the edge

TRL was also commissioned by the European Commission to report on engine and powertrain tampering, and suggest anti-tampering measures. You may remember that TRL chose to ask for advice from the user community, albeit in an original way: by launching a contest asking "schools, colleges, universities and rider associations" to send in their tips and tricks to boosting the power output of their favourite motorcycle, moped, scooter or... mini-car.

The ethical problems quickly piled up, not the least being the promotion of a public contest of how best to make your bike dangerous to ride, or the promise of a handsome 500€ reward (300€ for second place) from the taxpayer's pocket to the first person who does TRL's work for them. Despite a deadline extension, the initiative did not yield any results. The laboratory nonetheless came up with a report detailing the nature and extent of two-wheeler tampering, and possible countermeasures to be included in EU legislation.

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The report develops a methodology for determining what kind of tampering is more harmful and should be prevented in priority. It uses a simple system: for each type of tampering, the effects on safety, environment and noise are rated. Then it adds the effect on safety, the effect on environment and the effect on noise, and multiplies the resulting sum by a rate of occurrence and a rate of detection. The resulting number is compared to the results for other types of tampering to resolve priorities.

Guessing tampering away

Interestingly, when asked by FEMA how TRL knows the occurrence rate of a certain type of tampering, the TRL representative said "occurrence is difficult to know, so we often use guesses". You read that right: current state-of-the-art research on engine modification is based on guesswork. And there is no indication that TRL's guess is better than anybody's.

It seems obvious that despite its best efforts, the Commission cannot find evidence that tampering is either widespread or significantly harmful. The last nail in the coffin of anti-modification was driven by the representative of TRL himself, who added that they do not know the whole extent of the problem, which will make it difficult to assess the effectiveness of anti-tampering measures if they are ever implemented.

FEMA took the opportunity to remind the Commission and TRL that riders already pointed out earlier that harmful tampering, in their view, only concerns a small minority of users, and that it is and should remain a law enforcement problem to be solved on the member state level. Therefore, it should not be a priority, and it certainly doesn't warrant far-fetched technical regulations that would negatively affect the vast majority of safety-conscious, law-abiding motorcyclists.

Delegated acts under tight calendar

The meeting was also an opportunity for the Commission to introduce its calendar for the discussion, drafting and publication of three delegated acts covered by the type-approval regulation: the Regulation on Environmental and Propulsion Performance (REPPR), Regulation on Vehicle Functional Safety Requirements (RVFSR); Regulation on Vehicle Construction Requirements (RVCR) and Regulation on Administrative Requirements (RAR).

The first of these, which covers critical aspects of engine building and vehicle performance such as tailpipe emissions and fuel evaporation limits, was first shown during the meeting, but the Commission expects interest groups to make comments and to request changes before October 28th. A rather tight schedule, considering the draft is only 387 pages long! The deadline for the second, covering safety elements is barely longer, with input expected by mid-December.

The motorcycle industry, with a lot at stake, loudly complained that the timeframe was too short to provide anything meaningful. Is it a deliberate strategy on the Commission's part? Or is it just that the schedule for the implementation of the regulation is too short, as FEMA noted from the beginning?

Further meetings on September 22nd and on September 23rd look at emissions and environmental requirements. The Rapporteur at the Internal Market Committee, MEP Wim van de Camp, is meeting representatives of other political parties to discuss the regulation. The next Motorcycle Working Group meeting is planned for mid-December, and FEMA will be there.

European Parliament votes on Road Safety 2011-2020 resolution

Today in Strasbourg European Parliament adopted a resolution on road safety 2011-2020. As motorcyclists are concerned the resolution highlights standard guard rails as "death traps" and draws attention to slippery tarmac patches. At the same time FEMA is worried about a biased call for monitoring equipment to systematically detect and punish "speeding offences by motorcyclists" and regular technical inspections for all motorized road vehicles.

The so called Third Road Safety Action Program of the European Commission has expired in 2010. The ambitious goal of halving the number of road deaths was not achieved but the figure has been significantly reduced since 2001. Even though, in 2009 still 35.000 people died in road accidents. Instead of a new program for the next 10 years the European Commission published a Communication, whose impact is less

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significant. Therefore European Parliament (EP), namely the Committee on Transport and Tourism (TRAN), became active on its own (so called own-initiative report).

Since the EP has no agenda setting power the adopted resolution is not legally binding. But it gives us an insight of the attitude of MEPs towards road safety and it will surely influence the Commission's work on the next Road Safety Action Program. The main target set out by the EP resolution is halving the number of road deaths by 2020 in comparison to 2010 and in particular:

- a 60% reduction in the number of children under the age of 14 killed in road accidents
- a 50% reduction in the number of pedestrians and cyclists killed in road collisions
- a 40% reduction in the number of people suffering critical injuries

How does the EP address road safety?

The EP recognises training as crucial for road safety: Accompanied driver training at the age of 17, compulsory safety training for young and new road users, and better education of novice drivers regarding the role of tyres, are among the proposals. Remarkable is the idea, brought in by the Dutch MEPs Corien Wortmann-Kool and Wim van de Camp, to devote greater attention in car driving lessons "to the phenomenon of motorised two-wheeled vehicles and their visibility."

MEPs also agreed on obligatory refresher courses on first aid every 10 years for all driving licence holders, an eye test every 10 years for all A and B holders (every 5 years for people older than 65) and recommend the fitting of alcolocks to the vehicles of road users who already have more than one drinking conviction.

Alcolock devices oblige the driver to take an alcohol test in order to start the car. A controversial point MEPs agreed upon is a "Europe-wide ban on the manufacture, import and distribution of systems that warn drivers of traffic checks", which includes all kinds of devices (smart phones, navigation systems etc.) able to detect or to warn from speed cameras. This is one of the issues that caused French road users to join massive national protests in France this year.

Good for motorcyclists' safety

Brought forward especially by Ms. Wortmann-Kool, Mr. van de Camp and by the Spanish MEP Inés Ayala Sender, the European Parliament urges the Commission and the European Member States "to design their roads in such a way that they do not represent any hazards to motorised two-wheeled vehicles". Parliament recognises standard guard rails as death traps for riders and calls for prompt action to refit dangerous stretches of road and even to replace existing guardrails.

In the same paragraph the EP "draws attention to the danger posed to motorcyclists by tarmac patches, which offer much less grip than the normal asphalt road surfaces." Further positive are suggestions like the preparation of a most dangerous black spot map, indicating the occurrence of many accidents, which shall be made accessible via navigation systems. Also, the concepts of the 'self-explaining road' and the 'forgiving roadside' are highlighted as "integral to road safety policy".

Parliament explicitly recognises motorcyclists as vulnerable road users and calls for the introduction of special lanes for these groups. MEPs want the Commission to check whether eCall should be extended to cover motorcycles and call member states and road operators to provide suitable facilities especially for the needs of cyclists and motorcyclists.

The controversial parts of the EP resolution

In its resolution adopted today, European Parliament "calls on the Commission to establish a single European area for regular technical inspections of all motorised road vehicles." The formulation 'all motorised road vehicles' might encourage the Commission to include motorcycles into harmonised testing regimes, also in countries where motorcycles had been excluded so far. FEMA argues that these countries should not be obliged to permanently check motorcycles since the measure has no proven safety benefit on motorcycles.

Unfortunately the EP also decided to "call for the introduction of monitoring equipment by means of which speeding offences by motorcyclists can be systematically detected and punished." In the view of FEMA,

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this initiative discriminates riders to the greatest extent and shows that an elementary prejudice, stereotyping all riders as speeders, is still very common. FEMA tried to circumvent this formulation, and amendments had been tabled thanks to Ms. Ayala Sender and the French MEP Nathalie Griesbeck, but the Rapporteur of the resolution, German MEP Dieter-Lebrecht Koch, was able to carry his point.

A topic that will become prominent among all road users, if pursued by the Commission, is the data recording system as suggested by the EP Road Safety resolution. Like in a plane, a black box shall be installed in every vehicle. In case of an accident a standardised readout would provide authorities with the relevant data before, during and after the incident. Anticipating the explosiveness of this approach the EP stresses that the data recorded should be used for accident research exclusively.

Finally, EP wants all vehicle occupants to carry a warning jacket. Whether a motorcyclist counts as vehicle occupant remains to be clarified. Motorcyclists are not forced to wear warning jackets while riding, instead, cyclists shall at least be encouraged to wear them.

Background documents:

Initial document

www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-456.969+01+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN

List of amendments

www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-460.852+02+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN

Document voted upon

www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A7-2011-0264+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN.

110,000 motorcyclists say no to mandatory inspections – reported 14 October.

Today in Brussels representatives of the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA) delivered the bulk of 110,000 signatures from citizens across Europe opposing plans of the European Commission's to make periodical inspections (PTI) mandatory for motorcycles.

The petition was widely circulated and signed by riders in the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Ireland, Norway and Denmark when FEMA launched its campaign "No To Mandatory Inspections" in November 2010.

The campaign started in reaction to a public consultation held online from July to September 2010, where the European Commission asked citizens for their opinion on the extension of PTI to motorcycles. In countries where PTI is not mandatory for motorcycles riders immediately called their associations to react. PTI, or mandatory roadworthiness testing, only applies to powered two-wheelers in some countries in the European Union.

FEMA argues that an extension of PTI will not improve road safety, and only represents an unjustified additional financial burden on motorcyclists. There is no conclusive evidence of a positive impact on safety. Technical failures only account for 0.3% of motorcycle accidents, and only a fraction could be avoided by bi-annual inspection schemes.

Countries that enforce inspections do not display better safety results, therefore PTI schemes for motorcycles should be left to the discretion of national governments.

FEMA General Secretary Aline Delhaye says, "The Commission is barking at the wrong tree: there is no need for harmonisation of inspections for motorcycles. It looks like a good idea but it's not, it only means more expenses for users, for no safety benefit. The European Union should instead focus on the real issues if it wants to improve safety: training, driver behaviour and infrastructure; as proposed by the European Parliament last week."

A delegation of FEMA members from FFMC France, MAG Netherlands and NMCU Norway handed over the petition to Mrs. Marit Ruuda at the seat of the Commission in Brussels, who received it on the behalf of Commissioner for Transport Siim Kallas.

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FEMA's priorities in 2012 – report from Nich, 20th October

At the FEMA meeting last weekend the priorities for lobbying in 2012 were announced (based on the survey of member organisations views that NC was involved in recently):

1. Type-Approval Framework Regulation - Deal with the proposal both on Commission (technical) and Parliament/Council (political) levels [this was voted by NC as the top priority for 2012 and was the FEMA top priority in 2011]
2. Motorcycle Safety - Pro-actively promote all motorcycle safety measures FEMA is in favour of (EC Communication on road Safety, EC Action Plan for Motorcycle Safety, RIDERSCAN project, European Motorcyclists Forum, 4DLD lobby, OECD/ITF working group, 2BESAFE content exploitation) [MAG(UK) 4th priority for 2012, FEMA's 2nd priority in 2011]
3. Transport Policy - Define a pro-motorcycling strategy; make motorcycling recognized as part of sustainable mobility (pro-active lobbying towards Parliament, pro-motorcycling campaigns)
4. Guardrails - Lobby CEN (standard-setting organisation), dissemination of the technical specification (Arcelor/FEMA guidelines), exploitation of SMART RRS project results and dissemination opportunities (workshop/final event) [MAG(UK) 3rd priority for 2012 and FEMA's 3rd in 2011]
5. Consumer Protection - Campaign strongly for better consumer protection (product warranty, freedom of choice for maintenance and parts, fight against compulsory periodical inspections) [the MAG(UK) 2nd priority for 2012, FEMA's 5th priority in 2011]

Other issues considered were: Lobby for bike-friendly EU/Global policies on new technologies/Intelligent Transport Systems [MAG(UK)]'s 5th priority suggestion for 2011]; Push forward the environmental role of motorcycles [this was FEMA's 4th priority in 2011]; Campaign for better highway infrastructure for motorcyclists. We can expect these issues and others will be promoted by FEMA but not as priorities.

As you can see, there is a good deal of consistency in the priorities from year-to-year and those things MAG(UK) wants FEMA to work on are largely in-line with the collective wishes of all the member organisations.

FROM THE HOUSE

Motor Vehicles: Theft. 10.10.11 (written answers)

Mrs Main: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions she has had with the motorcycle industry on steps to reduce the number of motorcycle thefts.

James Brokenshire: Home Office Ministers have not met the motorcycle industry, but I am aware that there are ongoing discussions between the Metropolitan Police Service and the industry on how best to tackle motorcycle theft.

7 Oct - Ministry of Justice

Dangerous drivers to face longer jail terms (part report)

Dangerous drivers who seriously injure others could spend longer in jail thanks to a new criminal offence, Justice Secretary Kenneth Clarke announced today.

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The new offence of 'causing serious injury by dangerous driving' will carry a maximum sentence of five years in prison and allow the courts to impose tougher punishments on dangerous drivers who devastate the lives of others.

1. If a person causes death by dangerous driving the maximum sentence is 14 years.
2. 1,850 road deaths occurred in 2010. The Department for Transport published its Strategic Framework for Road Safety earlier this year, setting out the Government's plans to improve road safety education and enforcement.

Driving Offences: Sentencing

Mr Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Justice what discussions has he had with the Attorney-General, on reviewing the maximum sentence for dangerous driving; and if he will make a statement.

Mr Kenneth Clarke: The Government are creating a new criminal offence of causing serious injury by dangerous driving, which will carry a five-year maximum prison sentence. This will be introduced into the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Bill.

The offence is a direct response to the concerns expressed by victims of dangerous driving, and those who represent them. It will allow the most serious consequences of dangerous driving to be dealt with fully by the courts.

12 Oct - Written Answers - House of Commons

Motorways: Speed Limits

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 19 July 2011, *Official Report*, column 959W, on motorways: speed limits, whether his Department plans to review default speed limits on classes of road other than motorways.

Mike Penning: The Department's review of default speed limits is focused on the national motorway speed limit. It is not actively reviewing the national 30 mph speed limit for built up (lit) roads, the 60 mph limit for non-built up single carriageway roads or the 70 mph limit for non-built up dual carriageway all purpose roads.

In the course of considering the national motorway speed limit, the case for parallel changes on sections of high standard dual carriageway all purpose trunk roads is being considered. A consultation on these issues will be published in due course.

Mike Weatherley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what consideration he has given to the introduction of (a) motorcycle and (b) other hazard-based training in car driving tests.

Mike Penning: The theory test assesses a candidate's knowledge of driving theory, in particular the rules of the road and best driving practice. The wide range of topics covered requires candidates to prepare themselves for questions about other road users, particularly those identified as vulnerable such as motorcyclists. An integral part of the practical driving test is assessing how the candidate interacts with other road users, including motorcyclists.

Traffic signs policy paper: signing the way (PDF - 1931 KB)

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/signing-the-way/signing-the-way.pdf>

Background documents

TRL: Reducing traffic sign clutter (PDF - 1242 KB)

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/signing-the-way/traffic-sign-clutter.pdf>

AECOM: Research into the awareness of the meaning of traffic signs (PDF - 4743 KB)

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/signing-the-way/understanding-of-traffic-signs.pdf>

Traffic signs review - written statement by Norman Baker MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport, 13 October 2011

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/news/statements/baker-20111013/>

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18-10-2011 - Motor Vehicles: EU Action

Mr Brine: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effects on independent motorcycle repairers of the proposed EU Regulation on the type approval and market surveillance of 2- and 3-wheeled vehicles and quadricycles.

Mike Penning: The repair information aspect of the Commission's proposal will ensure maintenance information is more readily accessible to independent repairers. This will enable them to compete more effectively with franchised repairers. The effective functioning of a competitive market for motorcycle repair will ensure best value for consumers

E – Petitions – link to those concerning motorcycles, motorcyclists or motorbikes:
<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/search?q=motorcycle>

BRAKE: Mobile phone addiction threatens safety on roads

Road safety charity Brake and Direct Line are warning of the danger of mobile phone addiction, as research out today reveals the shocking extent of driver distraction from texting, emailing and social networking. The survey revealed that, nearly three in 10 drivers (28%) texts at the wheel and one in 13 (8%) do this at least once a week. One in 11 drivers (9%) surfs the web, emails, uses apps or social networking sites when driving.

Texting has been found to make drivers 23 times more likely to cause a crash, potentially killing or maiming innocent road users. Using a phone to email or surf the web also causes serious distractions.

Julie Townsend, Brake campaigns director, said: "People who text, use the web or social networking when driving are taking enormous risks with their own and other people's lives. This kind of irresponsible behaviour is illegal and it kills so there should be no excuses. We are concerned that the increasing uptake of this technology could lead to more crashes and casualties caused by distracted drivers, as is happening in the US. It is vital that the Government acts now to prevent an upsurge in distracted driving, and it's vital that drivers listen to these warnings and make a pledge to never use their phone when driving."

Brake and Direct Line are calling on drivers to commit to turning off their phone and putting it out of reach when driving to prevent temptation. They are also calling on the government to take urgent action against driver distraction from phone use at the wheel (see calls for government action below).

Facts

Texting distracts from driving cognitively, physically and visually. But increasingly people are using their phones to do much more than make calls and send SMS messages: responding to emails, social networking, inputting navigational data or using other mobile phone applications.

Research into the impact of sending or receiving text messages among young drivers found the amount of time drivers spent with their eyes off the road increased by up to 400%. Drivers made 28% more lane excursions and 140% more incorrect lane changes. Research using a driver simulator to explore risks drivers face when using phones for emailing found a heightened crash risk. In a large-scale study of commercial drivers, which monitored the impact of them texting at the wheel, their crash risk increased to 23 times that of a driver paying full attention. Studies looking at the impact of talking on your mobile at the wheel have found crash risk is quadrupled, whether you're on a hand-held or hands-free phone.

It is illegal to drive a vehicle or ride a motorcycle while using a hand-held mobile phone, smartphone or PDA. It is illegal to use any kind of electronic device to send or receive spoken or written messages or still or moving images or access the internet. This includes when stopped at traffic lights or queued in traffic.

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Drivers who are caught will receive a fixed penalty notice of £60 and three points on their licence. In May 2011 the government announced this fine is due to increase to £80 - £100. In some cases drivers will have to go to court and could face disqualification and a maximum fine of £1,000. But it could be much worse.

Using a phone at the wheel can and does lead to devastating crashes. If you kill someone while using a phone you could face up to 14 years in prison for causing death by dangerous driving, as well as the knowledge that someone died because of your decision to pick up your phone at the wheel.

Recommendations to government

The government should:

- make traffic policing a national policing priority, to enable an increase in traffic police, enforcing mobile phones offences and providing an effective deterrent to drivers who would flout the law.
- conduct widespread media campaigns that highlight the dangers of mobile phone use at the wheel, alongside other distractions, and the consequences of being caught or causing a serious crash.
- ban the use of hands-free mobile phones when driving in line with research showing it dramatically increases crash risk.
- change the law so being caught using a mobile phone while driving results in a disqualification for a minimum 12 month period, to provide a real deterrent from this dangerous behaviour; failing this, at the very least we need a far higher fixed penalty fine for this offence.
- incorporate road safety into the national curriculum to ensure that the next generation of drivers understands the dangers of using a phone at the wheel.

AND, from The House on this subject:-

3 Oct - Use of Mobile Phones whilst driving

Jason McCartney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to deter drivers from using mobile phones while driving.

Mike Penning: The Department increased the penalties for drivers using a mobile phone in 2007. More recently in the Government's Strategic Framework for Road Safety (May 2011), we propose to increase the fine levels for road traffic fixed penalty notices, including mobile phones offences, as a means of deterring drivers from using their mobile phones whilst driving, and to bring this in line with other fixed penalties.

The police continue to enforce mobile phone offences-in 2009, 126,000 fixed penalty notices were issued for the offence, a rise of 8% from the previous year.

The Department's observational survey in 2009 gives a national perspective and showed that 1.4% of car drivers were using hand-held mobile phones. This is a 17% reduction since the penalties were raised. We remain committed to ensuring that all regulations are effective.

Visordown - MythBusters claim cars are greener than bikes

The latest episode of US hit TV series Mythbusters has revealed that while bikes use far less fuel than cars they can't come close to matching them when it comes to exhaust emissions.

The show's hosts, Adam Savage and Jamie Hyneman, tested three bikes and three cars – makes and models unknown – from the 80s, 90s and 2000s to see how they compared for emissions over a 20-mile course.

And while the bikes easily won in the economy stakes and inevitably chucked out less CO2 as a result, they failed miserably on other emissions, the worst being carbon monoxide, with even the most modern bike on test pumping out more than 8000 percent more of the stuff than the equivalent car.

The results shouldn't be too surprising. Cars – particularly in America – have been subject to strict smog laws since the 1970s, with catalytic converters, exhaust gas recirculation and endless other devices to meet ever-tighter laws. Bikes, by comparison, have only recently been subjected to any form of emissions control and by comparison they're relatively lax. The most recent bike tested by the show was from the 00s and they're being coy about exactly what year or which model it was so it's not even possible to judge what

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emissions limits it was designed to comply with (and since the show has yet to be screened outside America, we haven't been able to actually watch it yet to deduce what bike it was). There's a chance that, had a more up-to-date model been used the emissions performance would have been somewhat better.

According to the Discovery Channel, the show marks a first for Mythbusters, as it is the first experiment in the series' history that it's produced publishable scientific results from one of its tests. Normally emissions tests are done while stationary, and this marks the first time such tests have been done on moving bikes in real-world conditions.

With bikes eventually due to meet the same emissions laws as cars in Europe, albeit not for several years yet, and the undisputed fact they're more economical than cars, eventually we may be able to sit back in a smug green glow, but right now it might be an idea to steer clear of arguing that you're saving the planet by riding a bike.

Driving Standards Agency

Module one bike tests to be offered in Shetlands

Learner riders in the Shetlands will now be able to take both parts of the motorcycle test without leaving the islands.

Since the introduction of the two part motorcycle test in 2009, candidates had to travel to the mainland to take the off-road, module one part of the test. But from this week the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) will be conducting module one tests at Anderson High School in Lerwick.

Road Safety Minister Mike Penning said:

“Our aim is to provide a local service that is both convenient for candidates and cost effective.

“We want to offer people the best service possible wherever they live so I am delighted that riders in the Shetlands will soon be able to take their whole motorbike test without needing to travel to the mainland.”

The move is part of an initiative to make module one tests available more locally by using non-DSA sites on a part-time, casual-hire basis.

At present the majority of module one tests are conducted from purpose-built off-road test centres.

However, in rural or remote areas where candidates have to travel a long distance to take the module one test, DSA is working with motorcycle trainers to identify suitable local sites where tests can be delivered, such as car parks and motorcycle trainers' sites.

The first module one tests at Anderson High School are taking place this week, and tests will subsequently be provided.

New theory test books published

New official driving and riding theory books will be published today to help candidates revise in preparation for changes to the test in January 2012.

Since theory tests began in 1996, the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) has published the questions and answers from the question banks for all categories of tests for cars, motorcycles, lorries and buses.

However, DSA announced last November that it was to stop publishing the multiple choice questions and answers, with unpublished questions being used from January 2012.

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DSA's chief executive Rosemary Thew said: "The reason behind the move is to stop candidates from simply memorising theory test questions and answers and learning by rote. The new books contain questions and answers for revision and also explain the theory behind each question.

"This approach to learning will help candidates to gain a better knowledge and understanding of driving theory which will help them respond correctly to the new, re-worded live questions used in the actual test."

Other theory test products including CD Roms, downloadable PDFs and ebooks have been revised too and will be published shortly after the theory test books are published on 19 September.

The agency has also launched its first ever mobile phone apps for theory test revision, which have been developed to help candidates learn in this way.

EVENTS

Wednesday, November 16, 2011 - AGM - Weston & North Somerset MAG

Organiser: Weston & North Somerset MAG – 8pm prompt. *Bring your current membership card or you can't vote!*

Location: [The Railway Inn Station Road Sandford NorthSomerset BS25 5RA](#)

Web: <http://north-somerset.mag-uk.org>

Thursday, November 17, 2011 - Bristol MAG AGM

Organiser: Bristol MAG Group

AGM in the area next to the lounge bar. It will be cosy but the skittle alley is already booked Starts 8.30pm sharp. Please remember your current MAG membership card - no card, no vote.

Location: The Railway Tavern Fishponds, Bristol. (behind Lidl Carpark)

Wednesday, November 23, 2011 - Wakefield MAG 8th Annual Bikers Quiz Nite

Organiser: Wakefield MAG

Popular pub quiz for biker's. 60 questions, 30 bike related, 30 general knowledge (but with a bike theme, however tenuous). Prizes for 1st, 2nd & 3rd, plus a booby prize for coming last. Enter as an individual or team (max team size 5)

Location: 20:00 in the Grey Horse, Kirkgate, Wakefield, WF1 4EJ

Web: <http://wakefield.mag-uk.org>

Sunday, December 4, 2011 - Annual Toy Run

Organiser: Unwanted Mcc

Donation £3.00 per bike/vehicle.Meeting at 9:30am leaving on the run at 11am. going to Fountains High School in Bitham Lane. Stretton, Burton on Trent, Staffs,a special needs school. please wrap and label gifts, children age from 5-16. mag affiliated.

Location: Starting From The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports & Social Club, Shobnall Rd, Burton on Trent, Staffs, DE14 2BB.

Web: <http://www.unwantedmcc.co.uk>

Friday, December 16, 2011 - York MAG Christmas Party

Organiser: York MAG

York Mag and York Bike Night Christmas party in aid of the Air Ambulance. Friday the 16th December from 7.30pm til late. Live music and raffle, £5 entry.

Ticket: Call Trev on: 07867 877277 or go to: www.yorkbikenight.co.uk

Location: The Post Office Club, Marygate, York, YO30 7BH.

Enquiries: Please call Trev, as above or Ant on: 07532339823

Web: <http://www.york-mag.co.uk>

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Sunday, December 18, 2011 - Xmas Toy Run SUFFOLK

Organiser: BikerFest RC aka Beck Row Bikers - Affiliated to MAG

Set off from Walkers at 1pm going straight to the West Suffolk Rainbow Kids ward for 2pm. What to bring? New sealed toys for ages 0-16, Girls or Boys, wrapped is preferred but not essential. "sealed" for Hygiene/Allergy reasons= no soft/cuddly toys for the younger kids.

Location: Start from Walkers snack Bar next to Barton Mills roundabout going to West Suffolk Hospital Kids Unit.

Wednesday, January 11, 2012 - Wakefield MAG AGM

Organiser: Wakefield MAG

Wakefield MAG Annual General Meeting. Review of 2011, plans for 2012 and election of 2012 Branch Committee. Don't forget current MAG card to vote.

Location: 19:30 for a 20:00 start at the Grey Horse, Kirkgate, Wakefield, WF1 4EJ.

Web: <http://wakefield.mag-uk.org>

Saturday, January 14, 2012 - Salisbury MAG AGM

Organiser: Salisbury MAG

***Note new venue** Salisbury MAG Annual General Meeting at 7pm to start promptly at 7.30pm. Please re-member your current MAG Membership card to entitle you to vote. No card - no vote. New food arrangements, please contact Rep. If you wish to order food, expected to be £5"ish" for buffet. Come and reminisce; "Where was I on 25th September?" Raffle for MAG Fighting Fund, bring a prize.....*

Location: Avon Brewery pub, Castle Street, Salisbury

Sunday, February 12, 2012 - Fred Hill Run 2012

Organiser: West Midlands MAG

Annual run in tribute to Fred Hill.

Location: Meeting at the Bewell Head Club, Bromsgrove, B61 8HY. Meet from 12 noon for a 1pm start of the ride to the Motorcycle Museum.

Friday, February 17, 2012 - Sunday, February 19, 2012 - 1st Frozen Pancake rally.

Organiser: Burton on Trent MAG

Disco, Fri & Sat with bands both nights. Silly games, Food van, stalls, Disabled loos and access, camping.

Location: The Rockbar, Shobnall Sports & Social Club, Shobnall Rd. Burton on Trent, Staffs, DE14 2BB

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