

Consultation on amendments to driver medical standards on eyesight, epilepsy and diabetes

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has published proposed amendments to minimum medical standards for drivers in relation to eyesight, epilepsy and diabetes.

The measures are contained in a **consultation** on the implementation of European minimum medical standards for drivers. While UK standards must be at least at the level of a minimum standard, the UK is not required to relax existing domestic standards where these are justifiably higher than the EU standards. However, where the

secretary of state's medical advisory panel has advised that a relaxation in standards is consistent with road safety, the recommendation is that this is adopted as the UK standard.

Road safety minister, Mike Penning, said: "We have taken expert advice on the latest evidence on eyesight, epilepsy and diabetes and believe these proposals strike the right balance in allowing as many people as possible to drive, without compromising safety. We would welcome views from anyone affected by the changes and will consider all representations before setting out our final decisions."

The consultation period will run until 28 April 2011. To find out more and to have your say, go to: dft.gov.uk/dvla/consultations/currentconsultations.aspx

The main aspects of the new standards are:

Eyesight

Group 1 - Cars and Motorcycles

A reduction in the distance that a number plate can be read from to test visual acuity, from 20 to 17.5 metres.

Group 2 - Buses and Lorries

A change for those who wear spectacles in how they are assessed. The eyesight test will concentrate on vision standards with the driver wearing their glasses.

Epilepsy

Group 1 - Cars and Motorcycles

Drivers who only suffer seizures whilst asleep would be considered for a licence after one year instead of the current requirement of three years.

Drivers who suffer seizures that have no impact on consciousness or

the ability to act could, for the first time, be considered for a licence after one year.

Group 2 - Buses and Lorries

For the first time, there will be a definition of epilepsy. The new EU Directives provide a definition as being "two or more epileptic seizures less than five years apart".

Diabetes

Group 1 - Cars and Motorcycles

Under the proposals, licences will not be issued or renewed for drivers with recurrent severe hypoglycaemia and/or impaired hypoglycaemic awareness.

Group 2 - Buses and Lorries

Drivers who are treated with insulin would be considered for all Group 2 driver licensing, providing strict medical monitoring is met. Currently, Group 2 drivers treated with insulin are restricted to certain categories of vehicle.

Stiff sentence for theory test fraudsters

Four men who arranged for an impersonator to take driving theory tests for them have been sent to prison.

They admitted conspiracy to commit fraud at driving theory test centres in Doncaster, Harrogate, Middlesbrough and Grimsby.

At Teesside Crown Court, three defendants were sentenced to six months in prison. They were:

- Sami Mohammed Hamadok, 36 of Percy Street, Middlesbrough
- Kayfee Hameed, 34 of Meath Street, Middlesbrough
- Ahmed Kamel Omar, 30 of Eaton Close, Fishponds, Bristol

A fourth defendant, Agar Hamid, 20, of Spalding Towers, Leeds, was sentenced to three months in prison.



The court was told they arranged for an impersonator to sit their driving theory tests between September and November 2009. Evidence discovered during the investigation uncovered links between all four men and the impersonators who took the tests.

Sentencing, Judge Peter Bowers said: “[Driving test impersonation] is a serious matter, particularly if it allows you to drive on the roads without an adequate knowledge of road safety. I think a deterrent sentence is essential. It’s important that others learn not to commit this sort of offence.”

Andy Rice, head of DSA’s fraud and integrity team, said: “The theory test is there to make sure candidates have a satisfactory understanding of the principles that will help make them safer drivers.

“Around 1.5 million theory tests take place every year and thankfully such crime is extremely rare. We work closely with police and the Crown Prosecution Service to bring these fraudsters to justice.”

Between 1 April and 31 December 2010, DSA’s Fraud and Integrity Team concluded 888 investigations into impersonation/identity fraud surrounding the driving test.

DSA is committed to the prosecution of offenders in order to preserve public safety on the roads and the integrity of the driving test procedure.

Since 2004, the work of the Fraud and Integrity Team has led to over 1100 arrests, and over 1500 licence revocations. There are currently more than 900 ongoing investigations.



Join the conversation

Thanks to new digital communication tools and social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter, keeping in touch with DSA has never been easier.

Reading Despatch isn't the only way to stay up to date with important news and information from DSA. The agency's digital communication team is making use of new communication tools like Facebook and Twitter, so that you can access up to date news and information where and when you want.

"We want to make it easy for you to get the information you need, but it's not just about giving

you messages - we also want to hear from you," says John Ploughman, DSA's digital communication manager. "Social media is a great way of getting information out quickly and at no cost, but it's also about interaction and the opportunity to hear what our customers are thinking. It doesn't mean we're going to stop sending information by email or putting it in Despatch, it just gives people more choice."



Trevor Wedge's Facebook page

Chief driving examiner Trevor Wedge now has an official Facebook page. Visit the page for updates on what Trevor's working on and who he's talking to around the country. You'll also find links to useful information, and you can post comments – Trevor's not always able to respond personally, but he does read them all. You don't need to have a Facebook account to view the page, just go to facebook.com/trevorwedge.

DSA Direct

With DSA Direct you can sign up to receive free alerts about specific topic areas straight to your email. You can choose to get alerts as soon as we send them, or as daily or weekly 'digests'. To sign up, simply go to dft.gov.uk/dsa then click on 'DSA Direct' and follow the on screen instructions.



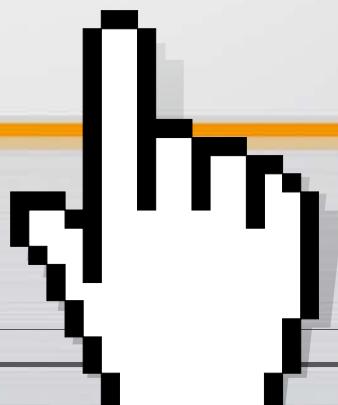
YouTube

DSA published its first video on YouTube in September 2009. Since then, we have uploaded more than 70 videos providing information about all aspects of learning to drive or ride. The videos have now been viewed more than 2.5 million times. See them for yourself at youtube.com/dsagov and let us know what you think in the comments section below each video.



Twitter

DSA also has its own Twitter feed, giving you regular, bite-size news and updates. By following DSA on Twitter, you can make sure you're one of the first to hear about the latest news stories, press releases and more. It's easy to access Twitter on most mobile phones, so even if you're not at your computer you can stay up to date, and if you have your own website you can include our latest 'tweets' on your homepage. To sign up, go to twitter.com/DSAgovuk



Putting road safety on the map



The Road Safety Foundation took top prize at last year's Prince Michael International Road Safety Awards. The charity was recognised for its work developing road risk maps, which identify problem areas across the road network. We found out more from the Foundation's director, Dr Joanne Hill.



Dr. Joanne Hill,
Road Safety Foundation
Director

- Find out more about the Road Safety Foundation at roadsafetyfoundation.org
- Download the Foundation's latest report, Saving Lives for Less, at roadsafetyfoundation.org/downloads/RSFreportweb.pdf
- To view and download older research and reports, go to roadsafetyfoundation.org/reports.html
- For national and regional risk rating maps of motorways and A roads, see eurorap.org/risk_maps

Q: What is the Road Safety Foundation?

A: We're a UK charity that advocates road casualty reduction through simultaneous action on all three components of the safe road system: roads, vehicles and behaviour.

Q: What are your main objectives?

A: With the upcoming UN Decade of Action for Road Safety on 11 May 2011, the Foundation is committed to stimulating and supporting action to improve road infrastructure so that it is seen as a public health issue. The Foundation

aims to ensure that Britain can be a leader in road safety providing best practise to other countries.

Q: You produce road risk maps - how do these work?

A: They show the distribution of crash risk on Britain's motorways and A roads, raising awareness of how risk changes as users move around. The huge disparity in risk across the network provides a platform for understanding why some roads are safer than others and the solutions available to improve safety on the riskiest routes.

Q: What's been your biggest success?

A: We established EuroNCAP and EuroRAP, both now worldwide programmes. Several of our published reports have provided the basis of new legislation or government policy on road safety.

Q: Do you work with any other road safety organisations?

A: The Road Safety Foundation is a founder member of the FIA Foundation and frequently works with other FIA members in Britain and abroad including the RAC Foundation, AA and IAM.

Q: What role can driving instructors play in your work?

A: Driving instructors play a fundamental role in instilling knowledge of how driving behaviour can increase or decrease risk of a collision in different circumstances. Students who vocalise their actions and decision making during lessons have been shown to be more aware of the risks they face, and particularly the reasons for speed limits and traffic laws which match driving conditions with road design and layout.

Driverless cars: Is this the future of motoring?

New technology, that could allow cars to travel on motorways without any input from the driver, has successfully undergone its first real-world trials.

The EU-financed SARTRE (Safe Road Trains for The Environment) project is based around the idea of a convoy of vehicles, or 'road train', all controlled by one lead driver.

Wireless technology in each car measures the distance, speed and direction and automatically adjusts to the car in front. The driver is then free to relax while the convoy proceeds towards its long haul destination.

The SARTRE team has for the first time trialled the technology outside of simulators, using Volvo's test track in Sweden. The tests included a lead vehicle and a single following car.

The successful test was a "major milestone", says Tom Robinson, SARTRE co-ordinator at engineering firm Ricardo.

He said road trains would help improve road safety, as they eliminate the human factor which is the cause of at least 80 per cent of



accidents: "Road trains offer the prospect of improved road safety, better road space utilization, improved driver comfort on long journeys and reduced fuel consumption and hence CO2 emissions."

Trial participant Eric Coelingh, an engineering specialist at Volvo, said: "We are very pleased to see that the various systems work so well together already the first time. After all, the systems come from seven SARTRE-member companies in four countries."

Project researchers believe the technology behind the SARTRE system could be in use in a few years, however, it may take much longer for European member nations to pass laws that allow it to be widely used.

How it works

Drivers who want to join a road train state their destination and are guided by their on-board navigation system to the nearest convoy. The car joins the rear of the queue and the system takes control over the car.

The lead vehicle, for instance a bus, is driven by a professional driver, and controls the vehicles following it via wireless radio communication.

As they approach their destination, drivers take control of their own vehicles and leave the road train by pulling out to one side. The other vehicles in the convoy automatically close the gap and continue on their journey.



See a video of the trial here:

volvo.qbrick.com/index.aspx?cid=2&mode=3&mid=564

A round up of this month's news





Maestro cards

From mid April 2011, DSA will no longer be accepting Maestro cards for test bookings and other payments.

If you're registered with DSA as a business or trainer booker and your nominated payment card is a Maestro, you'll need to change it to another card in writing (post or fax) to **DSA Business ID section, PO Box 280, Newcastle upon Tyne NE99 1FP** or fax **0300 200 1155**.

Theory test trainer bookers must log onto the online booking service and either delete or amend their nominated payment card details saved within the 'Favourite form of payment' field.

DSA accepts the following cards:

 MasterCard,  Visa,
 Delta,  Visa Electron

Complaints about online advertising

The Advertising Standards Agency (ASA) is now able to investigate complaints about marketing messages on websites. Driving instructors who want to complain about online advertising should contact ASA directly on <http://asa.org.uk/Regulation-Explained/Online-remit.aspx> where they will find an online complaints form. Please don't contact DSA - we have no powers to deal with these complaints.

Posters in test centres

All driving test centres have a notice board for DSA posters. The majority of centres also have a smaller, non-DSA notice board for other posters of interest to approved driver and rider trainers or learners. If you'd like to put up a poster, please email an electronic version (pdf or jpeg), along with details of the test centres you'd like to display it in, to dsaposters@dsa.gsi.gov.uk. All applications will be assessed for suitability and are subject to space availability. Posters of a commercial nature will not be accepted.

Motorcycle e-newsletter

DSA has published a new issue of the motorcycle update e-newsletter for approved training bodies and motorcycle trainers. You can read it online [here](#). You can find previous issues on the DSA website in the motorcycle news archive.

Motorcycle incident reporting

DSA is working to improve the motorcycle incident reporting process. Part of this work includes updating the incident reporting form and developing a clear notification and escalation process. All motorcycle trainers must fill out an incident reporting form where an incident occurs during training. We hope the new form and process will be ready to be sent out to motorcycle trainers in April.

Get in touch

For the latest DSA news and information visit dft.gov.uk/dsa

Information for candidates is available on direct.gov.uk/motoring and driver and rider trainers can visit businesslink.gov.uk/transport

Book and manage your test appointments at direct.gov.uk/drivingtest or businesslink.gov.uk/transport

A list of useful contact details can be found at dft.gov.uk/dsa

What do you think of this issue of Despatch ezine? Email your comments to pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk



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