



FIFE IAM

Kingdom of Fife Group IAM, helping improve road safety in Fife and beyond.

April 2019

Covid-19 and KofG IAM

As you will have noticed, due to Covid-19, IAM RoadSmart took the decision to temporarily suspend all on-road learning. For the safety of both our observers and our associates, we fully support this decision.

I certainly don't want to use this edition of the newsletter to focus on the virus, I think there is enough outlets doing that just now so I'll try to steer away from it as much as possible although there are a few articles I feel I need to touch on for both road safety and general health of your vehicle.

Other than those, I hope to provide a welcome distraction whether you are a key worker or remaining at home. Whatever your situation, we hope to continue to provide you with some useful information and entertainment until we are able to meet in person once again.

Stay safe, stay well and hopefully stay in contact with us through our new website, our social media channels or by email with one of the committee.

New website

Its taken us a wee while but we've updated our website to bring us a new modern look that should help make finding information easier.

The address is the same though so why not have a look at :

www.kofgiam.org.uk

Maintaining your car

Apparently more than two thirds of people are not 'key workers' and therefore should only be making essential trips. That means that our cars are being used significantly less and that may lead to issues when it comes time to start to venture out into the world again. I've included a few tips from the RAC to help keep your car in tip top condition if it isn't being used.

- Look after your battery - run your car for at least 15 minutes every so often or consider purchasing a trickle charger or battery conditioner.
- Pay attention to tyres - even sitting parked, tyres can lose pressure and will need topped up with air. More than that, if they are soft and left in the same position they may develop flat spots so make sure you keep them at the right pressure.
- Give the car a good clean (whilst maintaining social distance) to keep all the dust, bird droppings and pollen of your paintwork. This will help keep your paintwork healthier in the longer term.

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Drink driving and the festive period!

As you would expect, there was quite a lot of information being put out before Christmas around drink driving - particularly reminding people that they're not guaranteed to be under the limit if driving after drinking the night before.

The Fife branch of Police Scotland put out some advice during an operation to tackle drink driving. The operation was focussed on drivers speeding during the festive period. Anyone found speeding, even a few miles over the speed limit was breathalysed, as much to raise awareness of drink driving as it was to catch them.

The operation did however see just over 120 people breathalysed with just under 10% of those stopped being reported for being over the prescribed limit for alcohol or drugs.

A police representative suggested that if you've been out drinking of an evening then you may not be fit to drive until late morning or early afternoon. This is based on the Scottish limit of 50mg per 100ml of blood which means that one glass of wine, beer or spirit over a 2 hour period could see the average person being over the limit.



Uninsured drivers

Staying on police campaigns, in the last week of January Police Scotland carried out a 'Drive Insured' campaign.

In 2019, over 7,000 vehicles were seized as a result of vehicles being uninsured. In the last week in January, 271 uninsured vehicles were detected with 113 being seized by the Police. As a reminder, the Police have the right to seize any vehicle that is not properly insured and in some cases the vehicle may be destroyed.

As well as some people having their vehicle seized, all of them received a fixed penalty notice with a £300 fine and six penalty points added to their license. Other penalties can include having to pay £150 to have your vehicle released, if its been seized, There is also the option to be taken to court, face an unlimited fine and be disqualified from driving - although I assume that is for repeated offences.

The Motor Insurance Bureau work with the police to help identify and catch uninsured drivers. They state that there is evidence to suggest that uninsured vehicles are consistently used to commit wider criminal activities therefore addressing this issue helps deter criminal activity. The suggestion is also that uninsured vehicles which are involved in crime are also more likely to be involved in collisions which will impact those that have paid insurance. In the last 10 years, through work such as the Drive Insured campaign above, the number of uninsured vehicles on the roads has dropped by 50%.

What will Brexit mean to Insurance?

All UK vehicle insurance provides at least third party cover for driving in EU Countries. When driving in non-EU countries, a green card is required to prove you have the relevant insurance. From 1 January 2021 you will also require a green card to drive in EU countries.

You'll need to print out a physical copy of the green card for any trip outside the UK.

Are you paying a premium for your insurance this year?

At the end of January, the Association of British Insurers stated that the last quarter was the third highest for insurance premiums since 2012. But why is this?

12% of your policy is Insurance Premium Tax which is paid directly to the government and over £6 billion was paid to the treasury last year. In 2015 this was set at 6%. A change to the formula for high-value injury claims was amended in July last year which also led to increases in the premium. Increased repair costs, a result of more sophisticated cars, and an increase in car thefts by 18% also added to premiums. On average in the last quarter, fully comprehensive cover would cost you £484.

Santa Run

You may remember that in the last newsletter, we highlighted that we would be carrying out a Santa run to the Children's ward in Kirkcaldy to help entertain those kids that were unfortunate enough to be spending Christmas on the ward. Its your donations that made it happen!



Our Christmas Campaign

We'd asked for help and you stepped forward again so firstly a big thank you to our members.

In total we raised £440 pounds and from the picture on the right, you can see that we used it to buy a wide range of toys for children of various ages.

On 22 December, some members of the group met at North Queensferry car park and travelled together to Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. Some of them were even festively dressed which must have been a site for other motorists in the area.



It was a great initiative that was well received by the hospital and I'd also like to take the opportunity to thank our Chairperson that coordinated the drive. As a side note, it also helped publicise our group as we made a few of the local papers after the event. We rely on the generosity of our members so a final thank you goes to all those that donated money at a time when its not often readily available.

Speeding during Lockdown

You would have thought that during a national emergency and with most people staying at home, accidents would be less and those that were on the road would be less likely to have an accident and take up emergency services time. You won't be surprised to know that unfortunately that's not necessarily the case. A few reports have shown people driving irresponsibly, particularly in relation to excess speed.

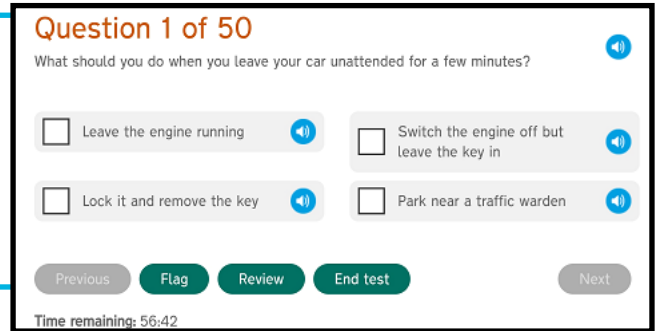
Some crazy reports have come out over the last few weeks including [this report](#) from the BBC stating that one driver was caught travelling at over 130mph in a 40mph limit. Closer to home, the [Edinburgh News](#) reports numerous speeding offences over 100mph topped by a driver on the A90 doing in excess of 130mph.

Reports suggest that whilst there has been a 60% reduction in traffic since the lockdown started, speeding offences have only decreased by less than 40%. This equates to an overall increase in speeding offences based on the level of traffic.

If you are needing to travel during lockdown then its advisable to use your IAM training to stay vigilant and be aware that even during this time poor driving and accidents are still occurring frequently.

Would you pass the test?

There have been a few articles around the increased difficulty of both the theory and practical tests. In this article we take a look at that in more detail.



The screenshot shows a digital interface for a driving theory test. At the top, it says "Question 1 of 50" in orange. Below that is the question: "What should you do when you leave your car unattended for a few minutes?". There are four multiple-choice options, each with a checkbox and a speaker icon: "Leave the engine running", "Switch the engine off but leave the key in", "Lock it and remove the key", and "Park near a traffic warden". At the bottom, there are navigation buttons: "Previous", "Flag", "Review", "End test", and "Next". A timer at the bottom left indicates "Time remaining: 56:42".

Have pass rates fallen?

An article by [VanMonster](#) had picked up on some information from the Department for Transport (DfT) that stated that the number of people passing their theory test had fallen. As a result, they decided to carry out their own test and you can find it on the link above. VanMonster asked 15 questions and found that only 1 in 20 people passed their version of the test - that was just over 7% of all drivers that took the test.

That doesn't sound great does it but lets put this into context. They surveyed 2000 people with a sample of 15 test questions taken from the theory tests. The national test pass rate is 86% so in order to pass this test people could only get 2 questions wrong. Its also a mixture of all tests including at least one question from the lorries theory test - not one everyone will know.

The DVSA have mock theory tests on their website so if you fancy having a go at a mock paper then you can find one [here](#). You have just under an hour to complete the test but with 50 questions you can fly through it much quicker than that. The site also has some examples of the hazard perception test for you to try too.

The [BBC](#) also had an article from around a year ago, suggesting a similar thing. It had highlighted that the new driving test had been introduced in December 2017 and 1 year on (at the time the article was written) the practical pass rate had fallen to 45.5% which had been the first time it had dropped below 46% since 2010. That being said the pass rate for the practical test has only varied by a couple of percent over a 12 year period.

Motorcycles are best - no that's not my view, that's what the test passes say. Whilst the 2019 pass rates for cars was 46% the motorcycle pass rate (practical) sits at 72%. On average, over the last 10 years, the practical pass test for bikes sits around 70.5% whilst for cars that's around 46.7%.

The theory test is no different. For car theory, the average pass rate over the last 10 years is 52.7% whilst for motorcycles its 74.2%. Both have dropped slightly though as for cars the highest pass rate was 65.4% in back in 2007 & 08 whilst for Motorcycles the highest pass rate was 81.4% in 2010/11. So both have fallen although cars have dropped slightly more.

What about Fife?

The DVSA produce test data by each test centre although the latest I could find was in 2011/12. What it did show was that Fifes pass rate was higher than the national average. For Motorbikes, 84.7% passed whilst 65.8% of cars passed their theory test.

Transport statistics

A few wee updates from the local Fife Police stats as well as the release of the annual transport statistics and a few other linked pieces



National Stats

Within a day of each other, the [national transport statistics](#) and the [quarterly police stats](#) were both released at the end of February. We look at both in a bit more detail here.

National police stats

On page 2, we showed that Fife stats for drink driving were around 10% of those tested. This was slightly higher than the national average of around 6.7%. Across Scotland over 8,500 people were stopped and 580 offences were detected.

Between April and December 19, there were 123 fatalities on Scotland's roads, this is down by 10% on the same period the time before. This figure includes motorbikes which positively dropped from 31 bikers killed last year down to 24 this year. Unfortunately at a local level, this isn't quite the case. For the last quarter, the number of fatal collisions rose from 9 to 12 and serious injuries increased from 75 to 84.

Something I didn't know was that over the last 10 years the number of people killed in collisions with older people has increased by 85%. Police Scotland have been working with partners to reduce this figure and surely Fife IAM must have a role to play in bringing this down.

National transport statistics

The annual transport statistics were released by the Transport Scotland at the end of February. In total there were 2.99 million vehicles licensed in Scotland in 2018 which means that on average every household had access to 1.2 vehicles. This means vehicle ownership has increased by 12% in 10 years.

However, there has been a decrease in vehicle registrations for the last 2 years and given the current circumstances, I can only assume that this will drop again for 2020. We are however driving more kilometres every year. This is up 0.3% on the previous year and up almost 10% from 2008.

On a positive note, road casualties continue to fall with the country currently having the lowest number of road casualties ever, that's got to be a positive for a group such as ourselves. Overall road casualties were down but this year motorbikes casualties increase by 3%. The majority of casualties involved car drivers (60%) whilst motorbikes accounted for 8% of all road casualties. Pedestrians accounted for 15% and bicycles 8%.

Private vehicles still accounted for 40% of carbon emissions from transport therefore we are going to need to see a wider introduction of alternative fuel vehicles to help reduce these emissions. On a side note, did you see that scientists think they've cracked hydrogen fuel? Maybe we'll pick up on that in the next edition.

This is just a quick run through and I may pull out some points for a more in depth look at what it means for us as a group. On the whole, the takeaway is positive - more vehicles on the road, driving more miles (well kilometres) but road casualties continue to drop. Now all we need is for the emissions to follow and we'll be winning all round.