

INSIGHT

THE INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED MOTORISTS GROUP BRIEFING

WELCOME

Welcome to Insight, the monthly newsletter produced for the IAM Group Network and its members.

DRIVING IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS



This month I represented the IAM at a panel held at the Department for Transport (DfT) looking into Winter Resilience.

It was an independent inquiry and the first time I had done this - but I found it quite revealing.

The IAM punches above its weight when it comes to driving expertise and - while we weren't the only motoring organisation giving evidence to this inquiry - we were the smallest by far.

There was inevitably a focus on salt supplies and the state of the UK roads.

My take was that, while the distribution of salt supplies wasn't as good as it should have been, at least part of the problem centred on the lack of communications.

As drivers, we didn't know really which roads were open and which weren't. So how were we meant to plan our journey?

In terms of driver education, there was predictably a lot of talk about skid pan training - but frankly, I felt this rather missed the point. During the really severe weather, yes, part of the issue was about drivers stopping effectively, in safety. They wanted to know what to do and how to prepare the vehicles. But the main priority was getting them going in the first place!

Standard advice about "not travelling unless absolutely necessary" had proved particularly pointless as the days of snow extended. What constitutes "absolutely necessary"? I pointed out that the UK grinds to a halt at the first fall of snow and that is an unacceptable state.

That said, the IAM welcomed this independent review and I agreed that the vast majority of road users, householders and businesses would like to exercise their sense of personal responsibility when dealing with weather related issues.



The role of government, central and local, should be to allow us as drivers to make informed decisions and safely contribute to keeping the country moving.

For example, during the many TV and radio interviews that Chief Examiner Peter Rodger did, one of the questions that came up was personal responsibility. Is it right to clear snow from the pathway in front of an individual's property? Or does this action somehow render the household liable if a pedestrian subsequently slips or falls?

The IAM believes that keeping traffic flowing is a key economic and safety function of road authorities and budget constraints should not have a part to play in winter maintenance decisions. IAM members are among the British drivers who already pay sufficient tax on their motoring to fund a winter maintenance operation geared up to the worst conditions.

Do you have anything your group wishes to add? Please let me know at ceo@iam.org.uk.



Simon Best
Chief Executive
ceo@iam.org.uk

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S INTRO

MOTORCYCLE TESTING

CYCLING MEMBERS SIGN UP

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

NEW MPs

MOTORCYCLE TESTING

The latest consultation that will be of interest to our motorcycle groups is the review of the bike testing arrangements. It was announced this month by the new Road Safety Minister Mike Penning.

The Minister said that road safety is a top priority and the testing and training on offer is vital to cut the disproportionately high numbers of motorcyclists killed and injured on our roads each year.

But he added: "It is clear there are concerns among the motorcycling community about the safety of the new test's off-road module. There have also been complaints about the difficulty for riders in some areas of accessing the off-road test centres.

"That is why I am today asking riders, safety groups and motorcycle industry representatives to come forward with their ideas for how testing and training can be improved to ensure we

produce safe, confident and responsible riders."

The new test was introduced in order to meet the requirements of the second EU Directive on driving licences. While most elements in the off-road module 1 test are required by the Directive, there may be scope to make some changes to the way in which the test is carried out.

It's really good that the Minister is taking a long hard look at this. We have heard too many stories about needless off-road crashes occurring during tests, and bikers having a long, and far from relaxed, ride to get to their test centre. Again, you can send your thoughts to us here, ceo@iam.org.uk or submit views to the DfT direct, by 31 July. Views can be sent to the DfT by email, RUSD4consultation@dft.gsi.gov.uk.

CYCLING MEMBERS SIGN UP

And since my last newsletter, we have introduced a new way to be a member – as a cyclist.

Central to the initiative is a new book – How to be a better cyclist – which has been sent to every IAM Group. Observers flicking through it will be pleased to see that the principles of IPSGA have been adopted and adapted for those using bicycles by our author, John Franklin.

There is no test involved for this category, but "the system" is just as relevant to those on two wheels as it is our bedrock membership categories, commercial, car and motorcycle. The new guide provides a comprehensive guide to safer cycling and is aimed at current and would be cyclists of any level of experience. It also champions the idea of cyclists taking up a primary position on the road. The book can be used for personal study, or in conjunction with training to the National Cycle Training standard.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

7 July Deadline for responses to the NRG (National Representatives Group) paper called: "Quality Assurance – Skill for Life Process". Chief Examiner Peter Rodger and the NRG are seeking views from Groups about the standards we propose to set for the "delivery" of Skill for Life and to obtain feedback on those standards. Details from: standards@iam.org.uk



17 July IAM Motorcycle Conference – invitations have been out for a while now so please submit your completed applications asap to: lyn.francis@iam.org.uk

31 August Deadline for advanced test passes if you have motorcyclist associates who wish to enter the IAM competition to Win a Yamaha worth £11.5k

NEW MPs



Do you know who your local MP is following the election? Or come to that, your Councillor?

I ask because you should have seen by now copies of the letters we have been issuing on your behalf to the "class of 2010", encouraging new MPs and Councillors to get to know their local IAM Group by taking a DriveCheck.

Those of you who have been around a while will remember that we had some

very good uptake from MPs in the past. In a way, it's a lot easier for an IAM Group to offer a one hour assessment rather than try to persuade a busy MP to take time out to commit to the full Skill for Life. We've had one or two responses already. If you have missed the letters by any chance, you can get copies from: press.office@iam.org.uk