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AA highlights sun dazzle danger

Monday 6th October 2014

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Drivers and other road users blinded by the glare of the sun have contributed on average to 28 road deaths a year since 2010, according to analysis carried out by the AA.

The AA says that "dazzle remains a stubborn factor" in the injury of 3,900 road users each year - despite the number of people killed and injured on UK roads falling 7.4% and 12% respectively since 2010.

The AA published its findings at the time of year when sunrise and sunset coincide with the busiest times of day on the roads.

Edmund King, president of the AA, said: "European research shows that the rate of head-on crashes involving lorries nearly quadruples in twilight conditions. They also tend to happen on rural roads."

In a [follow up piece on its website](#), Road Safety Analysis (RSA) described media coverage of the AA's findings as "excitable reporting", pointing out that the AA's data refers to all deaths where 'Dazzling Sun' was identified as a contributory factor for one of the vehicles involved.

RSA used its MAST Professional software to "dig a little deeper" to examine the contributory factor (CF) CF706 'Dazzling Sun', and points out that "other contributory factors may have played a part in the collision taking place and the results do not mean that the sun was solely to blame".

RSA also looked at the collision data in terms of recent history, time of day and age of driver, and concluded that: "We concur with the AA about the risk (from sun glare) increasing recently and agree with their advice to motorists.

"Drivers should take extra care early in the morning, especially in deep mid-winter when the sun is at its lowest.

"Mature drivers should consider their options regarding eyewear, ensure their eyes are checked regularly and appropriate tinted glasses are available."



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Dazzle can also occur to reflective surfaces such as the rear window or front windows of vehicles in front or their number plate. Anything of a metallic nature can reflect light sometimes into ones eyes. Even a watch face can accidentally blind one. The hood of the dashboard above the steering wheel can reflect a lot of light back up into the window that becomes a ghost and can effect or reduce vision.

bob craven Lancs

Agree (3) | Disagree (0)

+3

Dazzle can occur in an instant and without warning - as when the setting sun flashed across my GPS screen on Friday so that I missed my turning. And lost my friend driving in convoy, who had just missed getting through the last traffic lights behind me!

Idris Francis Fight Back With Facts Petersfield

Agree (1) | Disagree (1)

0

Therein lies the problem: "in the distance you can see to be clear".

If the sun is in one's face the distance seen is dramatically reduced by that sunlight so it appertains to all vehicles at all times on our roads. Sunlight does dramatically reduce what can be seen if directly looking towards it. It doesn't matter if it's a pedestrian or a bus or a HGV or a cyclist or motorcyclist. It doesn't matter if any of those vehicles are driving with lights on - they will not be seen. Every vehicle with the sun behind them is vulnerable to the brightness of the sun, and a smidsy happens.

Bob Craven, Lancs

Agree (4) | Disagree (0)

+4

Just checked and it's still there in the Highway Code (Rule 126): "Drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see to be clear." And nothing to say unless you can't see because of sun glare or if it's only a pedestrian that you might hit.

I remember learning in my driving lessons if you are dazzled slow down or stop (even more effective if the source of the dazzle is a vehicle travelling away from where you are).

David S.

Agree (6) | Disagree (1)

+5

Not unrelated and just as blinding - motorists who flash you at night - using their main beam! They know not to use main beam when driving towards other traffic, so why give a blinding flash (or several sometimes) just because that's the way the vehicle is configured? Much more considerate to flick-off the dipped beam to sidelights monetarily if you need to 'flash' at all at night.

Hugh Jones, Cheshire

Agree (4) | Disagree (1)

+3

As a motorcyclist I have been particularly aware of this problem by the number of drivers who at a junction and looking toward me and the sun and do not wind their window down looking through a dirty window. They don't move the moveable sunblind from in front of them to the side window and that will act like a sunblind should and shield their eyes from the sun. That's all it sometimes takes to save a life.

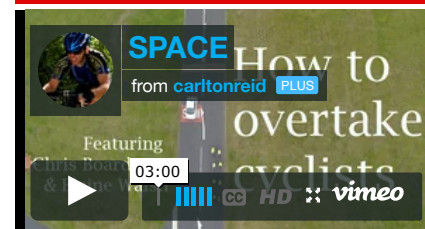
bob craven Lancs

be shown wearing helmets?



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VIDEOS



How to overtake cyclists

A new film featuring British Cycling's Chris Boardman and driving instructor Blaine Walsh shows drivers how to safely overtake cyclists.

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Agree (4) | Disagree (0)

+4

A problem, yes - if you ever drive to Llanysul from Carmarthen in August in late evening take care when exiting a sharp bend under a railway bridge a the bottom of a valley only to find the sun directly ahead on the brown of the steep hill!

I am more concerned however, and increasingly so, about the way car designers are now running riot with LED rear lights as a means of decoration, that dazzle at the best of times but in the wet must be causing accidents. All they need to do is to warn of their presence, not to turn busy roads into Sunset Strip.

Idris Francis Fight Back With Facts Petersfield

Agree (3) | Disagree (7)

-4

In two of the 55 cases that I studied, glare from the sun was the primary cause of the collisions. One male pedestrian (aged 84) was in the shadows as the vehicle was entering the road from a minor road. A female pedestrian (aged 83) was crossing the road, but appeared to have bent down as the vehicle turned into the road from a minor road. In these two cases that occurred during daylight, the glare came from the sun which was low in the sky and drivers were unable to discern the pedestrians.

Elaine, Northern Ireland

Agree (4) | Disagree (1)

+3

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