

MOTORISTS WARNED TO GET INSURED AHEAD OF CRACKDOWN

Motorists are being warned to insure their vehicles ahead of a new crackdown to tackle the menace of uninsured driving.

Under the new Continuous Insurance Enforcement law – which will affect all motorists from June 20 – it is an offence to keep an uninsured vehicle, rather than just to drive when uninsured.

A national advertising campaign will be launched by the Motor Insurers' Bureau today to raise awareness of the law.

Road Safety Minister Mike Penning said:

“Uninsured drivers are a danger on our roads, killing 160 and injuring a further 23,000 people each year, and they cost honest motorists £500 million in extra premiums. That is why we are introducing this tough new law which will leave uninsured drivers with nowhere to hide.

“Our message is clear – get insured or face a fine, court action or seeing your car seized and destroyed.”

Ashton West, Chief Executive at the Motor Insurers' Bureau, said:

“The change in law is a stepping up of enforcement activity, so that not only those vehicles driven without insurance will be caught. Now the registered keeper must make sure that their vehicle is insured all the time.

“In order to make sure everyone is aware of the new scheme, a national awareness campaign will be shown on satellite and terrestrial TV channels.

“Around four percent of vehicles have no motor insurance at any given time, and this needs to change so that is why this new enforcement approach is so important.”

Under the new system:

- The DVLA will work in partnership with the Motor Insurers' Bureau to identify uninsured vehicles.
- Motorists will receive a letter telling them that their vehicle appears to be uninsured and warning them that they will be fined unless they take action.
- If the keeper fails to insure the vehicle they will be given a £100 fine.
- If the vehicle remains uninsured - regardless of whether the fine is paid – further action will be taken. If the vehicle is on public land it could then be clamped, seized and destroyed. Alternatively court action could be taken, with the offender facing a fine of up to £1,000.

- Seized vehicles would only be released when the keeper provided evidence that the registered keeper is no longer committing an offence of having no insurance and the person proposing to drive the vehicle away is insured to do so.

Vehicles with a valid Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN) will not be required to be insured.

The new law will run alongside the existing offence of using a vehicle with no insurance, which is enforced by the police. The police seize 180,000 vehicles each year for this offence, and offenders also face a £200 fixed penalty or a court fine of up to £5,000 and possible disqualification.

The DVLA's records will be compared regularly with the Motor Insurance Database (MID) and this process will identify registered keepers of vehicles that appear to have no insurance. All drivers can check their vehicle is recorded on the MID for free - visit www.askMID.com.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Latest estimates are that around 4% (around 1.4 million) of GB motorists drive uninsured. The penalty for **driving** without insurance is a maximum fine of £5,000 and 6-8 penalty points or possible disqualification. Around 200,000 offenders are convicted for uninsured driving every year.
2. Currently every responsible motorist pays an average £30 each year within their premiums to cover crashes involving uninsured and untraced drivers. It is also estimated that uninsured and untraced drivers kill 160 people and injure 23,000 every year.
3. Measures already introduced in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 gave police improved access to the Motor Insurance Database and powers to seize vehicles driven without insurance. In 2009 around 180,000 uninsured vehicles were seized.

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