



Grampian Police warning to uninsured drivers

GRAMPIAN Police is highlighting its ongoing drive to rid the North east of uninsured motorists.

During 2008, an average of just over one car was crushed every day in the Grampian Police area for being used without insurance.

Sergeant Kenneth Davidson of Roads Policing said: "Uninsured motorists pose a real risk to road users and we continue to target drivers who ignore the law in this regard.

"We often see frustration, concern and worry from law-abiding motorists when they discover that they have been involved in a collision with an uninsured driver, and it is important we remove as many of these individuals from our roads as possible.

"In certain cases, driving without insurance also has links to criminality and it is our strong desire to deny criminals the use of our roads in this way.

"While a vehicle may be insured, some drivers still fall foul of the law because they themselves are not specifically covered by insurance. We've encountered this type of issue, particularly with friends and family of vehicle owners believing they are insured to drive, when in fact they are not covered.

"We recommend vehicle owners should always be aware of the extent of their motor insurance cover, including those authorised to drive the vehicle. If officers find a driver is uninsured - regardless of a certificate of insurance existing for the vehicle permitting others to drive - it is most likely the vehicle will still be seized."

When found to be without insurance, a vehicle is likely to be removed from the road by officers and placed in storage. In 2008, this happened on 1,127 occasions. At that point, the owner has up to seven working days to retrieve the vehicle before it is scrapped.

The vehicle will only be returned following payment of a £150 fee and the production of valid driving documentation. If no other offences are detected, offending drivers are usu-



Sergeant Kenneth Davidson with a crushed vehicle.

ally offered a conditional offer of a fixed penalty which results in a £200 fine and a six penalty point endorsement on their driving licence.

In 2008, 370 vehicles ended up going to the crusher in the Grampian area and, despite proactive enforcement, Grampian officers continue to seize on average almost 100 vehicles a month.

Ashton West, Chief Executive of the Motor Insurers Bureau said: "The major concern for us right now is that some people will have to make some tough choices in tough economic times.

"For the cost of about half a pint of beer a day, you can be insured and it is the responsible and right thing to do. We want people to understand that if you don't insure, you will be caught. Without insurance you have no right to use your vehicle on the road. The work we have done so far to cut the number of cars being driven uninsured is encouraging.

"The Motor Insurers Database is the only central record of more than 34 million insured vehicles in the UK and, if your vehicle doesn't appear on it, then your car is at risk of

being seized by the police. Anyone can check their vehicle appears on it today at www.askMID.com.

"More needs to be done. By 2011, it will be even harder for the uninsured to hide from prosecution. A new scheme will identify vehicles that appear to be kept uninsured and the registered keeper will be subject to a fixed penalty fine if the vehicle remains uninsured."

Any information on uninsured vehicles or drivers can be passed to Grampian Police on 0845 600 5 700 or the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.