

BADLY LIT VEHICLES

SHINING LIGHT

Is Your Vehicle Causing A Hazard Due To Defective Lighting?

Every day, tens of thousands of people take to the road with one or more defective lights. Badly lit and even unlit cars, motorcycles and of course cycles, are now a common sight but how confident are we that our own vehicle is properly lit up?



Lights on vehicles serve two vital purposes. They allow the driver, or rider, to see the road and other road users. They also enable other road users to see the vehicle.

Common examples of badly lit vehicles include:

The Night Rider

Usually to be found in well-lit urban areas, night riders think they can see clearly and assume that other road users can see them. They are often unaware that they haven't switched on their lights, until stopped by the police, or when they are hit by another vehicle.

Cyclops

Almost as dangerous as cars with no lights are cars with only one working headlamp or tail lamp. The driver's road vision is reduced by about half and other road users get a false impression of the width of the vehicle.

The Bright Spark

The bright spark believes in using all their lights - all the time. They've paid for them so why not use them? The problem is that the dazzle caused by too much light can be almost as dangerous to other road users as an unlit vehicle. Even bright sparks may be unaware of the problem they are causing, having forgotten to dip headlamps when faced with on-coming traffic.

The Foggy Thinker

In some situations, the foggy thinker may have forgotten that their fog lamps are still on after a previous journey or during patchy fog or they may be unaware of the workings of the model of car they are driving, particularly if it is new or a hire car.

Loaded

Motorists often forget to adjust their lighting according to what's in their vehicle. A fully laden car struggling home with the holiday luggage will inevitably cause the beam from headlights to point higher, potentially dazzling on-coming traffic.

Cross Eyed and Confused?

Poor or infrequent maintenance may result in mis-aligned lights. These should be checked regularly, either by the old-fashioned method of shining them against a brick wall, or on a regular basis as part of a service. not just once a year during the MoT.

The RAC Foundation's lighting fact file shows:

- October and November generally have the highest road traffic casualty figures in the year.
- Of the 7.3 million cars which failed the MoT test in 2001/2002, 16% had lighting faults. 10% of motorcycles failed on lighting grounds.

It is dangerous as well as illegal to use a vehicle without lights and yet there are thousands of dim motorists on our roads. Lights enable drivers to see and be seen by other road users. Badly lit vehicles are a nuisance and a danger. A weekly check of all lights is important, particularly when the nights and mornings are getting darker. Replacing a bulb is usually straightforward and inexpensive and could save a life. Think about it.