

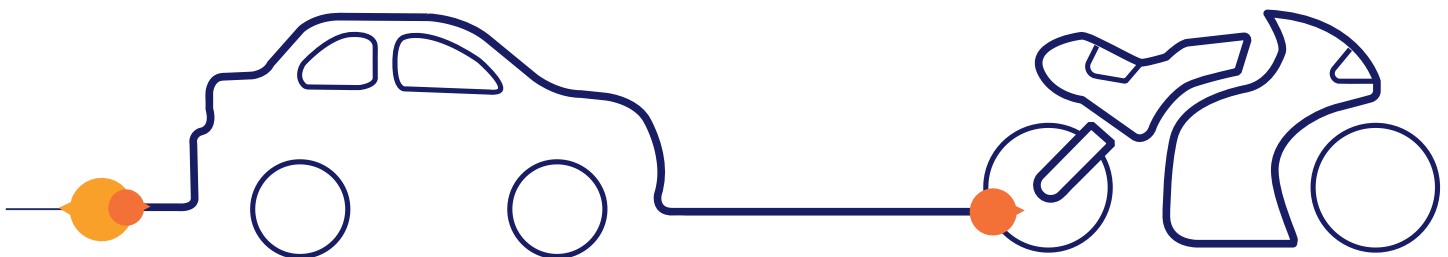


Regional Coordinator Newsletter March 2025



Allan Mauchline –Regions-
Scotland & Ireland

Date: 13th of MARCH 2025



Welcome to my March 2025 newsletter. I recently attended a webinar from an Interest Group in Wales regarding the 20 mph implementation in September 2023 of the restricted roads across Wales.

Some interesting statistics show that there has been a significant 28% decrease in road casualties. Evidence from Wales shows that even with limited enforcement, public acceptance of the 20mph limit is steadily increasing.

Because this 20 mph restriction was implemented throughout Wales, 'lower speeds lead to reduced collision risks', translating into lower insurance premiums for drivers. This was estimated by one large insurance company to be currently £45 per driver per year. Which leaves me considering if this was implemented throughout the UK, with a national reduced collision risk, what would be the insurance dividend?

This month's discussion Topic.

Driver Distraction: New Technology Systems (Part 2)




Driving any new car, is or many, a definite pleasure. Today, whether it is a new purchase or a rented vehicle, this often means getting used to new gadgets. Some may be obvious while others may come as a surprise. In the case of a purchase, the Salesman would normally ensure we are aware and demonstrate how to employ any in-vehicle technology. Although, often this illustrated knowledge can be quickly forgotten due to our decision not to use it.

New car technology when used, while offering a range of conveniences and safety features, can unintentionally contribute to driver distraction in several ways. These systems, designed to enhance the driving experience, often require attention, interaction, or mental engagement that can divert a driver's focus from the road.

NB. Following changes on 25 March 2022, motorists in the UK are breaking the law if they use a handheld mobile phone behind the wheel for any use. This includes taking photos or videos, scrolling through music playlists, using streaming services, or playing games.



1. Infotainment Systems

Many modern vehicles come equipped with complex infotainment systems that include touch screens, navigation, music streaming, voice controls, and more. While they offer convenience, they often require the driver to:

-  Physically interact with the screen (tap, swipe, etc.), taking their hands off the wheel.
-  Look away from the road to locate and operate controls.
-  Navigate through menus to find the right function (e.g., changing the radio station or selecting a destination), which can be mentally engaging and distracting.

2. Voice Assistants

Some cars come with voice-controlled systems. While voice commands are meant to allow drivers to keep their hands on the wheel and eyes on the road, there are still pitfalls:

-  Misunderstanding commands: Voice recognition isn't always perfect, and drivers may need to repeat commands or rephrase them, which can cause distraction as they try to get the system to work correctly.
-  Multi-step interactions: For example, asking the system to play a specific song, change the temperature, or navigate to a destination might require multiple voice commands, which still takes attention away from driving.



3. Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)

ADAS features such as adaptive cruise control, lane-keeping assist, parking assist, and collision warnings are meant to improve safety, but they can lead to a false sense of security:

- 👉 Over-reliance on technology: Some drivers might feel overly confident in these systems and allow their attention to drift, not fully analysing the road, thinking that the car can handle most of the driving demands.
- 👉 Alerts and warnings: Many ADAS systems trigger visual or auditory alerts (e.g., lane departure warnings or forward collision alerts). While these are meant to enhance safety, they can sometimes be overwhelming or distracting, causing drivers to focus on the warning rather than the road.

4. Automated Features

Some cars now come with semi-autonomous driving features. While these systems can handle some aspects of driving, the driver must remain attentive and ready to take control at any moment. However, some drivers misuse these systems, believing the car can drive itself entirely, leading to disengagement from active driving.

- 👉 Reduced driver engagement: As the vehicle takes on more driving tasks, the driver may feel less need to pay attention, making it easier to become distracted.
- 👉 Misuse of technology: A driver may attempt tasks like reading or even watching videos while the car is in autonomous mode, thinking the system is foolproof.

5. Smartphone Integration

Many car manufacturers integrate Smartphone apps with the vehicle's infotainment system, allowing drivers to access calls, messages, social media, and other apps directly from the dashboard. While trying to read or respond to messages or notifications, the driver may take their eyes off the road and get mentally engaged in an ongoing conversation or app interaction.

6. Heads-Up Displays (HUD)

Some modern cars feature heads-up displays that project important driving information (e.g., speed, navigation directions) directly onto the windscreen. While HUDs are designed to reduce the need for drivers to glance down at the dashboard, they can still create distraction in a few ways:

- 👉 Cluttered information: When too much information is displayed, it can overwhelm the driver, leading them to focus on the HUD instead of the road.
- 👉 Inaccurate data: If the information is incorrect or out-of-date (for example, navigation directions not updating properly), drivers may spend time trying to interpret the data rather than focusing on driving.

7. Notification Systems

Vehicles now feature a range of notifications for things like tire pressure, engine temperature, and system alerts. While these can be helpful, they can also cause distraction if the notifications are constant or not actionable in the moment. Receiving and processing these alerts can keep the driver engaged mentally, reducing their ability to focus on driving.

Two particularly common technology items I often note can cause issues with a driver are

- 👉 When they normally leave their light selector on the 'auto' setting. Some drivers become unaware what lights are on and often forget how to manually select when it becomes necessary. In the worst instance, they can forget where the light switch is located.
- 👉 TPMS (tyre pressure monitoring systems) many drivers have physically stopped checking their tyres and when asked, say their vehicle will alert them to any problem.



When advanced driver training, discussions with the associate, on their use of these technology topics where pertinent, is essential. Remembering that some manufacturers implement them quite differently can add complexity. So, initial research is advisable.

Additional RoADAR topics



Roadarbenefits.co.uk

Make use of your RoADAR member rewards

Visit [RoADAR Benefits](https://roadarbenefits.co.uk) today to see what offers are currently available to you.

- 🗨️ RoSPA Testing: One RoSPA test taken In February in Scotland. There were four tests taken during February in the Republic of Ireland. There were no tests taken in February in either North Cumbria and South West Scotland or in Northern Ireland.
- 🗨️ ScORSA –Are holding their ‘ScORSA Driving and Riding for Work Summit: ‘How Can Businesses Get It Right?’, on March 20th 2025 | COSLA Conference Centre, Edinburgh. Attendance is free and you can still register if your quick, at <http://click.info.rospa.com/click/gflt-5h6g3-m73jk-b76q58/>
- 🗨️ RoSPA Webinar – By now every RoADAR member should have received an invite to the first RoADAR Webinar to be held on Tuesday 25th March at 11am. If you have not received your invite, your Group Secretary should be able to share it or you can contact me and I will.
- 🗨️ I would like to ask all motorcycle members to remember if you have recently purchased new PPE, please consider donating your unused but useable PPE to a young rider who may not have the finances to purchase proper PPE.

Allan Mauchline
Mobile +447789986097
Email: amauchline@rospa.com

