

NEW HIGHWAY CODE COULD HELP CUT CONGESTION

Roadworks misery and the congestion that goes with them could be radically reduced, according to the IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists), if UK motorists take on board new advice in the Highway Code published today (28 September 2007).

For the first time, the Highway Code has a rule on merging in turn under the section on lane discipline (Rule 134; Highway Code 2007).

We are pleased to see this as we believe it will ease many pinchpoints at roadworks, said IAM Chief Examiner Peter Rodger.

Too often we see a long, empty lane leading up to roadworks, doing nothing, because drivers have been told to get in lane too early. Then there is a tension with people perceived as pushing in. The new recommendation to merge in turn in the Highway Code will encourage drivers to use all the available lanes right up to the lane closure - and could make roadworks less of a problem, he said.

It will avoid frustration and mean everybody gets through the restriction that much quicker.

Mr Rodger, a former Metropolitan Police driving instructor, said that the IAM had long campaigned for merge in turn recognition in the Highway Code.

We are convinced everybody will get through sooner if they merge in turn. If drivers try it, encouraged by the Highway Code, it could be the end to the I'm first, you're next attitude that slows everybody down.

We now need to see this initiative supported by physical merge in turn roadside signs as well, because we know many drivers don't bother with the Highway Code once they have passed their test.

A survey in 2006 supported by the IAM found that in a test, only 29 out of 1000 motorists recognised all of the ten Highway Code signs they were shown.**

The Highway Code is a best selling title in the UK. The new edition - last revised eight years ago - now describes smoking as a distraction for drivers, an increasing problem following the UK wide indoor smoking ban.

"If you are on a long journey, then it makes sense to combine your rest break away from driving with a smoking break. While it is not as big a distraction as a hand held mobile phone, it is not worth the risk. Just think of the consequences of a cigarette dropping into your lap while you are driving," added Mr Rodger.

ENDS

Issued by the IAM Press Office 020 8996 9600. We have an ISDN line for interviews.

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