

## **Kids in cars: the ultimate distraction**

DRIVING TIP

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### **Kids in cars: the ultimate distraction?**

In an ideal world, we would all give our driving 100 per cent of our concentration, 100 per cent of the time. But of course that doesn't happen.

Driving experts acknowledge that internal distractions can be every bit as dangerous as the external distractions. Both are compounded by drivers simply letting their concentration slip, to the point when they are on 'auto pilot'.

But what is the greatest single distraction that drivers have to deal with?

Well, surprisingly, according to a survey by a manufacturer this month, the number one distraction in the car is passengers specifically, the kids in the back.

If you are planning a journey with young children, you do have to be organized. And that goes beyond simply packing the boot with all their stuff, and strapping them in.

Take on board the needs of your young passengers before you start. Plenty of food and especially drink are key, and if it's a long journey put more stops in than you would allow for adult passengers. When you stop for a break, find somewhere that the kids can 'let off steam' while you stretch your legs.

Have a plastic bag (without holes) handy, but out of reach of the children themselves, to cope with travel sickness.

Then when you are back on the road, deploy toys and books, or electronic games that are needed to keep your children quiet.

One idea is a 'day bag' full of surprises that can't be opened until you are underway - packed with pencils, puzzle books and cheap simple amusements. Even long European trips are possible in relative peace and quiet when the back seat passengers are absorbed.

Needless to say, a second adult to look after the children makes a massive difference: leaving the driver to drive.

Young, first-time parents, in particular, tend to be focused on their new offspring almost to the exclusion of everything else. For the rest of us, those 'Baby on board' signs are a good clue that we may be about to encounter a driver prone to sudden noisy (and smelly!) distractions.

ENDS

344 words

### NOTES TO EDITORS

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

2. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) directly influences the driving and riding of more than 160,000 road users a year (full members, associates and commercial clients) in the UK and Ireland. Established in 1956, the IAM is today best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving course. The IAM has grown to become the UK's leading road safety charity, dedicated to raising driving standards, engaging with the road-using public and influencing road safety policy. IAM Fleet, the corporate arm of the IAM, has two subsidiary companies, Drive & Survive and Fleet Ireland. It also operates IAM Pro-Drive.

3. A 2006 report by Brunel University, following an 18 month study, concluded that advanced driver training produces safer drivers and lower accident involvement, with measurable improvements in knowledge, skills and attitude. The 'Driving Tips' provided by the IAM are part of our broader road safety mission and not intended as a substitute for the advanced driving course.

4. In January 2007, the IAM Motoring Trust was established as the research and advocacy arm of the IAM. The IAM Motoring Trust will undertake research, promote practical policies, act as an advocate for safer roads, safer drivers and safer vehicles and encourage responsible motoring through education and training.

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Institute of Advanced Motorists

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