

BRAKE WELCOMES CLARIFIED GUIDANCE FOR DRIVING EXAMINERS ON SPEED IN URBAN AREAS

Thursday 29 May, 2014

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has clarified its written guidance for driving examiners on appropriate speed in built-up areas. The move comes in response to concerns raised by Brake, the road safety charity, alongside the GO 20 coalition, over whether driving test candidates could potentially be penalised for driving at 20mph in 30mph areas, even where the lower speed is more appropriate to the road environment.

The GO 20 coalition calls for 20mph to become the default limit in cities, towns and villages, and appeals to drivers to slow down to 20mph or below around homes, schools and shops, even where the limit is still 30mph, to protect people on foot and bike.

The DT1 document that contains the guidance has been clarified to make it clearer that the speed limit is the absolute maximum and does not mean it is safe to drive at that speed:

"The speed limit is a limit and not a target and there are many instances especially in narrow residential streets when candidates may need to reduce their speed considerably lower than the speed limit - this should not be considered as a fault."

This reflects advice already given to examiners by the DVSA during training. All driving test candidates must demonstrate the ability to adapt their speed to prevailing road conditions, and drive at a speed that allows them to stop safely in the distance they can see to be clear.

Welcoming the change, Julie Townsend, deputy chief executive, Brake, said: "It is excellent news that the DVSA has responded to the GO 20 coalition's concerns and clarified their guidance. There is a growing consensus that 20mph is the most appropriate top speed to protect people on foot and bike in built-up areas. It is critical that drivers learn right from the start of their driving careers that speed limits are limits, not targets, and that slowing down is one of the most important things they can do to safeguard others. This change will help give drivers the confidence to make the choice to protect people, and slow down to 20mph in communities, even in areas where the limit is still 30mph."

Find out more about Brake's GO 20 campaign for safe, active, happy communities. Tweet us @Brakecharity, #GO20.

Brake

Brake is a national road safety charity that exists to stop the needless deaths and serious injuries that happen on roads every day, make streets and communities safer for everyone, and care for families bereaved and injured in road crashes. Brake promotes road safety awareness, safe and sustainable road use, and effective road safety policies. We do this through national campaigns, community education, a Fleet Safety Forum, practitioner services, and by coordinating the UK's flagship road safety event every November, Road Safety Week. Brake is a national, government-funded provider of support to families and individuals devastated by road death and serious injury, including through a helpline and support packs.

Brake was founded in the UK in 1995, and now has domestic operations in the UK and New Zealand, and works globally to promote action on road safety.

Road crashes are not accidents; they are devastating and preventable events, not chance mishaps. Calling them accidents undermines work to make roads safer, and can cause insult to families whose lives have been torn apart by needless casualties.

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