

Gem Calls For Overhaul Of Driver Eyesight Test

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ROAD SAFETY organisation GEM Motoring Assist says better regulation of eyesight tests for drivers would cut collisions and make Britain's roads safer.

GEM says a detailed test of a driver's visual acuity and field of view should be required every 10 years.

GEM chief executive David Williams MBE comments: "Speeding, drink or drug driving, driving unlicensed... these are responsible for a fraction of the crashes on our roads compared with failing to look properly, according to all the official data. Yet our current testing regime is crude and outdated."

The eyesight test was introduced to the driving test in 1937 and has only been amended in minor ways over the years to reflect changing number plate sizes. It is the only eyesight test drivers are required to undertake until they reach the age of 70.

According to GEM, the test is crude and outdated, as it only measures visual acuity (sharpness). It could also quite easily examine a driver's field of view, as is done in many US states, to check whether motorists can see and react to what's happening around them.

Many campaigns over the years have attempted to persuade the government to introduce measures that would make drivers take a more responsible view on the subject, but so far governments have declined to change the current regulations.

GEM believes that regular mandatory eyesight tests for drivers would offer a simple and effective way of reducing collisions caused by defective vision.

David Williams concludes: "The time has come to accept that the current driver eyesight test simply isn't fit for purpose. What's more, it is certainly no longer acceptable for drivers to self-certify.

"What's more, many people are staying behind the wheel into their eighties and beyond. This, coupled with the greater volume of traffic and an increase in distractions, both inside and outside the vehicle, points to the clear need for more regular and detailed eyesight testing."

ENDS

Notes for editors

GEM Motoring Assist provides two levels of recovery service; Recovery EXTRA and Recovery RECLAIM, to suit all needs and pockets. All GEM policies also include free Accident Management, so members are also fully covered in this area.

GEM provides a unique, comprehensive and competitively-priced Roadside Assistance and Vehicle Recovery Service. GEM has also been voted number one for Breakdown Cover in the 2014, 2013, 2011, 2010 and 2008 Auto Express Driver Power Survey, and runners-up in 2012 and 2009.

GEM Motoring Assist is a trading name of The Guild of Experienced Motorists, established in 1932, as an independent driver-based road safety association. GEM's aim is to improve safety for all road users through the sponsorship and initiation of accident prevention measures throughout the UK and to provide motoring and safety information to its own members. Member benefits include a quarterly magazine, free literature and advice and discounts on insurances and other services.

Press information: David Williams MBE, Chief Executive of GEM Motoring Assist, is available for comment on 01342-825676 (office) or 07711450560 (mobile). David Williams was awarded the MBE in 1998 for services to road safety.

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