

002

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UNINSURED DRIVERS FACE NEW CRACKDOWN

New powers to tackle uninsured driving will come into force within months, Road Safety Minister Mike Penning announced today.

Under the new powers it will be an offence to keep an uninsured vehicle, rather than just to drive when uninsured.

Currently every responsible motorist pays an average £30 each year within their premiums to cover crashes involving uninsured and untraced drivers. It is also estimated that uninsured and untraced drivers kill 160 people and injure 23,000 every year.

Mike Penning said:

"Uninsured drivers push up premiums for other motorists and often drive with no regard for other road users, so it is vital that we do everything we can to keep them off the roads.

"More than 400 uninsured vehicles are already being seized by the police every day but it is simply not possible to catch every uninsured driver in this way. That is why we are bringing in these new powers which will help us to take targeted action while freeing up police time to deal with the hard core of offenders."

Ashton West, Chief Executive at the Motor Insurers' Bureau, said:

"Today's news marks a significant step forward in the fight against uninsured driving. This means that as enforcement can take place for both keeping and driving a vehicle without insurance there will be no place for illegal motorists to hide.

“Continuous Insurance Enforcement (CIE) will complement and run alongside existing police roadside enforcement, which has already reduced uninsured driving by 20%.”

Under the new system:

- The DVLA will work in partnership with the Motor Insurers' Bureau to identify uninsured vehicles
- Motorists will receive a letter telling them that their vehicle appears to be uninsured and warning them that they will be fined unless they take action
- If the keeper fails to insure the vehicle they will be given a £100 fine
- If the vehicle remains uninsured - regardless of whether the fine is paid - it could then be seized and destroyed.

Vehicles with a valid Statutory Off Road Notice (SORN) will not be required to be insured.

The Department for Transport today made the Commencement Order to make it an offence to be the registered keeper of a vehicle which does not have insurance, as well as regulations to support this. Further regulations will be made shortly, allowing the scheme to come into force in the Spring.

Notes to Editors

1. Latest estimates are that around 4% (around 1.4 million) of GB motorists drive uninsured. The penalty for driving without insurance is a maximum fine of £5,000 and 6-8 penalty points. Around 242,000 offenders are convicted for uninsured driving every year.
2. Measures already introduced in the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 gave police improved access to the Motor Insurers Bureau database and powers to seize vehicles. In 2009 around 180,000 vehicles were seized.
3. The Road Safety Act 2006 provided the primary powers for a new offence of being the keeper of a vehicle which does not meet insurance requirements. Further secondary legislation is now being made to bring these provisions into force.
4. The Motor Vehicles (Insurance Requirements) Regulations 2010 make provision for regulations in support of the offence of being the registered keeper of a vehicle which does not have insurance cover. This instrument makes exceptions to that offence, provides that liability to conviction for the offence may be discharged by paying a fixed penalty of £100 and provides for the disclosure of information in connection with enforcement.

Public Enquiries:

Check your vehicle is on the Motor Insurance Database: www.askMID.com

Department for Transport Website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk>

Information about the new offence can be found here:
www.direct.gov.uk/stayinsured

Press Enquiries: 020 7944 3066

Out of Hours: 020 7944 4292

Public Enquiries: 0300 330 3000

Department for Transport Website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk>
www.twitter.com/transportgovuk | www.youtube.com/transportgovuk
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