VULNERABLE ROAD USERS

Setting the Scene

Vulnerable road user groups account for almost 50 per cent of all deaths and 60 per cent of all seriously injured casualties.

The most common factors which contribute to vulnerable road users / goods vehicle collisions include:

- Failure to look properly.
- Poor turn or manoeuvre
- Being careless/ reckless/ in a hurry
- Failure to judge other persons path or speed
- Passing too close

Vulnerable road users include:

- Pedestrians.
- Cyclists
- Motorcyclists
- Horse riders

Pedestrians:

More than 60 child pedestrians are killed or seriously injured every week. Children often misjudge the speed and intentions of drivers. They are easily distracted and may dash into the road without looking. Nearly half of all pedestrians killed are aged over 60. Older people may have difficulties seeing or hearing approaching traffic, and may have decreased mobility.

How you can help pedestrians:

- Give them time and room to cross, especially the elderly or disabled.
- Remember pedestrians can be hard to see, especially children.
- Don’t park on pavements as it can force people to walk on the road.
- Stop at zebra crossings if someone is waiting to cross.
- Never wave a pedestrian across the road – there may be other traffic overtaking from behind you.

Cyclists:

Cyclists can be difficult to see especially at junctions and are particularly vulnerable at roundabouts. Be aware that cyclists may wobble and are easily affected by side wind when being overtaken. They may also ride away from the kerb to avoid drains and debris and to be more easily seen.

How you can help cyclists:

- Always check your mirror and blind spots for cyclists. Be especially aware that your nearside is clear when turning left and at roundabouts.
- Give them plenty of room when overtaking them.
- Respect cycle lanes and advance stop lines.
- Slow down around cyclists.
- Never overtake a cyclist and then turn left shortly afterwards.
Motorcyclists:
Motorcyclists can be difficult to see, especially at junctions. Motorbikes can often be travelling faster than you might think and are affected by side wind so should be given space when being overtaken.

How you can help motorcyclists:

• Always check your mirrors for motorcyclists. Be especially careful that your nearside is clear when turning left, and at roundabouts.
• Take extra care when pulling out of junctions – always recheck for motorcyclists.
• Give motorcyclists plenty of room when overtaking.
• Spilt fuel is hazardous for motorcyclists. Make sure your fuel cap is secure.

Horse Riders:
Horse riders often ride along minor roads. Horses are powerful animals which are easily frightened and can panic in traffic.

How you can help horse riders:

• Drive slowly past horses, give them plenty of room and prepare to stop.
• Keep engine noise as low as possible and avoid sounding the horn.
• Look out for horse riders’ signals.
• Be aware that they may not move to the centre of the road before turning right.

Before you travel:

• Prepare yourself.
• Set your phone to voicemail.
• Refresh your knowledge of the Highway Code.
• If you need glasses or contact lenses to meet the Highway Code’s minimum vision standards, you must wear them at all times while driving.
• Plan your journey.
• If you can’t avoid commuter routes, try to travel at less busy times.
• Be particularly vigilant around schools.
• Check your vehicle (MIST).
• Complete a walk-around check of the vehicle before every journey to ensure that:
  • Mirrors are clean, correctly adjusted and set to minimise blind spots.
  • Indicators are working, are clean and can be seen.
  • Signs for cyclists are clean and easily visible
  • Technology, including Fresnel lenses, side proximity sensors, blind spot cameras and sideguards, is fitted correctly, working and clean.