

## **BACK TO DRIVING SCHOOL FOR BRITS**

Britain's motorists display a startling lack of knowledge of road signs and driving rules and admit that, if they had to sit their driving test again, they would probably fail, according to a new report from Lloyds TSB Insurance. Almost a quarter of drivers (23 per cent) questioned think they would fail their driving test if they had to retake it and nearly half (46 per cent) believe that they would just scrape through.

Men are more confident in their driving abilities, with a cocky 40 per cent proclaiming they would pass with flying colours compared to only 26 per cent of women. Despite this, the survey shows that men overtake women when it comes to committing dangerous driving sins, adding weight to the argument that the fairer sex are safer drivers.

Driving offences include - 65 per cent of men have turned at a junction without signalling, compared with 45 per cent of females, and, nearly half of men (48 per cent) undertake slower drivers compared with a third of women (29 per cent). A dizzy, seven per cent of men have gone the wrong way around a roundabout compared with only 2 per cent of women while a shocking 3 per cent of men even admit to reversing on a motorway because they missed a junction. Unfortunately, the dangers do not stop there - one in five drivers (22 per cent) admit to cruising past road signs that they do not understand.

When shown a selection of common road signs, a worrying proportion of motorists failed to identify the simplest signs. One in ten failed to recognise either the 'no overtaking sign' (10 per cent) or the 'national speed limit' sign (8 per cent). More complex signs sent drivers into even more of a spin. A massive 41 per cent thought the 'no access to motor vehicles' sign indicated access to cars and motorcycles only - a disaster waiting to happen. Nearly a third (32 per cent) incorrectly identified the no waiting sign, with one in five (20 per cent) mistaking it for the no entry sign while an astonishing one in ten (10 per cent) mistook the no entry sign for the stop sign!

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Phil Loney, managing director of Lloyds TSB Insurance, said: “The results of our survey are alarming. British drivers are on the road to disaster, committing serious driving offences and failing to make the grade when asked to identify common road signs. The fact that so many licensed drivers are not confident in their ability to pass the driving test is reason enough for them to seriously start thinking about revisiting the highway code and to make sure that they are properly insured, should the worst happen.”

While men scored badly in the dangerous driving stakes they took up pole position when it came to knowledge of the highway code, with more men correctly identifying the road signs. Young people aged 17 to 24, who arguably should be more familiar with road signs having taken the test more recently, were more likely to get them wrong. Older drivers topped the road sign survey suggesting knowledge comes with experience.


### **Other survey highlights include:**


- Driving offences are rife. Over half of motorists (53 per cent) have turned at a junction without signalling, a third (31 per cent) have cruised in the middle lane of the motorway and well over a third (36 per cent) have undertaken slower drivers just to get round them.
- Older drivers do nothing to help their image of being slow ‘Sunday Drivers’ with 43 per cent of those aged 55 plus admitting to cruising in the middle lane of the motorway.
- Some drivers have no clue when it comes to car insurance. Nearly a third (31 per cent) did not realise they could get immediate cover and a misguided one per cent even thought they could get car insurance from the police.
- Twenty per cent of drivers would not know what to do if they broke down on the motorway. Eighteen per cent would stay in the car with the doors locked and a frightening 2 per cent would leave the car and head for the central reservation!
- London drivers are the most confident with 37 per cent claiming they would pass their test with flying colours if they had to re-sit it.
- Motorists in the North East exhibit the most dangerous habits – they are most likely to turn at a junction without signalling, undertake slow drivers and cruise in the mid lane of the motorway.


**.../more**


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**Test yourself – Can you correctly identify the following road signs?**

1.  a) No entry for vehicular traffic  
b) No waiting  
c) No motor vehicles  
d) Authorised vehicles only

2.  a) Authorised vehicles only  
b) Cars and motorcycles only  
c) Caution, motorcycles ahead  
d) No motor vehicles

3.  a) Stop and give way  
b) No entry for vehicular traffic  
c) No through road  
d) End of minimum speed limit

4.  a) No overtaking  
b) Caution, lanes merging  
c) Overtaking allowed  
d) Dual carriage-way ahead

5.  a) End of motorway  
b) No waiting  
c) National speed limit applies  
d) Dual carriage-way ends

**Answers: 1. (b) 2. (d) 3. (b) 4. (a) 5. (c)**

**-ends-**

### **Notes to editors:**

- 1458 drivers were surveyed by Tickbox in September 2004.
- Regional statistics available on request

### **For more information:**

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