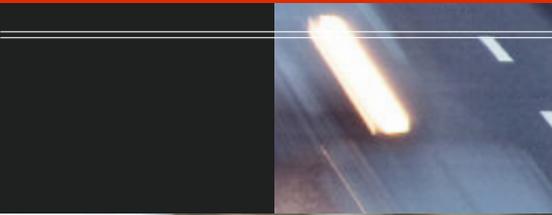


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Direct Line & Brake Reports on Safe Driving 2012-2014 **REPORT FOUR**

Speed



Produced by:



Working in partnership with:



direct line



Julie Townsend, Brake's deputy chief executive, says:

"The relationship between speed and road safety is thoroughly evidenced. If we slow traffic, we reduce crashes. If people drive faster, they have less time to react and come to a stop, to avoid hitting someone or something. Slowing down is therefore critical to crash avoidance and in protecting our most vulnerable road users. Yet speed is also probably the most controversial road safety topic and speed limits probably the most widely broken road safety law. This report reveals the huge proportion of drivers who own up to speeding or driving too fast for a host of different reasons and in different environments, often habitually.

However, it is increasingly recognised that slower speeds and lower limits, especially where people live, work and play, can deliver a host of social benefits. Not only is it crucial to preventing devastating casualties, but also in encouraging and enabling people to walk and cycle. No one wants to walk to work, the shops or the bus stop, or take up cycling for travel or leisure, if it entails putting their life on the line. Equally, no parent wants to let their child to walk or cycle independently if they will be forced to negotiate potentially-deadly fast traffic.

As awareness grows around the impact of sedentary lifestyles on health and happiness, we are also seeing increasing recognition of the importance of making roads safer for walking and cycling – and that reducing and managing traffic speeds is at the heart of this. More and more local authorities across the UK are implementing town and city-wide 20 limits, which Brake fully supports, in a bid to create a safer environment for people on foot and bike. But, as this report shows, there is much to be done to persuade all drivers of their personal responsibility to slow down to protect others."



About this report

This is the fourth in a series of reports on safe driving 2012-14 by Brake and Direct Line. It examines attitudes and behaviour in relation to speed, speed limits and overtaking, including the reasons drivers speed, and level of speeding on different types of road.

The report is based on a survey of 1,000 drivers across the UK carried out by research company Surveygoo on behalf of Brake. For other reports in the series, visit www.brake.org.uk/safedrivingreports.

Speed



EXCUSES FOR SPEEDING

Q1: Within the past 12 months, have you broken the speed limit on any roads for any of the following reasons?

Nearly six in 10 (57%) drivers admit speeding in the past year, giving a variety of reasons. One in six (14%) said they'd done this because they weren't paying attention. However, many more admit consciously speeding, with one in five (19%) saying they believed they could do so safely, showing disrespect for the law. A horrifying one in three (32%) broke the limit to overtake, a potentially deadly manoeuvre. Men were far more likely to speed to overtake or because they thought it was safe.

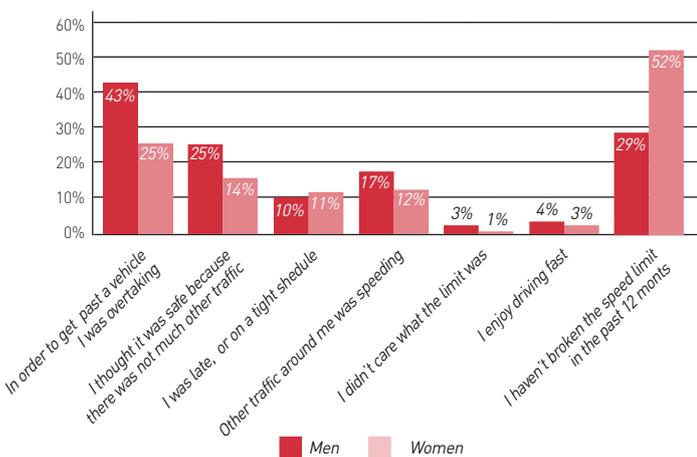
Among all drivers:

- 32% said yes, to get past a vehicle they were overtaking
- 19% said yes, because they thought it was safe because there was not much other traffic
- 14% said yes, because they weren't paying attention to the limit
- 12% said yes, because other traffic around them was speeding
- 11% said yes, because they were late, or on a tight schedule
- 2% said yes, because they didn't care what the limit was
- 3% said yes, because they enjoy driving fast
- 43% said they hadn't broken the speed limit in the past 12 months.

Men vs women:

- 43% of men and 25% of women said to get past a vehicle they were overtaking
- 25% of men and 14% of women said because they thought it was safe because there was not much other traffic
- 17% of men and 12% of women said because they weren't paying attention to the limit
- 15% of men and 11% of women said because other traffic around them was speeding
- 10% of men and 11% of women said because they were late, or on a tight schedule
- 3% of men and 1% of women said because they didn't care what the limit was
- 4% of men and 3% of women said because they enjoy driving fast
- 29% of men and 52% of women said they hadn't broken the speed limit in the past 12 months

Figure 1: have you broken the speed limit for these reasons?



RURAL ROADS AND OVERTAKING

Q2: Within the past 12 months have you driven above 60mph on a rural road (not dual carriageway or motorway)?

A worrying three in 10 (32%) drivers admit taking the deadly risk of speeding on 60mph rural roads. It is far more common still among male drivers, with four in 10 (44%) men admitting it, compared to a quarter (24%) of women.

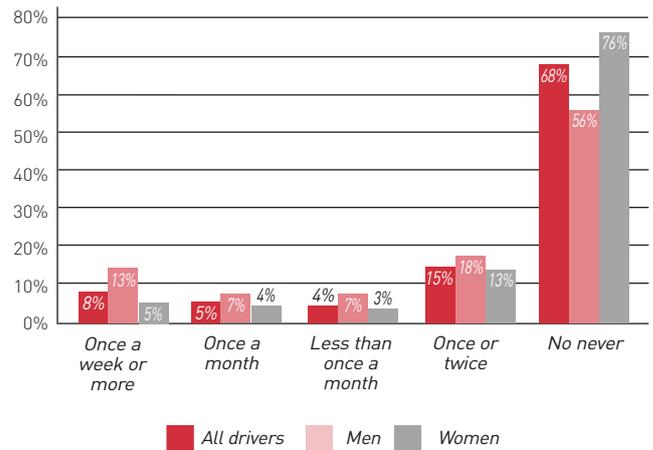
Among all drivers:

- 8% said once a week or more
- 5% said about once a month
- 4% said less than once a month
- 15% said once or twice
- 68% said no

Men vs women:

- 13% of men and 5% of women said once a week or more
- 7% of men and 4% of women said once a month
- 7% of men and 3% of women said less than once a month
- 18% of men and 13% of women said once or twice
- 56% of men and 76% of women said no

Figure 2: have you driven above 60mph on a rural road?



Q3: Have you overtaken a vehicle when there was a chance you could have hit something you couldn't see in the past 12 months?

A frightening proportion of drivers – more than one in five (21%) – admit putting their own and others' lives in grave danger by overtaking blind in the past year. Again, men were more likely than women to admit to this.

Among all drivers:

- 5% overtook blind once a month or more
- 14% overtook blind occasionally
- 80% never overtook blind

Men vs women:

- 7% of men overtook blind once a month or more, compared with 6% of women
- 17% of men overtook blind occasionally, compared with 13% of women
- 77% of men never overtook blind, compared with 82% of women

Speed

THE CONSEQUENCES

Richard and Gill Clutterbuck, from Market Harborough, were riding their horses along a rural road, on a bright Tuesday morning in August 2010. They had stopped at the side of the road to allow a passing vehicle on the other side of the road to go by without scaring the horses. Suddenly a sports vehicle overtook the car, passing onto the wrong side of the road and crashing head on into Richard and his horse.

Richard's horse went over the bonnet and was killed. Richard was thrown onto the road, breaking vertebrae in his lower back and three ribs. Gill's horse collapsed on top of her, rupturing a ligament in Gill's knee. Richard had to undergo surgery and it was feared he would be paralysed. Surgeons managed to stabilise his back by injecting cement into the damaged bones before pinning them with titanium rods.

Richard said: "It is sheer luck I wasn't killed that day, and I put this down to the size of my horse Linford – who sadly lost his life – and the excellent work of medical professionals. It was an awful, terrifying experience that I would not wish on anyone, and it's taken me a long time to recover physically. It has had a terrible emotional impact on both me and my wife. It's vital that drivers understand that rural roads are shared roads, so they must drive cautiously, and never overtake unless it's absolutely essential and 100% safe. A lot of the time overtaking makes very little difference anyway – and it could have appalling consequences for you or another innocent person."

Q4: As a passenger, have you been afraid when your driver has overtaken another vehicle, in the past 12 months?

Despite many themselves admitting to dangerous overtaking, many drivers (46%) have also felt endangered as passengers when their driver has overtaken.

Women (50%) and young respondents (82%) are much more likely to say they have been afraid as a passenger during overtaking, possibly a reflection of the risks their partners and peers have taken with them in the car.

Among all drivers:

- 46% said yes
- 47% said no
- 7% hadn't been a passenger

Men vs women:

- 38% of men and 50% of women said yes
- 50% of men and 46% of women said no
- 11% of men and 5% of women hadn't been a passenger

Among young drivers:

- 82% said yes
- 18% said no
- 0% hadn't been a passenger

Q5: Have you been involved in or witnessed an incident of dangerous overtaking, or an overtaking near-miss or crash, in the past 12 months?

A huge proportion of drivers – nearly half (49%) – have been involved in or witnessed dangerous overtaking or an overtaking near-miss or crash. Many (19%) have faced the scary prospect of an overtaking driver heading towards them on their side of the road.

Among all drivers:

- 14% said yes, when they were driving
- 5% said yes, by a driver they were a passenger with
- 19% said yes, by a driver headed towards them
- 30% said yes, by a driver in front or behind going the same way as them
- 51% said no

ADVICE: OVERTAKING ON RURAL ROADS

Overtaking on single carriageways is incredibly dangerous and should be avoided at all costs.

It is impossible to accurately judge the speed and distance of approaching traffic, or the amount of empty road in front of you, but when overtaking this lack of judgement can be fatal. The gap between you and oncoming traffic disappears surprisingly fast. If you and an oncoming vehicle are both driving at 60mph, the gap between you is closing at 120mph, or 60 metres a second. Yet a small error of judgement can easily result in multiple deaths, in your vehicle and the vehicle approaching you.

That's why it simply isn't worth the risk. Often overtaking makes little difference to your arrival time, but could mean you and someone else never arriving at all. So never overtake on single carriageways unless absolutely essential, like because the vehicle in front is extremely slow moving, and only if there is enough space to get past it on a long, open stretch without speeding and with no risk of someone coming the other way. Otherwise just hang back, relax and enjoy the journey.

