



Blinded!

When driving at night, are you continually being blinded by the lights of oncoming cars? Have you felt annoyance at the driver of the car behind you seemingly driving on full headlights? Then the cars in question are almost certainly fitted with a bi-xenon lighting system, standard equipment on most modern cars.

These lights are up to 60% brighter than the standard halogen lamps and, according to the manufacturers, make driving at night much safer. The problem with the system is that it 'floats'. Let London taxi driver Ken Perham who has spent his last 37 years working only at night, and has been campaigning about the dangers of this system, explain.

"The bi-xenon system floats and doesn't have a scroll switch to enable the driver to adjust the height according to the number of passengers or load being carried. This causes severe dazzle to anyone in front of the vehicle and affects not only oncoming vehicles but anyone travelling in the same direction as well.

"Drivers with the bi-xenon system are often flashed by other motorists who think full beam is being used. As a result, the bi-xenon driver pays a visit to his or her dealer complaining that the lights of their car must be too high and asks for them to be adjusted correctly because they didn't

want to fall foul of the law.

"The get a shock when the dealer tells them they couldn't alter the lights if they wanted to, and adding, the lights are factory set so they must be legal!"

Recent statistics show that 40% of Road Traffic Accidents (RTA) between the months of October and March occur during the hours of darkness. The statistics do not list how many RTA are caused by dazzle but it is known that a significant number can be put down to it.

As for the law in regard to vehicle lights, the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989 clearly states in Schedule 4, Part 1, Section 4 that lights must *not be set to dazzle other drivers.*

Ken Perham has been campaigning long and hard for the situation to be remedied so that driving conditions at night become less hazardous. He believes the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989 (RVLR) should be updated to make it mandatory for bi-xenon lighting systems to be fitted with scroll switches, so the systems can be adjusted to avoid other road users being dazzled and reducing the number of accidents caused.

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Blindingly Obvious

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