



Department for
Transport

From Mike Penning MP, Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

Roy Milnes
Campaign Director
The Association of Drivers against
Daytime Running Lights

Great Minster House 76
Marsham Street London
SW1P4DR

Tel: 020 7944 3084 Fax: 020 7944
4521 E-Mail:
mike.penning@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Web site: www.dft.gov.uk

OurRef:MP/023599/10

15 SEP 2010

Dear Roy

Thank you for your letter of 20 August to Norman Baker, about the dangers of Vehicle Daytime Running Lights (DRL) and High Intensity Discharge (HID) headlights. I am replying as Minister responsible for this issue.

The Department for Transport's position has not changed from previous replies to you. We successfully argued against EU proposals to require all drivers to switch on their headlights during the daytime as we were concerned that this would increase emissions, reduce the life span of the light sources, i.e. drivers are more likely to experience a failed bulb at night, and motorcyclists felt headlight use on all vehicles would reduce the benefits they receive from the voluntary use of headlights during the day. However, we still believe that dedicated DRL have the potential to reduce accidents and, through the use of low wattage light sources, keep increases in emissions to a negligible level.

In response to your suggested actions:

Repeal EU directive before February 2011 - As stated in previous replies, DRL has the potential to reduce fatal and serious accidents by up to 6% when fitted to all vehicles, we therefore do not support repealing the Directive. Even if we did, we would need the support of a majority of European Member States which is unlikely to happen.

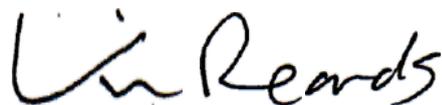
200cd limit - DRL operate during the daytime when ambient light levels are such that lights can be brighter without causing dazzle. 1200 cd is recognised as a suitable limit for use when ambient light levels are good. To address concerns that DRL might be used at low ambient light levels, e.g. during rain, fog, night time, we are working with other member states to introduce provisions into the regulations that would ensure that more appropriate lights are used at these times, i.e. dipped beam headlights.

Make cyclists and motorcyclists more visible - Motorcyclists already voluntarily use dipped beam headlamps and in future motorcycles will also be permitted to be fitted with DRL. Cyclists may now use flashing lights as well as or instead of steady lights to distinguish themselves from other vehicles. The Highway Code also recommends that both these groups wear light coloured or fluorescent clothing in the daytime to make themselves more visible. The use of purple headlights is currently not allowed and this is likely to remain the case in the future.

Clause to Highway Code on use of headlights - The Highway Code already states that fog lights should only be used in very poor visibility. While we have chosen not to require headlights on during the day like some other member states, we do not see any advantage banning drivers from voluntarily using them during the day.

HID - The self levelling mechanism described is not intended to continually adjust the beam to take account of bumps in the road, it adjusts the beam to compensate for any load in the vehicle that may influence aim. Bumps in the road will momentarily affect the aim of any headlamp whether HID or not. This is more likely to occur if the initial aim is set too high and so it is important that the aim is set correctly.

Headlamp technology is always improving, advanced headlamp designs are becoming available that constantly adjust the beam pattern to provide the maximum view to the driver while minimising glare to others. It will take time for this technology to be widely fitted. European and international regulations are being amended to accommodate these lights and speed up their adoption by vehicle manufacturers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Penning', written in a cursive style.

MIKE PENNING