



Driving Instructors support campaign against blinding headlights

Faye Sunderland, January 31st, 2011

The Driving Instructors Association (DIA) is the latest [motoring](#) organisation to put weight behind a campaign to tackle the use of blindingly bright lights on the UK's road.

The Lightmare campaign has been organised to fight the use of bright lights such as [Bi-Xenon headlights](#) which could affect another driver's ability to perceive hazards.

The amalgamation of two separate organisations – Blinded Bi-Xenon and Drivers Against Daylight Running Lights (DaDRL) – Lightmare is the culmination of many years of work from both organisations on the effects of bright lights on road safety.



Ken Perham, a night-time London taxi driver for the last 40 years, has been campaigning about the intensity of the modern 'high intensity discharge' (HID) headlight system. The technology involves the headlights to 'float' and respond to the undulations in the road surface. As this system cannot be checked sufficiently during an MOT test, [vehicles](#) fitted with it can dazzle oncoming road users, in contravention of the Construction and Use Regulations 1986 and the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989. Perham said: "These lights are up to

three times brighter than a standard halogen headlight and the HID system causes severe distraction to a driver approaching them, to the point that the intensity of these lights hides less conspicuous objects, such as motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians, putting these vulnerable groups in danger. This situation must be considered as an urgent matter to be redressed by the government."

Perham has teamed up with Roy Milnes, who has been at the helm of DaDRL for the last 12 years. He has been involved in a worldwide campaign involving other organisations and ophthalmologists to look at a more common-sense way of vehicle lighting for daytime use.

New laws that come into effect in the UK from Feb 2011 mean that daytime running lights – which are 50 per cent brighter than standard dipped headlights – will be mandatory for all new European-built vehicles. Motorcycle and bicycle action groups are concerned that the proliferation of lit traffic streams will make less visible cyclists and motorcyclists more vulnerable within those streams.

Milnes said: "[Car drivers](#) are already overprotected in their vehicles, thanks to safety cages and in-vehicle technology. Cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians don't have this luxury."

Milnes has worked extensively with Dr Peter Heilig, professor of ophthalmology at the University of Vienna, who was instrumental in getting the EU legislation on daylight running lights withdrawn in 2006, after the Austrian national road safety statistics showed a 12 per cent increase in road casualties upon introduction of mandatory daytime running lights.

Howard Redwood, head of road safety at the DIA, said: "Lightmare has collected a staggering amount of data and produced a very strong case to persuade the UK government to reconsider the current MOT system and the need for daytime running lights. The DIA are more than happy to get behind this campaign." More information and a petition calling on the government to eliminate daytime and night-time blinding vehicle lamps can be found on the Lightmare website at www.lightmare.org.

Responses to “Driving Instructors support campaign against blinding headlights”

Eva David on [April 20th, 2011 at 6:22 pm](#)

I have just watched the one show,

I can thoroughly agree with Ken, that these HID lights are dazzling and I find them dangerous.

On top of all this they hurt my eyes.

I am over 60, I drive every day and I hate these lights.

Please get these lights of the road, they are not roadworthy.

Julia King on [April 24th, 2011 at 9:38 am](#)

I am amazed that these HID lights are legal. They are far too bright. I find them as dazzling as full beam halogen. If I were to [buy a new car](#) already fitted with HID lights I would change them to halogen as I could not bear to inflict that degree of dazzle on another driver. They might make the road brighter for the driver of the vehicle, but completely at the expense of everyone else who has to put up with them.

Do we really need brighter roads? Most [driving](#) is in towns where the roads are already well lit. For country lanes we have the option of using full beam. HID should only have the same legality as full beam halogen lighting e.g. on country lanes and only when the road ahead is clear, so flipping back to a halogen lighting system when it is not. Using them on motorways and in towns is in my opinion nothing short of dangerous driving.

[June 22nd, 2011 at 3:35 am](#)

Blinding lights on dark roads may cause serious accidents. We should get the right ones with just the right brightness. Mine were way too bright and I had it changed. I agree that it should be a law that anyone possess cars with blinding headlights should be warned or asked for a fine.

[Ken Perham](#) on [June 23rd, 2011 at 9:04 am](#)

Dear Faye,

Thanks for this article. What has become clear is why the EU, our Government and the major manufacturers have done nothing.

These blinding lights appear to others to be similar to that of emergency vehicles. If you have them, you intimidate other drivers much like you are an emergency vehicle without a siren.

I am with what Julia King said on the 24th April 2011. Caring drivers would not want to inflict other drivers with lights that may help them. Having them generally means they dazzle others.

Howard Redwood from the DIA now has a recognised quote : – ‘Shining bright lights at each other is not road safety’

Please vote on our e petition at <http://www.lightmare.org>

Thank you for caring Ken Perham & Roy Milnes