



4<sup>th</sup> April 2022

## **ALMOST TWO MONTHS SINCE NEW HIGHWAY CODE LAUNCHED AND MOTORISTS STILL LACK AWARENESS OF NEW RULES**

**As travel plans commence for the Easter break nearly 20% of drivers don't know they have to give way when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction**

The latest research commissioned by Europcar reveals that not all UK drivers are aware of the changes to the Highway Code which came into effect on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2022<sup>1</sup>. According to the research conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 over a quarter of motorists (26%) surveyed still don't know that cyclists are allowed to cycle in the centre of a lane when they are able to keep up with the traffic stream. 19% are not aware that drivers have to give way when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction.

With around 35.9 million people in the UK holding a full driving licence it equates to around 7.2 million people not aware of these new rules<sup>2</sup>.

Significant changes have been made to the Highway Code that gives a new 'hierarchy of road users' in a bid to improve the safety of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Given there were 330 cyclists and 1,743 pedestrians killed or seriously injured in road accidents in Great Britain during 2019<sup>3</sup>, it's not surprising that the new rules place those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy.

Age seems to play a factor too. The younger age groups appear less aware of the changes. 20% of 18 to 34 year-olds are not aware that drivers have to give way to pedestrians when crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, compared to 14% of those aged 55 years plus.

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<sup>1</sup> Research conducted by Vypr on behalf of Europcar to a panel of 1,000 motorists

<sup>2</sup> <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/d0be1ed2-9907-4ec4-b552-c048f6aec16a/gb-driving-licence-data>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/324018/pedestrians-killed-or-injured-in-road-accidents-in-great-britain/>

But it's not just the new rules that don't seem to have sunk in with motorists. The Europcar research found that even some of the well-established rules were not that well known by drivers. Over a quarter (26%) admitted they didn't know middle lane hogging is a criminal offence with an on the spot fine of £100 and three penalty points. Plus nearly 20% didn't realise it is illegal to use a horn while driving in a built-up area between the hours of 11:30pm and 7am.

In addition to the legally binding rules, the new Highway Code also includes some recommendations to motorists to aid road safety. For example, it has proposed wider use of the 'Dutch Reach' which involves opening the car door with the wrong hand when exiting because it forces the person to look over their shoulder before getting out of the car, thereby enabling them to see any close passing cars, cyclists or pedestrians.

"Driving is habitual and therefore it can be hard to change behaviour", commented Ron Santiago, Managing Director, Europcar Mobility Group UK. "But the safety of all road users is paramount. And it seems from our research that more needs to be done to educate drivers on the latest changes to the Highway Code.

"The fact is that many of the rules in the Code are legal requirements, and if drivers do not comply they will be committing a criminal offence. A driver could be fined, given penalty points on their licence or be disqualified from driving. If all drivers complied with the rules and guidance in the Highway Code it would result in fewer road traffic accident and provide safer roads for all users"

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Customers' satisfaction is at the heart of the Group's ambition and that of its employees. It also fuels the ongoing development of new offerings in the Group's three service lines - Professional, Leisure and Proximity - which respond to the specific needs and use cases of both businesses and individuals. The Group's 4 major brands are: Europcar® - the European leader of car rental and light commercial vehicle rental, Goldcar® - the low-cost car-rental Leader in Europe, InterRent® - 'mid-tier' car rental and Ubeeqo® - one of the European leaders of round-trip car-sharing (BtoB, BtoC).

Europcar Mobility Group delivers its mobility solutions worldwide through an extensive network in over 140 countries (including wholly owned subsidiaries - 18 in Europe, 1 in the USA, 2 in Australia and New Zealand - completed by franchises and partners).

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