



5 VICTIMS A DAY ON SCOTTISH COUNTRY ROADS IN WEST SCOTLAND

On average, 5 drivers or passengers are killed or injured on country roads in Strathclyde every day.

The West of Scotland Road Safety Forum, working in partnership with Road Safety Scotland, launches a new campaign today - Monday 27th September – to help tackle it.

Campaign research found that many Scottish drivers using country roads regarded them to be 'low risk' due to the fact that there is often less traffic on them and yet, statistically speaking, there is a significantly higher chance of death and injury on this type of road. 1,775 people were killed or injured on country roads in the West of Scotland in 2009.

This new initiative uses radio to help target drivers when they are actually using country roads, and is supported by posters, online information (www.roadsafetywestscotland.com) together with high profile promotional activity in key public areas throughout West Scotland to directly engage with the public and raise awareness of the issue.

Councillor Betty Cunningham, the Chair of the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum says;

"In Scotland, 75% of road deaths occur on country roads and addressing this issue is a high priority for the Forum and for the Scottish Government's Framework. The Forum is keen to continue the excellent work already undertaken by Road Safety Scotland to help make Scottish roads safer.

"During 2009, according to official data provided by Strathclyde Police, some of the most frequently reported causation factors in country road collisions were cited as being loss of control, a failure to look properly and driving too fast for the conditions. The West of Scotland Forum is working closely with all our key partners and members to raise awareness of the specific hazards motorists face when driving in the countryside"



Michael McDonnell, Director of Road Safety Scotland added; "We are pleased to support this important campaign; in using the imagery from our successful television and cinema campaign, it strongly reinforces the message. It is ironic that many people perceive country roads to be safer places to drive due to the fact there is less traffic around - not considering the many unexpected risks caused by slow moving vehicles, animals, hidden junctions, and cyclists to name just a few. It is a fact that country roads claim more lives than any other type of road in Scotland"

The country roads campaign will remind drivers:

- They are not alone on country roads
- To look out for the myriad of hazards on the roads and be aware of the unpredictability of driving in the countryside
- They don't have to be speeding to be going too fast
- Not to become another stark statistic

Neil Greig, Director of Policy and Research for the Institute of Advanced Motorists says;

"The IAM supports this vital initiative. We know from our own extensive research that drivers often choose the wrong speed for the conditions on country roads and, in many cases, take more risks because they think it is safe to do so. It is this driving culture which we need to change and it's encouraging all the key stakeholders in road safety are working closely together to raise awareness and target lethal country road crashes"

Ralston MacKenzie, spokesperson for the Forum added;

"We know that 9 out of 10 Scottish drivers regularly use country roads and we are determined to reduce the number of crashes and casualties by working closely with all our partner agencies to make this happen.

"Our Country Roads Campaign will hopefully reach out to all road users to get across a very important message that 'You are not alone on a country road' and, as a consequence, you should take extra care at all times".



Superintendent Iain Murray, Head of Road Policing within Strathclyde Police concluded;

Officers from my Department are often the first to arrive at the scene of a crash on a country road and all too often we have to investigate deaths and serious injuries which could have been prevented by the driver looking ahead and adjusting their speed in accordance with either the weather, traffic or road conditions which are clearly visible. Of course, the effects of the crash extend beyond the driver or passengers of the vehicle and my officers liaise with family members of those who have been injured or killed; this is the difficult part of the job of a police officer – trying to explain to a loved one why something which shouldn't have happened actually did happen. I urge drivers to be aware of the risks associated with country roads and to ensure their driving style is appropriate. My officers regularly patrol country roads in the West of Scotland but during the campaign we will be making an extra effort to be visible.

ENDS



Notes to Editor

Members of the West of Scotland Road Safety Forum include the 12 councils in the West of Scotland detailed below, together with Strathclyde Police, Strathclyde Safety Camera Partnership and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue Services.

- North Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire
- East Ayrshire
- North Lanarkshire
- South Lanarkshire
- Renfrewshire
- East Renfrewshire
- West Dunbartonshire
- East Dunbartonshire
- Argyll & Bute
- Inverclyde
- Glasgow City Council

For more information on the campaign or for copies of the campaign posters and other materials (in PDF) which can be downloaded visit the Forum website www.roadsafetywestscotland.com

To find out the number of collisions occurring in specific locations visit www.dontriskit.info/country-roads/home/

For media enquiries contact Jan Deans on 07980 851360.