

INFORMATION



from South Lanarkshire Council Corporate Communications and Public Affairs
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To: Newsdesks
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Back row (L-R): Colin Smith, Assistant Road Safety Training Officer (SLC), Sharon O'Leary, School Travel Plan Coordinator (SLC), Inspector Keith Prentice, Lanarkshire Road Policing, Constable Colin Baird, Lanarkshire Road Policing, and Marion Logan, School Travel Plan Coordinator (SLC).
Front row (L-R): Gerry McDonnell, site director Bothwell Hamilton Services, Brendan Corish, Network Liaison Officer for Amey, Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Road Safety Forum, Councillor John Murray and Eleanor Gibson, Road Safety Training Officer (SLC).

Driver fatigue can be factor in accidents

THE dangers of falling asleep at the wheel have been highlighted by South Lanarkshire Council's Road Safety team.

The team were encouraging motorists using Bothwell Hamilton services to take part in a quick survey about driver fatigue, in return for a free travel mug.

Most people were happy to oblige, and the results of the survey will be available soon.

Driver fatigue is estimated to account for one fifth of accidents on major roads, and there are a number of factors which increase the likelihood of these accidents:

- On long, monotonous roads such as motorways
- During the early hours of the morning, specifically 2am to 6am
- During mid-afternoon, from 2pm to 4pm (especially after eating or drinking even one alcoholic drink)
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol
- If taking drugs (either illegal or medicinal) that cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts

Planning your journey can help combat the problems caused by driver fatigue. Consider how long the journey will take and take into account time for rest breaks and unexpected delays.

Before heading off:

- Plan where to stop for regular rest breaks. Include a break of at least 15 minutes within every two hours of driving time
- On long journeys consider an overnight stop, particularly if you are catching an early flight or returning from abroad – perhaps take the extra day as part of your holiday
- If possible, share the driving with a second driver
- Sleep well. Don't stay up later or reduce your normal sleeping time before a long journey
- Try not to make trips between the hours of 2am and 6am, and 2pm to 4pm, when natural alertness is low

There is also some valuable advice which should be heeded if you do feel sleepy while driving:

- Do not try to complete the journey (you might never arrive)
- Find somewhere safe to stop (not the hard shoulder)
- Drink one or two cups of strong coffee or other high caffeine drinks
- If you are in a suitable place and it is safe to do so, nap for 15 minutes or rest to allow the caffeine to kick in

Chair of South Lanarkshire Council's Road Safety Forum, Councillor John Murray, said: "I cannot emphasise how important it is to make sure you are not tired before setting off on a journey, no matter how short the distance.

"If you are tired your reaction time, alertness, concentration and decision making – in fact all crucial driving skills – are greatly reduced.

"The quality of your decision making may also be affected.

“Although there are various tips you can try if you are feeling tired, they are only short term solutions and it is best to pull over and if possible find somewhere safe to stay overnight.

“With driver fatigue estimated to account for one in five accidents on major roads, this was a very important message we were delivering.

“Giving away a free travel mug was a way of thanking those taking part in our survey. It can obviously be used for having a caffeinated drink if you do feel a bit tired.”

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