

# UPDATE

## A.D.I. NEWSLETTER



January 2004

Welcome to the first edition of *Update* for 2004 and a belated Happy New Year to all of you. I hope that you all had a peaceful start to the year. One of our objectives this year is to improve communications with ADIs and we are trying to do this particularly by increased use of email and by providing better information on our web-site. Last year we posted the contact details of a number of ADIs on our web-site and we have had some feedback that learner drivers have used this to find ADIs in their area. We would encourage anyone, even if you do not have an email address, to let us post your name and contact number on the site. We are also keen that ADIs feel comfortable about lifting the telephone to call anyone on the administrative or testing side of the organisation about any matters of concern.

This paper includes updates on the ADI Review, the Booking Services Project, Fees and a number of other issues. Also attached is a consultation paper which includes details of proposals regarding new supervision arrangement for ADIs which some of you may have heard about.

### **Proposals for New Supervision Arrangements for ADIs**

The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) intend to make provision for registered driving instructors to undergo the ADI multiple choice theory test, including the hazard perception test. The test will apply to ADIs who qualified before the computer-based assessment of hazard perception was introduced into the ADI qualifying examinations.

The rationale is that these measures could bring important benefits by enhancing the quality assurance relating to existing instructors, ensuring that they possessed a safety-critical skill at the appropriate standard and ensuring that all professional instructors were exposed at first hand to the HPT that their pupils would face, and for which instructors would be responsible for preparing them.

The DSA requirement will be that:

- ADIs who qualified before the computer based HPT test was introduced should pass HPT as part of their standard supervision arrangements;
- the computer-based assessment should also contain a multiple-choice-question (MCQ) assessment of knowledge and understanding, using a modern question bank;
- the pass-marks for the HPT element and the MCQ element should be the same as for the pass-marks in the computer-based assessment for prospective ADIs;
- ADIs should have up to two years to pass the new assessment;
- ADIs should be allowed unlimited attempts in the two-year period to pass. If unsuccessful, at the end of the period the Registrar would initiate removal action from the ADI Register;

- the new arrangements would come into operation as soon as practicable and as soon as the necessary change to regulations is made;
- there would be no charge for the first attempt at the new computer-based assessment, but a fee of £50 would be charged for each re-test
- this standards-raising initiative would operate alongside a programme of practical check-tests of instructional ability.

DVTA's position is that we must now consult on this issue, and the consultation document in which this proposal is outlined is attached to this *Update*. It is not a foregone conclusion that the same provisions will be made in Northern Ireland but not to do so would represent a significant difference between the NI and GB scheme, which currently enjoy mutual recognition. However, recommendations and decisions will have to await the outcome of the consultation, which gives all ADIs and other interested parties a chance to forward their views.

## **ADI Review**

The latest target date for bringing into effect new legislation is now March 2004. Even though a definitive date is still not certain we are going to press ahead with seminars for ADIs and a list of dates and locations is listed below. Seminars will begin at 7.00 pm and finish by 9.00 pm. The agenda will include an update of the new changes as well as other topical issues, which hopefully will be of interest to you. There will also be a question and answer session. Can you please call Angie McClenaghan as soon as possible to confirm your attendance? Angie can be contacted at 028 9054 7933 or you can email her at [angie.mcclenaghan@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:angie.mcclenaghan@doeni.gov.uk). Apologies if the locations listed are not close to you but we would urge you to try to attend one of the sessions. The uptake of places will determine if it is worthwhile for the Agency to run regular information seminars for ADIs in the future.

*Dates and locations are:*

22 March 2004	Greenvale Hotel,	Cookstown
24 March 2004	Canal Court Hotel	Newry
25 March 2004	White Horse Hotel	Londonderry
29 March 2004	DVTA Boucher Road	Belfast
30 March 2004	Silver Birch Hotel	Omagh

## **Competencies for Learner Drivers**

As you may know a voluntary learner driver log-book has been in operation in GB for some years. DSA have carried out a study which indicated that pupils who used the voluntary log book achieved a higher pass rate at the driving test than those who did not. DVTA will consider introducing the log book in Northern Ireland, in due course. In the meantime you can view the driver's record as it is now called and all related material on the DSA website which is [www.dsa.gov.uk/drivinst/driver-record/index.htm](http://www.dsa.gov.uk/drivinst/driver-record/index.htm).

Many of you are no doubt already using a very structured approach to teaching and all of you will know that a clear lesson plan and objective are requirements which Supervising Examiners look for in the ADI check test. Regrettably, it would seem (from feedback and complaints that the Agency receives from learner drivers) that some instructors are either not using any structure for lessons or are not communicating their structure effectively to their pupils. A learner driver should never be in any doubt about how much progress they have made, how much remains to be made and what the focus of each individual lesson is.

DSA has kindly given the Agency permission to copy to you some of the material which they have developed in respect of the 'Driver's record'. Attached to this *Update* is a list of the key competencies or topics that make up the official recommended syllabus and the underpinning knowledge which a pupil should be able to demonstrate in order to be a safe and competent driver. Also attached are the notes for guidance for instructors and the driver's record for completion by the pupil. These are 'living' documents in the sense that they are still being developed by DSA but they provide a measurable and transparent path through the learning process for both instructor and learner. DVTA would also encourage ADIs to re-visit the various texts that are available, eg, 'Driving - the Essential Skills', 'The Official Driving Test, and 'The Driving Instructors' Handbook.

Many of you may be using similar methods to plan and chart learner driver progress and we would be very keen to have a look at these. Please contact Deirdre Walsh at DVTA, Boucher Road, Belfast, telephone no. 028 9054 7959 or e-mail [deirdre.walsh@doeni.gov.uk](mailto:deirdre.walsh@doeni.gov.uk) if you don't mind sharing your good ideas.

### **Telephone Booking Service**

The roll out of the new booking system has now been completed and the telephone booking service is now available for all centres.

Practical driving tests for a private car or motorcycle can be booked by telephone on **0845 247 2472 (calls are charged at local rates) and the lines are open 8.00 am to 6.00 pm, Monday to Friday.**

Customers do not need to complete an application form when making a telephone booking but should have their provisional licence, theory test certificate and credit/debit card details hand when making the call. Calls are recorded for quality assurance purposes.

A similar service is also available for booking MOT appointments for private cars, motorcycles and light goods vehicles (under 3,500 Kg). The number to ring for vehicle test bookings is **0845 247 2471.**

### **Waiting Times**

Significant effort has gone into addressing the difficulties the Agency was experiencing earlier in the year in relation to vehicle test waiting times. As you are no doubt aware this had an adverse impact on driving test waiting times as we sought to concentrate as much resource as possible to assist customers to comply with their vehicle test and motor tax obligations. .

Vehicle test waiting times are now largely under control and we hope to be in a better position this year to meet the high level of demand that characterises the early part of the year. Driving test waiting times are still higher than we would like at some centres and effort is being concentrated on bringing waiting times into line with our target across all centres.

### **Supervision of Driving Examiners**

The Agency's mission statement refers to our contribution to road safety by providing a fair, high quality, independent and efficient testing service. To this end we have introduced a number of new procedures, which include new supervisory arrangements that have been developed in agreement with staff.

The new procedures ensure that all driving test staff are supervised at least two days per year (four tests per day). Time is also set aside during the day for discussion and feedback. We believe that these new procedures will help to maintain the integrity of the testing regime and ensure the public have confidence in the testing process.

The Agency recognizes the role driving instructors play in ensuring pupils are fully aware that they may be accompanied by a Supervisor and are fully prepared for the additional passenger. We would ask for your continued support in ensuring that pupils fully understand the need for and the benefits of supervision.

### **Show Me/ Tell Me Questions**

Some ADIs have pointed out that candidates are getting a driving fault against vehicle safety questions if they operate the hazard warning light switch when asked to demonstrate how to check that the indicators were working. DSA are accepting this and have stated so on their web site. The Agency's consider that using the hazard light switch will confirm that all the direction indicator bulbs are working. However, using the direction indicator stalk to operate the direction indicators on both sides will not only check that bulbs are in working order, but will confirm that the switch is working correctly. DVTA considers this to be a more complete method of checking that direction indicators are working correctly and will continue with its current practice.

### **ADI Fees**

I am pleased to advise you that the Agency has no plans to increase ADI fees on 1 April 2004. We appreciate that ADI fees in Northern Ireland are still considerably higher than those charged in GB. Consequently we have been doing everything possible in recent years to avoid any increases.

### **Driving Test Fees**

At this stage, we are not anticipating any adjustments in driving test fees on 1 April 2004, but we cannot rule out any changes later in the year. The Agency is keen to hold most driving and vehicle test fees at last year's levels, but some adjustments may be unavoidable. At the time of writing, the matter is still under review.

Recorded fee information is available on our Fee Information line 0845 758 1416 (available 24 hours). However, if you wish to enquire about any impending fee revisions, please feel free to contact Angie on **028 9054 7933** or our Customer Helpline on **0845 601 4094** (calls are charged at local rates and the service is available 9.00 to 5.00, Monday to Friday).

### **Customer Survey**

We have recently received the results of our annual customer survey. The results make interesting reading in light of the difficulties we faced last year particularly in relation to waiting times for MOT appointments. The driving test results held up well but poor results from vehicle test respondents meant that the overall results were down on previous years.

Some 88% of the customers surveyed indicated that they were satisfied with their overall experience of their test (driving test or vehicle test). The level of satisfaction with test procedures at 91% (satisfied or very satisfied) was slightly down on previous years but fell short of the Agency's target of 94% for the first time. Customers were unhappy with booking arrangements with just 68% indicating that they were satisfied against our target of 92%. The overwhelming reason for dissatisfaction (and this was quoted by 94% of vehicle test respondents) was having to wait too long to get a test appointment.

The survey was carried out during July and August 2003 when the Agency was going through one of the most difficult patches in its history and although the result was much lower than we would have liked, it nevertheless gave us confidence that the survey actually reflects what customers think.

### **Data Protection**

DVTA has become aware of the existence of a company calling itself Data Protection Agency Services. This company sends unsolicited emails stating that the recipient is not held on the company's records as having registered under the Data Protection Act 1998. The email goes on to say that in order to avoid further action the recipient should complete an enclosed form and return it immediately along with a fee of £95.

While our information is that this message has been sent by email there may also be instances where people have received hard copies of such messages in the post. Please be on the alert for this type of communication. If you receive anything of this nature **please ignore it** and make no contact. This company is currently being investigated by Trading Standards.

Those of you who have not already done so may wish to find out what your own obligations are in terms of data protection. Anyone, whether self-employed or running a small business, who holds or processes personal data, may have data protection obligations. The Data Protection Act 1998 put in place eight principles to make sure that information is handled properly. These are listed below for your information. You may also wish to view the website of the Office of the Information Commissioner - [www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk](http://www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk) - where you will find a question flow chart which is designed to help you decide whether or not you are required to register for data protection purposes.

## **Principles**

There are eight principles put in place by the Data Protection Act 1998 to make sure that your information is handled properly.

Data must be:

1. fairly and lawfully processed;
2. processed for limited purposes;
3. adequate, relevant and not excessive;
4. accurate;
5. not kept for longer than is necessary;
6. processed in line with an individual's rights;
7. secure; and,
8. not transferred to countries outside the European Economic Area unless that country has adequate protection for the rights and freedoms of data subjects.

By law data controllers have to keep to these principles.

## **Use of Mobile Phones While Driving**

On 1 February 2004 new legislation will become operative in Northern Ireland which will prohibit a person from driving, or causing or permitting a person to drive, a motor vehicle on a road if the driver is using a hand-held mobile telephone or similar device.

It also prohibits a person from using a mobile telephone or similar device while *supervising* a holder of a provisional licence at a time when the provisional licence holder is driving a motor vehicle on a road. To contravene these requirements will be an offence under Article 58 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1995

A similar device could be a device, other than a two-way radio, which performs an interactive communication function by transmitting and receiving data.

The regulations state that a person will not be breaking the law, if it is necessary to make a call to the emergency services on 999 or 112 in response to a genuine emergency where it is unsafe or impracticable for him (or the provisional licence holder) to cease driving while the call is being made.

Please be sure to observe these new rules particularly when instructing.

### **Parking At Dill Road Test Centre**

Some Instructors and ADI trainers using Dill Road test centre are parking on the yellow lines outside the centre. This has caused inconvenience to learners during their test as it forces them to reposition onto the wrong side of the road on the approach to a right hand bend. It is also a bad example to set for learner drivers. In the interest of all concerned we would ask those involved to cease this practice.

### **Use of Driving Test Centres for Instruction**

Once again I have to ask you - **please** don't use our centres for practice. This is presenting difficulties for centre managers who have to manage the use of these areas for their intended purpose, ie, driver and vehicle testing.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

DVTA is currently undertaking an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the driver and vehicle test functions. The EQIA is being conducted under the Department of the Environment's Equality Scheme and all aspects of the driver and vehicle tests will be assessed for differential impacts upon the nine social groupings (religion, political opinion, race, age, marital status, sexual orientation, disabled persons, persons with dependents, and between men and women generally), specified under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Data has been collected and analysed, and informal consultations have been conducted with interested organisations. At present the Agency is preparing a document which will be issued for public consultation within the next few months. All members of the public and representatives of organisations will then have 12 weeks to reply to the consultation before the Agency produces its final equality impact assessment.

If you would like to receive a copy of the consultation or need any further information please send you name and address to Gillian Lewis, DVTA, Balmoral Road, or we can send you an electronic copy on receipt of your email address.

### **NIADIA meeting**

The Association has asked us to let you know that they are holding their AGM on 16 February 2004. All ADI's are invited to attend the NIADIA AGM and conference which is to be held in the Fitzwilliam International Hotel, by the Belfast International Airport. Registration begins at 6.30pm. DVTA personnel will be in attendance along with other guest speakers invited by the Association.



**R J CROSBY**

Registrar

