

30 September 2009

Don't take an early mud bath this autumn

Harvest time is upon us and local drivers, as well as out-of-towners, will be confronted by slippery mud patches on the roads, usually with nothing more than the charmingly rustic home-made sign as a warning.

The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) has urged drivers to look for other clues to the possibility of mud on the roads, which caused 696 accidents in 2008*. IAM Chief Examiner, Peter Rodger, said:

"Mud on roads is particularly an issue around harvest time. If you're driving on a rural road, keep an eye out for indicators such as tractors in the fields, and straw or tractor tyre marks on the roads. Field and farm entrances or farm buildings by the roadside are places where the landscape is giving a clue that there could be a problem. If you do find a small amount of mud, be ready for more, and prepared to find yourself on a very slippery surface. If it rains the result can be a very slippery film of mud spread across the road.

"If you are amongst other traffic, drop back from the vehicle ahead and allow yourself more time to see the road surface – and keep away from the mud splattered up onto your windscreen at the same time.

"Mud is an inevitable part of life in the country, and drivers should always expect it to be there. Statistically rural roads are our most dangerous and observation is the key to safe driving. By taking this kind of information on board, and by adjusting your driving accordingly, you can avoid being caught by surprise, and serious accidents due to skidding."

Notes to editors:

*Reported Road Casualties Great Britain 2008

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1. The IAM (Institute of Advanced Motorists) directly influences the driving and riding of more than 100,000 full members in the UK and Ireland. Established in 1956, the IAM is today best known for the advanced driving test and the advanced driving course, which is available to car, motorcycle and commercial licence holders. The IAM has grown to become the UK's largest independent road safety charity, dedicated to raising driving standards, engaging with the road-using public and influencing road safety policy. The commercial division of the IAM operates through occupational driver training companies IAM Fleet UK, Drive & Survive and IAM Fleet Ireland.

2. A 2006 report by Brunel University, following an 18 month study, concluded that "advanced driver training produces safer drivers and lower accident involvement", with measurable improvements in knowledge, skills and attitude.

3. In January 2007, the IAM Motoring Trust was established as the Policy and Research Division to undertake research, promote practical policies, act as an advocate for safer roads, safer drivers and safer vehicles and encourage responsible motoring through education and training.

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