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Press release

When it rains it kills: warning to drivers

From: Highways England
Part of: Road network and traffic
Published: 29 November 2016

Drivers are being urged to slow down when it's raining after almost 3,000 people were killed or seriously injured when driving in the rain last year.

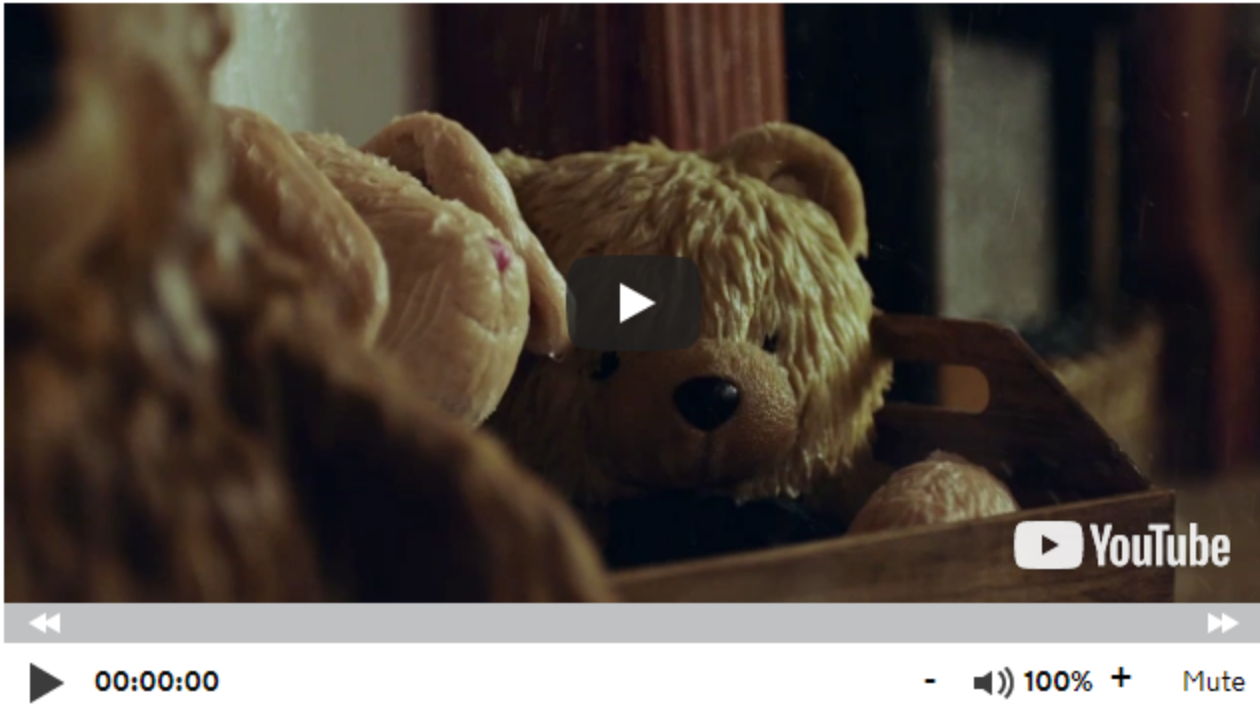


Highways England is launching a new safety campaign warning drivers that 'when it rains, it kills' after the latest statistics showed that people are 30 times more likely to be killed or seriously injured on the roads in rain than in snow.

The figures also reveal that travelling too fast for the current conditions was identified as a factor in 1 in 9 road deaths in Great Britain last year, with drivers failing to alter how they drive in response to changing conditions on the road.

Highways England is warning that even driving within the speed limit in wet weather could be dangerous if drivers don't allow extra space between them and the vehicle in front. And the message is being reinforced with rain-activated paint messages visible to people leaving motorway services when it is raining.

A new road safety video has also been produced, directed by award-winning photographer Nadav Kander, which shows rain falling inside the home of a family imagined to have been involved in a serious road collision.



Highways England's Head of Road Safety, Richard Leonard, said:

- " Most of us already slow down in snow, ice or fog but when it rains we consider it normal so don't adapt our driving.
- " The sad fact is that 2,918 people were killed or seriously injured on the roads when it was raining last year, and not slowing down to suit the current conditions was identified as a factor in 1 in 9 of all road deaths.
- " Rain makes it harder for tyres to grip the road and harder for drivers to see ahead – significantly increasing the chances of being involved in a collision. We've launched our new campaign to make drivers aware of the dangers and to stay safe."

It generally takes at least twice as long to stop on a wet road as on a dry road because tyres have less grip on the surface. In wet weather you should:

- slow down if the rain and spray from vehicles is making it difficult to see and be seen
- keep well back from the vehicle in front as this will increase your ability to see and plan ahead
- ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually if the steering becomes unresponsive as it probably means that water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road



In total, 197 people lost their lives on roads during rainfall in Great Britain last year and 2,721 suffered a serious injury, compared to 14 deaths and 153 serious injuries during fog, and 2 deaths and 95 serious injuries during snow.

Highways England is aiming to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on England's motorways and major A roads by 40% by 2020 through road improvements, safety campaigns and other initiatives.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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