



Don't take speed to the limit – Read the road. See the hazards

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Nearly 2/3 of all fatal crashes occur on country roads. Among the primary reasons for such a high proportion of fatalities is the inappropriate use of speed for the constantly changing driving conditions.

Kent Highway Services is launching its 'Country Roads' campaign to raise awareness of the need to read the road, see the hazards and not take speed to the limit. The consequences of getting it wrong can lead to tragedy. The campaign aims to continue the reduction in the number of fatal and serious injury crashes on Kent's roads. Each fatal crash is estimated to cost the community around £1.6million.

Country roads have many hazards that can include sharp bends, large vehicles, concealed entrances, walkers, cyclists and other vulnerable road users, which is why it is often inappropriate to drive at the limit. All speed limit signs are there as an indicator of the environment and the maximum legal speed permitted. However, speed limits are never an indicator of the safest speed because prevailing conditions are constantly changing (for example wet road surface, parked vehicles, walkers in the road) and ultimately it is the responsibility of the road user to assess these factors and use the highway appropriately.

Kent Highway Services is launching its awareness campaign in Sevenoaks on Wednesday 28th July at the Stag Community Arts Centre, Sevenoaks with a presentation and film demonstration highlighting the need to read the road and drive at speeds suitable for the conditions.

Nick Chard, KCC Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste. "This campaign is aimed at raising awareness for drivers' that even though a road sign may indicate national speed limit, common sense must prevail. For example, on winding country road which may have hidden dip, it would be irresponsible to drive at 60 mph. We want all drivers to think 'What if?' What if, there is a cyclist, horse rider or large vehicle coming toward you on the next bend? The conditions on country roads change all the time and it's often not safe to be travelling at the limit."

Steve Horton, Kent Highway Services, Road Safety Team Leader commented "Speed is a key factor in all crashes – if you crash it's because you couldn't stop in time. If you cannot stop, you're travelling too fast for the conditions. The faster you crash, the more damage you will do. Don't take speed to the limit, read the road, see the hazards."

The film demonstrates not only the changing conditions but the variable road widths which fall under a National Speed Limit sign.

The launch is a visual demonstration of the need to read the road and observe the vital signs which are there to help us all complete our journeys safely. The campaign is designed to reach everyone who drives in Kent, not just people who live in the countryside but the urban communities too. All drivers use a country road at some point. We hope that with the help of the media we can get this message out to help save lives on Kent roads."

After the press launch the campaign will be released county-wide for the duration of August and will include 40 second radio commercials, bus advertising, fuel nozzle advertising, advertising on major route planning websites as well as popular car websites and local Kent websites, Facebook advertising, High Street promotional events, mailings to rural public houses and Kent businesses and also a dedicated website with an online quiz.

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