

Summary: Intervention & Options

Department /Agency: Department for Transport	Title: Impact Assessment of Measures to Increase Driver Compliance - Careless Driving	
Stage: Consultation	Version: 1	Date: October 2008
Related Publications:		

Available to view or download at:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk>

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What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?

The potentially significant problem of careless driving and the inadequacies of the current system for securing a conviction mean that there is a strong case for Government intervention to improve driver compliance with expected driving standards.

What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?

The overarching policy objective is to minimise casualties resulting from non-compliance with road traffic law. The specific aim of proposals relating to careless driving is to improve driver compliance with expected driving standards and, in doing so, improve road safety.

What policy options have been considered? Please justify any preferred option.

Option A is to maintain the status quo. Option B involves the introduction of fixed penalties for careless driving. Option C involves the production of guidance for the Courts Service/CPS. Option D would result in increased enforcement. Option E is a combination of Options B and D.

When will the policy be reviewed to establish the actual costs and benefits and the achievement of the desired effects? DfT to confirm.

Ministerial Sign-off For consultation stage Impact Assessments:

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

Signed by the responsible Minister:

.....Date:

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: B

Description: Introduce fixed penalties for careless driving

COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Cost saving as a resuction of the introduction of fixed penalties.
	One-off (Transition)	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off)		
	£ -4.6 to -5.0m		Total Cost (PV) £ -39.2m to -42.6m
Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' None			

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Indicative estimate of potential benefits which could occur from a 1 to 5 per cent reduction in casualties as result of improved enforcement.
	One-off	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off)		
	£ 17.7-88.7m		Total Benefit (PV) £ 152m to 763m
Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' None			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks The level of ongoing costs and benefits generated by this measure depends on the increase in detection rate and behavioural change (improved compliance resulting from a perceived increased risk of being caught).

Price Base Year 2007	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £ 195 to 803m	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £ 499m
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	GB			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	tbc			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	Police			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£ tbc			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£ 0			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£ 0			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro 0	Small 0	Medium 0	Large 0
Are any of these organisations exempt?	No	No	N/A	N/A

Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices)		(Increase - Decrease)	
Increase of	£ 0	Decrease of	£ 0
		Net Impact	£ 0

Key: Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices (Net) Present Value

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: C

Description: Improve guidance for courts/CPS

COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' One-off cost of producing guidance and ongoing cost of additional prosecutions.
	One-off (Transition)	Yrs	
	£ 3m	1	
	Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off)		
	£ 0.5–1.5m	Total Cost (PV)	£ 7 –16m
Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' None			

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Indicative estimate of potential benefits which could occur from a 0.5 to 1% reduction in casualties as result of improved enforcement.
	One-off	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off)		
	£ 8.9–17.7m	Total Benefit (PV)	£ 77–152m
Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' None			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks The level of ongoing costs and benefits generated by this measure depends on the increase in detection rate and behavioural change (improved compliance resulting from a perceived increased risk of being caught).

Price Base Year 2007	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £ 69–136m	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £ 103m
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	GB			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	tbc			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	n/a			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£ n/a			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£ 0			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£ 0			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro 0	Small 0	Medium 0	Large 0
Are any of these organisations exempt?	No	No	N/A	N/A

Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices)		(Increase - Decrease)	
Increase of	£ 0	Decrease of	£ 0
		Net Impact	£ 0

Key: Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices (Net) Present Value

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: D

Description: Improved enforcement

COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' The grant funding for additional officers has been assumed to last for a 10 year period. There will be also be an ongoing cost of additional prosecutions.
	One-off (Transition)	Yrs	
	£ 3.5m	10	
	Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off)		
	£ 0.5–1.5m	Total Cost (PV)	£ 34–43m
Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' None			

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Indicative estimate of potential benefits which could occur from a 0.5 to 1 per cent reduction in casualties as result of improved enforcement.
	One-off	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off)		
	£ 8.9–17.7m	Total Benefit (PV)	£ 77–152m
Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' None			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks The level of ongoing costs and benefits generated by this measure depends on the increase in detection rate and behavioural change (improved compliance resulting from a perceived increased risk of being caught).

Price Base Year 2007	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £ 42–109m	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £ 76m
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	GB			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	tbc			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	Police			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£ tbc			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£ 0			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£ 0			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro 0	Small 0	Medium 0	Large 0
Are any of these organisations exempt?	No	No	N/A	N/A

Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices)		(Increase - Decrease)	
Increase of	£ 0	Decrease of	£ 0
		Net Impact	£ 0

Key: Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices (Net) Present Value

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: E	Description: Introduction of fixed penalties and improved enforcement
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COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Cost of grant funding for additional officers plus cost saving from introduction of FPNs.
	One-off (Transition)	Yrs	
	£ 3.5m	10	
	Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off)		
£ -4.4 to -5.0m		Total Cost (PV)	£ -7.3 to -12.5m
Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups' None			

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Indicative estimate of potential benefits which could occur from a 1 to 7% reduction in casualties as result of improved enforcement.
	One-off	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off)		
£ 17.7–124.2m		Total Benefit (PV)	£ 152–1,069m
Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' None			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks The level of ongoing costs and benefits generated by this measure depends on the increase in detection rate and behavioural change (improved compliance resulting from a perceived increased risk of being caught).

Price Base Year 2007	Time Period Years 10	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £ 165–1.076m	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £ 621m
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	GB			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	tbc			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	Police			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£ tbc			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£ 0			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£ 0			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro 0	Small 0	Medium 0	Large 0
Are any of these organisations exempt?	No	No	N/A	N/A

Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices)		(Increase - Decrease)
Increase of £ 0	Decrease of £ 0	Net Impact £ 0

Key: Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices (Net) Present Value

Evidence Base (for summary sheets)

[Use this space (with a recommended maximum of 30 pages) to set out the evidence, analysis and detailed narrative from which you have generated your policy options or proposal. Ensure that the information is organised in such a way as to explain clearly the summary information on the preceding pages of this form.]

Background

This Impact Assessment relates to proposals to improve driver behaviour in respect of careless driving.

It is part of the review of DfT's overarching strategy for achieving compliance with road traffic law, which has the aim of the minimising casualties resulting from non-compliance. Driver behaviour has been found to be a factor in a significant proportion of all road traffic collisions. To the extent that road traffic laws proscribe behaviour that is unsafe, compliance with those laws is key to preventing road collisions and in reducing road casualties.

Careless driving is defined in the Road Safety Act 2006 as driving 'below the standard expected of a careful and competent driver.' It includes a wide variety of behaviours such as tailgating, sudden braking and driving too fast for the road conditions – i.e. instances where bad driving rather than breach of a specific regulation leads to a collision (or potential collision). It is considered that most bad driving is due to a failure of the driver's skills rather than a conscious decision to drive badly. It is also recognised that most bad driving is committed by people who have passed a driving test. Such careless driving is covered by the general offence of 'driving without due care and attention' or in extreme cases the offence of 'dangerous driving.' Further offences may also apply where a fatality results.

Given that careless driving covers a great many behaviours, it is difficult to identify the extent of the problem based on available statistics. In 2006, there were 233,000 recorded instances of careless driving being dealt with by the authorities in England and Wales, and a further 10,000 in Scotland. Of these, 38,000 led to proceedings in magistrates courts in England and Wales, and this resulted in almost 28,500 findings of guilt (including those cases which were committed to Crown Court). The category 'careless driving' covers a range of offences, so narrowing this down to those found guilty of driving without due care and attention gives a total of 25,400 guilty findings (Ministry of Justice, 2008). In addition, a survey of drivers convicted of careless driving showed that 57 per cent reported that at the time of the incident they were driving as they often or normally drove, indicating that the majority of careless drivers are not simply exhibiting a temporary diversion from acceptable driving behaviour.

DfT statistics indicate that in 2007 there were 432 fatal accidents (leading to 480 fatalities) where 'careless, reckless or in a hurry' was identified as a contributory factor, accounting for 17 per cent of all fatal accidents. 'Careless, reckless or in a hurry' also contributed to 3,700 serious accidents, 4,460 serious casualties, and 29,670 slight casualties. This is likely to be an underestimate of the number of incidents involving careless driving, given that the term may also span other contributory factor categories such as 'aggressive driving' or 'failing to look properly'.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the prosecution rate for careless driving is low, given the heavy burden of paperwork involved, which means that many potential offenders are not prosecuted or even charged, and so there is a potentially significant number of offences that are going unpunished. Given the problem of careless driving, which is likely to be higher than available data suggest and the inadequacies of the current system for securing a conviction, there is a strong case for Government intervention to improve driver compliance with expected driving standards, and, in doing so, improve road safety.

Preparation of the Impact Assessment

This initial Impact Assessment has been prepared on the basis of a review of existing evidence and discussions with key stakeholders.

It has been prepared to accompany a consultation to invite comments on a range of proposals relating to compliance with road traffic law.

The evidence base will be updated following the consultation period to take account of any further evidence that emerges.

Options

Option A: Do nothing – this would involve maintaining the status quo. However, this would not address the issues identified above, meaning that the opportunity to reduce careless driving would not be realised. Therefore to do nothing would not contribute to the overall strategy to improve driver compliance with road traffic law. However, for the purpose of the impact assessment, all 'do something' options should be assessed against the status quo.

Option B: Introduction of fixed penalties for careless driving (less serious instances only).

Option C: Provision of improved guidance for the Courts Service/Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) relating to prosecution of careless driving.

Option D: Improved enforcement of careless driving through the introduction of additional resources.

Option E: Introduction of fixed penalties coupled with improved enforcement.

Sectors and groups affected

Drivers

As noted, in 2006, almost 25,400 drivers were convicted of driving without due care and attention. However, this is considered to be a lower estimate of the incidence of the problem, given that it only relates to the number who were identified and subsequently convicted.

Police/CPS/Courts Service

The police are responsible for enforcement of careless driving law, while the CPS and Courts Service have a role in prosecution of offenders.

Government

Government would be responsible for amending legislation and issuing guidance in respect of enforcement.

Costs and benefits – overview

The options proposed aim to generate improved driver compliance in respect of careless driving law, which would be expected to translate into a reduction in accidents (and associated casualties) where careless driving is a contributory factor, thereby creating improved safety for all road users. The extent of this impact will largely depend on the change in driver behaviour that occurs as a result of the measures, and which will be influenced by how drivers perceive the change in the risk of being caught. Improved enforcement (either through additional resources or improved processes) would be expected to impact on the perception of risk, although the likely extent of this impact is not known and so the analysis which follows presents indicative estimates that highlight the potential benefits which would result from a small decrease in the number of casualties caused by careless driving.

The proposed options will generate costs to enforcement authorities as a result of the additional resources required to implement them, but there is also potential for cost savings as a result of

improved processes. Costs will also be incurred by additional drivers who are caught committing the offence, but these are not included within the Impact Assessment.

Risks and uncertainty

As noted, a key area of uncertainty relates to how the measures will impact on behaviour with regards to careless driving. At present there is no basis on which to construct an estimate of the reduction in casualties that might be expected to occur as a result of any of the four proposed options. In the absence of further evidence, we have chosen to provide a range that shows the potential monetary impact caused by an assumed reduction in the number of casualties (with the number calculated as a percentage reduction in current casualty numbers). This is further assumed to be an ongoing benefit, given that the number of casualties attributed to careless driving by contributory factors data is thought to be an underestimate of the full extent of the problem. This approach serves to highlight the benefits that could result if the objective of improved compliance is achieved.

Option B – Analysis of impacts

Costs

The introduction of careless driving as a fixed penalty offence would improve the ability of the police to enforce the law in respect of careless driving.

It is assumed that there would be no additional costs incurred by the police as a result of this change, as enforcement through the use of fixed penalties would be undertaken as part of routine patrols and so covered by existing resources. It could also be argued that the introduction of careless driving as a fixed penalty offence will help to free up police time that would otherwise be taken up in processing offenders under the existing system. However, any time saved would be expected to be absorbed by undertaking other duties.

When issued with a fixed penalty notice, a driver has the option of either accepting the fine and endorsements or going to court to challenge the offence. Where a driver accepts the fixed penalty, there would be a reduction in costs for the police, CPS and Court Service.

A survey of drivers convicted of careless driving reveals that the majority pleaded guilty to the offence – this suggests that around 18,500 of those convicted in 2006 would have pleaded guilty in court. It is estimated that the average cost of a guilty plea to an indictable motoring offence in a magistrates court was £550 in 1998/99 (*The Cost of Criminal Justice*, Home Office, 1999) – equivalent to £680 in 2007/08 prices. If these drivers had been issued with, and accepted, a fixed penalty notice, a significant saving would have been made, as the cost of enforcing a fixed penalty notice is estimated at £36 (PA Consulting, 2004 – uprated to 2007 prices). This potential saving is estimated at around £12m (assuming that the introduction of fixed penalties has no impact on the likelihood of a driver to plead guilty). However, some of these cases may have related to more serious instances of careless driving (for example where the driver was subsequently disqualified), and it is intended that these more serious cases would still be dealt with in court.

Evidence from the introduction of fixed penalties for speeding offences suggests that, in the four years after the introduction of fixed penalties, the number of prosecutions in court dropped by around one-third compared to the level for four years before the introduction.

Applying this assumption to the total number of instances where drivers were found guilty of driving without due care and attention (25,400) provides a conservative estimate of a potential saving of almost £5.5m in court costs per annum.

In the case of speeding, the number of offenders being charged increased after the introduction of fixed penalties, i.e. the number of fixed penalties issued exceeded the reduction in the number of cases taken to court. A potential benefit of the introduction of fixed penalties for careless driving is that it would enable offenders who currently go unpunished to be issued with

a fixed penalty notice. Any increase in the number of careless driving cases that occur would be assumed to be attributable to the introduction of fixed penalties; therefore this increase does not represent a cost saving against the baseline level of court costs. However, such an increase would represent a cost to enforcement authorities in terms of issuing and processing fixed penalties. Based on evidence on the impact of introducing fixed penalties for speeding, we have assumed a potential increase in the number of cases of careless driving of between 50 and 100 per cent. Based on current data relating to convictions, this suggests a potential increase in careless driving cases enforced against of between 12,700 and 25,400 – all of which would be dealt with by fixed penalty notice – resulting in an additional average cost of between £0.5 and £0.9m per annum (although in reality the number of additional cases would be dependent on a number of other factors, such as driver behaviour).

Those who receive, and accept, fixed penalties would be required to pay a fine. However, the cost of this payment is a transfer between the driver and the State and therefore does not result in a net impact for inclusion in the Impact Assessment. Costs incurred as a result of endorsements depend on the circumstances of the driver (e.g. the number of existing/future endorsements and whether their job involves driving). Given that careless driving does not involve breach of a specific regulation (e.g. speeding or failure to wear a seat belt), we have assumed that, in the majority of cases that are dealt with by the issue of a fixed penalty notice, the driver is unlikely to have any other endorsements and that the issue of three penalty points will not result in the driver incurring any significant financial costs (e.g. as a result of disqualification). However, even if costs were incurred by individuals, they would not be included in the Impact Assessment, as they result from committing a criminal offence.

Benefits

The introduction and use of fixed penalties would send a signal to drivers that careless driving is unacceptable and has an increased likelihood of being punished. Over time this may lead to a reduction in careless driving as drivers seek to correct unacceptable driving behaviour in order to avoid punishment. Such a reduction may be expected to lead to a fall in the number of cases of careless driving and a corresponding fall in the number of related casualties. In 2007, there were over 400 fatal collisions in which 'careless, reckless or in a hurry' was identified as a contributory factor. However, there is currently no basis on which to estimate the extent to which the introduction of fixed penalties would impact on driver behaviour.

Constructing an estimate of the potential benefits in terms of reduced casualties is further complicated by the wide range of behaviours that might be classed as careless driving and the lack of a definitive data set that shows the number of accidents which occur as a result of this behaviour. In order to provide an indicative estimate of potential benefits, it has been assumed that the introduction of fixed penalties would lead to between a 1 and 5 per cent reduction in casualties associated with careless driving – these reductions have been estimated on the basis of the number of casualties where 'careless, reckless, or in a hurry' was the contributing factor. The value of these reductions has been estimated using the DfT's estimate of the value of preventing a fatality (estimated at £1,652,000 in 2008) and associated weightings for major injuries (10) and reportable minor injuries (200). On this basis, the value of the potential benefits could range between £17.7m and £88.7m. In the absence of further evidence, this estimate should be viewed as indicative only but shows the potential benefits which could result from a small reduction in the casualties caused by careless driving.

Table 1 Estimated reductions in types of injury, given 0.5 and 1 per cent reductions in casualties

Type of injury	1 per cent reduction in casualties		5 per cent reduction in casualties	
	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)
Fatality	5	7,929,600	24	39,648,000

Serious injury	45	7,367,920	223	36,839,600
Slight injury	297	2,449,586	1,484	12,253,710
Total	346	17,747,106	1,731	88,741,310

Environmental and social impacts

No significant environmental impacts are expected to result from this proposal.

The proposals would be expected to generate positive social impacts by tackling the problem of careless driving thereby helping to improve driving standards, and safety for all road users.

Option C – Analysis of impacts

Costs

This option would involve the production of guidance for the CPS and Courts Service, which would be designed to result in more effective enforcement of careless driving laws. The costs of producing such guidance would be met by Government and, at this stage, have been estimated at a one-off cost of £3m (indicative estimate).

Taken in isolation from the introduction of fixed penalties, the production of such guidance would be expected to increase the number of prosecutions, resulting in increased costs. However, the introduction of such guidance would do nothing to address the administrative burden currently faced by police. In 2006, 37,000 cases of careless driving (from a total of 233,000) were prosecuted by magistrates courts in England and Wales, and resulted in 25,400 findings of guilt.

There is no way of estimating the impact of guidance on the number of prosecutions, so an indicative range of 1 per cent to 3 per cent has been assumed for the percentage increase in prosecutions (an increase of between 370 and 1110). In line with evidence from 2006, 70 per cent of these prosecutions are assumed to result in a finding of guilt. Seventy-five per cent of those found guilty are assumed to plead guilty (in line with survey evidence cited above), while all those found not guilty are assumed to plead not guilty. The cost of a guilty plea to a motoring offence in a magistrates court is estimated at £680 in 2007/08 prices, and a non-guilty plea is estimated at £2,100 (*Cost of Criminal Justice*, Home Office, 1999, uprated to 2007/08 prices using the GDP deflator).

Successful prosecutions are assumed to lead to a magistrate's fine, which, for the purposes of the impact assessment, is treated as a transfer payment from the individual to the courts. Average fines for findings of guilt in cases relating to careless driving were £164 (data for 2006 uprated to 2007/08 prices, Ministry of Justice 2008).

Total indicative costs are estimated to range between £497,000 and £1,492,000.

Table 2 Scenarios associated with 1 and 3 per cent increases in prosecutions

	1 per cent increase in prosecutions	3 per cent increase in prosecutions (£)
Increase in prosecutions	370	1110
Increase in findings of guilt	263	788
Number of guilty pleas	197	591
Number of not guilty pleas	173	519
Cost associated with guilty pleas (£)	133,977	401,931

Cost associated with pleas of not guilty (£)	363,248	1,089,743
Total costs	497,225	1,491,674

There would also be additional costs incurred by the individuals who are prosecuted. The extent of such costs would depend on the plea and the verdict. However, such costs incurred by individuals who have broken the law are not considered by the Impact Assessment.

Benefits

As noted, the production of guidance would be expected to result in more effective enforcement of careless driving law. This would send a signal to drivers that careless driving is unacceptable and has an increased likelihood of being punished. Over time this may lead to a reduction in careless driving as drivers seek to correct unacceptable driving behaviour in order to avoid punishment. Such a reduction may be expected to lead to a fall in the number of cases of careless driving and a corresponding fall in the number of related casualties. In 2006, there were over 400 fatal collisions in which 'careless, reckless or in a hurry' was identified as a contributory factor. There is currently no basis on which to estimate the extent to which the introduction of new guidance would subsequently impact on driver behaviour. Constructing an estimate of the potential benefits in terms of reduced casualties is further complicated by the wide range of behaviours that might be classed as careless driving and the lack of a definitive data set that shows the number of accidents which occur as a result of this behaviour.

However, given the estimated relative impact on enforcement, it has been assumed that the introduction of guidance would lead to between a 0.5 and 1 per cent reduction in casualties associated with careless driving – these reductions have been estimated on the basis of the number of casualties where 'careless, reckless, or in a hurry' was the contributing factor. The value of these reductions has been estimated using the DfT's estimate of the value of preventing a fatality (estimated at £1,652,000 in 2008) and associated weightings for major injuries (10) and reportable minor injuries (200). On this basis, the value of the potential benefits could range between £8.9m and £17.7m. In the absence of further evidence, this estimate should be viewed as indicative only but shows the potential benefits that could result from a small reduction in the casualties caused by careless driving.

Table 3 Estimated reductions in types of injury, given 0.5 and 1 per cent reductions in casualties

Type of injury	0.5 per cent reduction in casualties		1 per cent reduction in casualties	
	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)
Fatality	2	3,964,800	5	7,929,600
Serious injury	22	3,683,960	45	7,367,920
Slight injury	148	1,224,793	297	2,449,586
Total	172	8,873,553	346	17,747,106

Environmental and social impacts

No significant environmental impacts are expected to result from this proposal.

The proposals would be expected to generate positive social impacts by tackling the problem of careless driving, thereby helping to improve driving standards, and safety for all road users.

Option D – Analysis of impacts

Costs

This option would encourage increased enforcement activity related to careless driving by providing funds (e.g. via a dedicated grant that forces could apply for) to enable an increase in the number of traffic police. Details of such a scheme have yet to be finalised, so at this stage it has been assumed that a total budget of £3.5m would be made available by the Department each year for a 10-year period (based on data from ASHE, the median gross annual wage of a police officer of the rank of sergeant and below is £36,300; allowing for other costs such as training suggests that the actual cost per officer may be closer to £50,000 – therefore the indicative budget would be expected to provide for around 70 officers, which is an increase of approximately 10 per cent of the stock of traffic police in England and Wales as recorded in 2004/05). It is assumed that there would be no additional costs to police forces.

There is no way of estimating the impact of this increased activity on the number of offences detected. An increase in traffic policing resources may be expected to result in an increase in the detection rate. However, it is also possible that the additional resources will act as a deterrent that increases driver compliance with careless driving law.

An increase in the detection rate would also be expected to increase the number of prosecutions, resulting in an increase in court costs. There is currently no basis on which to estimate the potential increase in the number of prosecutions therefore we have presented an indicative range of 1 per cent to 3 per cent (an increase of between 370 and 1110). In line with evidence from 2006, 70 per cent of these prosecutions are assumed to result in a finding of guilt. 75 per cent of those found guilty are assumed to plead guilty (in line with survey evidence cited above), while all those found not guilty are assumed to plead not guilty. The cost of a guilty plea to a motoring offence in a magistrate court is estimated at £680 in 2007/08 prices, and a non-guilty plea is estimated at £2,100 (Cost of Criminal Justice, Home Office, 1999, uprated to 2007/08 prices using the GDP deflator).

Successful prosecutions are assumed to lead to a magistrate's fine, which, for the purposes of the impact assessment, is treated as a transfer payment from the individual to the courts. Average fines for findings of guilt in cases relating to careless driving were £164 (data for 2006 uprated to 2007/08 prices, Ministry of Justice 2008).

Total indicative costs are estimated to range between £497,000 and £1,492,000.

Table 4 Scenarios associated with 1 and 5 per cent increases in prosecutions

	1 per cent increase in prosecutions (£)	3 per cent increase in prosecutions (£)
Increase in prosecutions	370	1110
Increase in findings of guilt	263	788
Number of guilty pleas	197	591
Number of not guilty pleas	173	519
Cost associated with guilty pleas (£)	133,977	401,931
Cost associated with pleas of not guilty (£)	363,248	1,089,743
Total costs	497,225	1,491,674

There would also be additional costs incurred by the individuals who are prosecuted. The extent of such costs would depend on the plea and the verdict. However, such costs incurred by individuals who have broken the law are not considered by the Impact Assessment.

Benefits

An increase in enforcement would be expected to result in more effective detection of careless driving. This would send a signal to drivers that careless driving is unacceptable and has an increased likelihood of being punished. Over time this may lead to a reduction in careless driving as drivers seek to correct unacceptable driving behaviour in order to avoid punishment. Such a reduction may be expected to lead to a fall in the number of cases of careless driving and a corresponding fall in the number of related casualties. In 2006, there were over 400 fatal collisions in which 'careless, reckless or in a hurry' was identified as a contributory factor. There is currently no basis on which to estimate the extent to which the introduction of new guidance would subsequently impact on driver behaviour. Constructing an estimate of the potential benefits in terms of reduced casualties is further complicated by the wide range of behaviours that might be classed as careless driving and the lack of a definitive data set that shows the number of accidents which occur as a result of this behaviour.

However, given the estimated relative impact on enforcement, it has been assumed that the introduction of this measure would lead to between a 0.5 and 1 per cent reduction in casualties associated with careless driving – these reductions have been estimated on the basis of the number of casualties where 'careless, reckless, or in a hurry' was the contributing factor. The value of these reductions has been estimated using the DfT's estimate of the value of preventing a fatality (estimated at £1,652,000 in 2008) and associated weightings for major injuries (10) and reportable minor injuries (200). On this basis, the value of the potential benefits could range between £8.9m and £17.7m. In the absence of further evidence, this estimate should be viewed as indicative only but shows the potential benefits that could result from a small reduction in the casualties caused by careless driving.

Table 5 Estimated reductions in types of injury, given 0.5 and 1 per cent reductions in casualties

Type of injury	0.5 per cent reduction in casualties		1 per cent reduction in casualties	
	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)
Fatality	2	3,964,800	5	7,929,600
Serious injury	22	3,683,960	45	7,367,920
Slight injury	148	1,224,793	297	2,449,586
Total	172	8,873,553	346	17,747,106

Environmental and social impacts

No significant environmental impacts are expected to result from this proposal.

The proposals would be expected to generate positive social impacts by tackling the problem of careless driving, thereby helping to improve driving standards, and safety for all road users.

Option E – Analysis of impacts

Costs

The costs associated with this option would be the sum of the costs of providing a grant to fund additional traffic police plus the estimated reduction in court costs brought about by the

introduction of fixed penalty notices plus the costs associated with issuing fixed penalty notices to additional offenders. In relation to Option B, we assumed an increase of between 50 and 100 per cent of current levels, based on evidence relating to the impact of fixed penalty notices for speeding. Option E also involves the introduction of additional policing resources. Therefore we have assumed a potential increase in the number of offenders of between 60 and 120 per cent (all to be dealt with by fixed penalty notices). Based on current data relating to convictions, this suggests a potential increase in careless driving cases enforced against of between 15,240 and 30,480 – all of which would be dealt with by fixed penalty notice – resulting in an additional average cost of between £0.5 and £1.1m per annum (although this should be viewed as an indicative estimate, as in reality the number of additional cases would be dependent on a number of other factors, such as driver behaviour).

Benefits

The introduction and use of fixed penalties alongside increased enforcement activity would send a signal to drivers that careless driving is unacceptable and has an increased likelihood of being punished. Over time this may lead to a reduction in careless driving as drivers seek to correct unacceptable driving behaviour in order to avoid punishment. Such a reduction may be expected to lead to a fall in the number of cases of careless driving and a corresponding fall in the number of related casualties. As noted, in 2006, there were over 400 fatal collisions in which 'careless, reckless or in a hurry' was identified as a contributory factor.

There is currently no firm basis on which to estimate the impact on driver behaviour which would result from the introduction of fixed penalties along with increased enforcement activity. Option E represents a combination of Options B and D so would be expected to generate an equal or greater reduction in casualties than either of the two options in isolation. For this reason, and given the expected increase in enforcement, we have presented an indicative range showing the potential benefits resulting from between a one and seven per cent reduction in casualties associated with careless driving – these reductions have been estimated on the basis of the number of casualties where 'careless, reckless, or in a hurry' was the contributing factor. The value of these reductions have been estimated using the DfT's estimate of the value of preventing a fatality (estimated at £1,652,000 in 2008) and associated weightings for major injuries (10) and reportable minor injuries (200). On this basis, the value of the potential benefits could range between £17.7m and £124.2m. In the absence of further evidence, this estimate should be viewed as indicative only but shows the potential benefits that could result from a small reduction in the casualties caused by careless driving as a result of the combination of two measures.

Table 6 Estimated reductions in types of injury, given 0.5 and 1 per cent reductions in casualties

Type of injury	1 per cent reduction in casualties		7 per cent reduction in casualties	
	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)	Reduction in casualties	Value (£)
Fatality	5	7,929,600	34	55,507,200
Serious injury	45	7,367,920	312	51,575,440
Slight injury	297	2,449,586	2,077	17,155,194
Total	346	17,747,106	2,423	124,237,834

Environmental and social impacts

No significant environmental impacts are expected to result from this proposal.

The proposals would be expected to generate positive social impacts by tackling the problem of careless driving thereby helping to improve driving standards, and safety for all road users.

Impact tests

Race, gender and disability equality

There are no race, gender or disability equality impacts to these proposals.

Competition assessment

The proposal is intended to improve the compliance of drivers as individuals and so is not expected to have any business impacts.

Small Firms Impact Test

The proposal is intended to improve the compliance of drivers as individuals and so is not expected to have any business impacts.

Legal Aid

There are no Legal Aid implications.

Sustainable development

The proposals do not conflict with any of the five principles of sustainable development.

Carbon assessment

The proposals would not be expected to generate a significant impact on carbon emissions.

Other environment

It is considered that there will be no significant other environmental implications.

Health impact assessment

It is considered that the proposals will not impact significantly on health and wellbeing, or health inequalities, as defined by the screening criteria for this test; therefore a full assessment is not necessary.

Human rights

There are no human rights implications.

Rural proofing

The proposals are not expected to have a differential impact on rural areas.

Summary and next steps

The proposed measures aim to improve behaviour with regards to careless driving.

The estimated cost impacts of the proposed changes are summarised in Table 7 (note that transfer impacts are excluded from this summary table).

Table 7 Estimated cost impacts of the proposed changes

Area of impact	Size of impact	Notes
Option B		
Increased detection – fixed penalties	£0.5–0.9m pa	Number of cases of careless driving likely to increase.
Court costs	-£5.5m pa	Cost saving due to fact that some cases will be dealt with by fixed penalty notices.
Option C		
Production of guidance	£3m – one-off	Indicative estimate.
Increased court costs	£0.5–1.5m pa	Due to fact that number of prosecutions likely to increase.
Option D		
Grant funding for additional police resources	£3.5m pa	Indicative estimate pending further details of scheme.
Increased court costs	£0.5–1.5m pa	Due to fact that number of prosecutions likely to increase.
Option E		
Increased detection – fixed penalties	£0.5–1.1m pa	Number of cases of careless driving likely to increase.
Court costs	-£5.5m pa	Cost saving due to fact that some cases will be dealt with by fixed penalty notices.
Grant funding for additional police resources	£3.5m pa	Indicative estimate pending further details of scheme.

As noted, at present there is no firm basis for estimating the impact of any of the options on the number of casualties. However, Table 8 shows the estimated benefits that would be associated with a casualty reduction of 1, 3 and 5 per cent.

Table 8 Estimated benefits associated with a casualty reduction of 1, 3 and 5 per cent

	1 per cent reduction in casualties	5 per cent reduction in casualties	7 per cent reduction in casualties
Benefits (£ ongoing)	£17.7m	£88.7m	£124.2m

Present value calculations, based on a standard 3.5 per cent discount rate over a 10-year period, have been undertaken and are summarised in Table 9. The calculations include an indicative allowance for potential benefits as outlined in the description of impact for each option.

Table 9 Present value calculations, based on a standard 3.5 per cent discount rate over a 10-year period

	Option B	Option C	Option D	Option E
Net Present Value (mid-point)	£499m	£103m	£76m	£621m

Specific Impact Tests: Checklist

Use the table below to demonstrate how broadly you have considered the potential impacts of your policy options.

Ensure that the results of any tests that impact on the cost-benefit analysis are contained within the main evidence base; other results may be annexed.

Type of testing undertaken	<i>Results in Evidence Base?</i>	<i>Results annexed?</i>
Competition Assessment	No	No
Small Firms Impact Test	No	No
Legal Aid	No	No
Sustainable Development	No	No
Carbon Assessment	No	No
Other Environment	No	No
Health Impact Assessment	No	No
Race Equality	No	No
Disability Equality	No	No
Gender Equality	No	No
Human Rights	No	No
Rural Proofing	No	No

Annexes

[Delete the Annexes heading above]