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PRESS NOTICE

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21st March, 1955.

HIGHWAY CODE OUT TOMORROW

NEW RULES FOR DRIVERS, CYCLISTS, AND PEDESTRIANS

DRIVING TEST ARRANGEMENTS

The new Highway Code will be on sale tomorrow (Tuesday, March 22). Ten million copies will be printed initially and two million of these will be on sale immediately at bookshops and bookstalls throughout the country, price 1d. To make sure that all demands are promptly met, stocks are to be held at Stationery Office depots in London, Bristol, Manchester, and Edinburgh, from which further supplies can be sent direct to wholesale distributors and retailers as required.

There will be no free distribution to householders as such, but learner drivers will receive a free copy when they apply for their first provisional licences. Free copies will also be distributed at a later stage to other drivers when they renew their licences, to older children at school and to the Armed Forces.

DRIVING TEST ARRANGEMENTS

From tomorrow until further notice driving test candidates will be examined on either the new or the old Code. The examiner will ask the candidate to state which of the two codes he has studied and will then base his questions on the version named by the candidate. If the candidate has studied both, he will be tested on the new one.

NEW RULES

The Code includes new rules which, it is hoped, all road users will put into practice at once.

Examples are:-

Pedestrians before stepping on a zebra crossing are advised to "wait for a suitable gap in the traffic so that drivers have time to give way". If a police officer is in charge of the crossing, they are told, "watch for his signals and do not cross until he holds up the traffic". (Rule 10)

Drivers giving way to pedestrians on zebra crossings are reminded to signal to other drivers their intention to slow down or stop. (Rule 22) The Code emphasises that this signal is not an invitation to overtake. (Pages 16 and 17).

When pulling up at the kerb, drivers are asked to give the signal meaning, "I am ready to be overtaken" where this is appropriate. This will leave the slowing down signal to be used in all circumstances where the driver is not ready to be overtaken, as, for example, at zebra crossings.

When the Code was first presented to Parliament it contained a suggestion that the turn-right signal might also be used by drivers stopping at a zebra crossing to warn traffic behind not to overtake. This suggestion has been dropped because it might lead drivers of following vehicles to attempt to pass on the near side.

Motor cyclists are told: "If riding a motor cycle, even one fitted with a mirror, glance behind before you signal or move off, or change course or overtake or turn".

A summary of the major changes from the old Code is
--- attached.

Although the Code has not the force of law, it can be quoted in a court of law as tending to establish or disprove liability. Copies are being supplied immediately to all police forces and magistrates' clerks.

To produce a Code which would command the respect of all concerned, the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation asked for advice of 60 outside organisations, as well as the Departmental Committee on Road Safety whose members range from motor manufacturers to teachers and from the police to the T.U.C. Suggestions made by Members of Parliament and the Press have also been included. The Code was presented to Parliament in July, 1954, and after slight amendments was presented again in October. It was approved by both Houses of Parliament in November, 1954.

PUBLICITY PLANS

Twelve meetings were held simultaneously today to launch the new Code. At meetings in England and Wales, arranged by the Central Office of Information, the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents and local road safety bodies, presentations were made of copies of the Code autographed by Mr. John Boyd-Carpenter, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation. A similar ceremony took place in Edinburgh where the Earl of Home, Minister of State for Scotland, presented an autographed copy to the Lord Provost, and handed similar copies to drivers of A.A. and R.A.C. cars. The cars, decorated with road safety posters, were then driven to Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, and Aberdeen, where the drivers formally delivered the copies to the Lord Provosts. Further details of the arrangements for --- these meetings are attached.

There will be an intensive publicity campaign in which

over 1,000 local road safety committees are co-operating with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. The first object of the campaign is to make the Code widely read; the second is to make the Code observed and respected. Posters and other literature prepared by the Society and carrying the slogan "get to know the Highway Code" are being widely displayed, and 100,000 copies of a Government poster, advertising the Code, will be shown in Post Offices, factories, garages and other buildings. There will be special Highway Code displays at Charing Cross Underground Station, where copies of the Code will be on sale, and in many West End stores.

The Ministry, with the help of the Central Office of Information and H.M. Stationery Office, have given a completely "new look" to the Code. For the first time colour has been used extensively; drawings of drivers' signals have been improved to leave no doubt as to the proper hand signals to give; more traffic signs have been illustrated; "The Law's Demands" have been brought up to date; and notes on first-aid added.

A Welsh translation of the Code will be prepared as soon as possible.

Appendix A.

MAJOR CHANGES FROM THE PREVIOUS CODE
(SUMMARY)

A new rule is included telling marching bodies to keep to the left and to carry lights at the front and rear of the column. (Rule 4)

Rule 10 tells pedestrians to be sensible about their right of way on uncontrolled zebra crossings and to wait for a suitable gap in the traffic so that drivers have time to give way.

The important braking table has been illustrated (inside back cover).

Rule 22 tells drivers to give way to pedestrians, who have right of way, on uncontrolled zebra crossings.

Drivers are told never to cross a continuous white line along the middle of the road unless they can see the road well ahead and know that it is clear. (Rule 32)

Drivers pulling up at the kerb are told to give the signal meaning "I am ready to be overtaken" where this is appropriate. (Rule 46) This practice will leave the slowing down signal to be used in all circumstances where the driver is not ready to be overtaken, such as at zebra crossings. (Pages 16 and 17)

Drivers are told not to rely on sidelights in built-up areas after dark unless the street lighting is good. (Rule 59)

When parking or stopping on the carriageway, drivers are advised to get out on the nearside whenever possible. (Rule 66)

Footnotes have been added showing the major factors contributing to accidents. Accident statistics are related in this way to the rules of the Code.

The drawings of drivers' signals have been improved and the signals to be given by motor-cyclists have been added. These drawings leave no doubt as to the proper hand signals to give. (Appendix (1))

Many more traffic signs are illustrated and the features of mandatory, prohibitive and warning signs are explained. The significance of the chequer symbol on direction signs is also explained. (Appendix (3))

"The Law's Demands" has been brought up to date and set out more attractively. (Pages 27 to 32)

Notes on First Aid have been added. (Back cover)

REGIONAL MEETINGS

Birmingham

Mr. Ken Wharton, the racing driver, will be presented with a signed copy of the Highway Code by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, Alderman J.R. Balmer at a meeting to be held in the Town Hall. The Lord Mayor will also present the 28-years-award of the Safe Driving Competition to three drivers, Mr. H. Wilkinson, Mr. C. Cooper, and Mr. A.W. Francis, who hold the longest accident-free records in the Midland Division. The principal speaker at the meeting will be Mr. J.E. Jones, Divisional Road Engineer of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Bristol

The Lord Mayor of Bristol, Alderman G.G. Adams, will preside over a meeting to be held in the Council Chamber. The principal speakers will be the Lord Mayor and the Chief Constable, and at the conclusion of the meeting the Lord Mayor will present signed copies of the Code to eight representatives of groups of road users; a bus driver, a car driver, two school children, one cyclist and one motor cyclist, a Boy Scout and a Girl Guide.

Cambridge

The Mayor of Cambridge, Councillor H.R. Mallett, and the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University, the Rt. Hon. H.U. Willink, will be presented with autographed copies of the Highway Code at a meeting to be held in Cambridge. The principal speaker will be Mr. E.W. Barnard, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation.

Cardiff

The new Highway Code will be launched at a meeting to be held in the City Hall under the chairmanship of the Lord Mayor, Alderman George L. Ferrier. The principal speaker will be the Lord Mayor; other speakers will include Alderman William Evans, Chairman of the South Wales and Monmouthshire Federation, Alderman D.T. Williams, Chairman of the Cardiff Committee and Mr. L. Cleaver, Divisional Road Engineer, Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. At a ceremony outside the City Hall, the Lord Mayor will present signed copies to a car driver, a motor-cyclist, a pedal cyclist, and a mother and child.

Edinburgh

The new Highway Code will be launched at a ceremony in St. Andrew's House, where Lord Home, Minister of State for Scotland will present a copy of the Code to the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and hand further copies to drivers of A.A. and R.A.C. patrol cars. These cars, displaying road safety posters, will be driven to Glasgow, Perth, Dundee and Aberdeen. At each of these towns, the A.A. or R.A.C. scout will deliver the Code to the Lord Provost.

Leeds

Mr. Ian Appleyard, the well-known Rally driver, will be presented with an autographed copy of the Highway Code at a meeting to be held in the Civil Hall. The presentation will be made by the Lord Mayor, Councillor H.S. Vick. The chair will be taken by Councillor Mrs. M. Fish, Chairman of the Leeds Accident Prevention Committee, and speeches will be made by the Lord Mayor and by Mr. C.E. Laybourn, Divisional Accident Prevention Organiser, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Liverpool

At a meeting in the Town Hall, Mr. J.D. O'Hagan, Divisional Organiser, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, will present a signed copy of the Highway Code to the Deputy Lord Mayor of Liverpool, Alderman W.J. Tristram, and to Councillor G.F. Catlin, Chairman of the Merseyside Federation. Councillor Catlin will be the principal speaker at the meeting. He is a member of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents National Public Safety Committee and Executive.

Manchester

A meeting in the Registrar's Office, All Saints, Manchester, will be presided over by Alderman A. Dawson, Chairman of the South East Lancashire Federation and member of the Executive Committee of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents. The Lord Mayor, Alderman R.S. Harper, will address the meeting. At the conclusion signed copies of the Highway Code will be presented to twelve-year-old Rosalind Browne, a pupil of Stretford High School, who won the Stretford Telegraph Challenge Cup in 1954 for the best cyclist and also the Chief Constable of Lancashire's Challenge Cup in the Junior section of the Lancashire Constabulary County Final Rally in 1954. Copies will also be presented to R.A.C. Patrol Harold Jackson and R.A.C. Patrol John Jackson, both with 25 years' service on the roads, during which time they have covered upwards of three quarters of a million miles, without ever being involved in an accident.

Nottingham

The Code is being officially launched by Mr. A.G. Curtis, Traffic Commissioner, East Midland Traffic Area, at a meeting in the Guildhall, Nottingham, which will be presided over by Miss A.M. Watkinson, the Chairman of the North Midland Accident Prevention Federation. The Traffic Commissioner will present copies of the Code to the Chairman and to the Lord Mayor of Nottingham, Councillor S. Hobson.

Newcastle

At a meeting in the Town Hall the Lord Mayor, Alderman Col. R. Mould-Graham, will present a copy of the Highway Code to a driver who passed his test earlier in the day. Copies will also be presented to representatives of the Police, R.A.C., and the A.A. Captain C.W. Codrington, Assistant Divisional Accident Prevention Organiser, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents will speak.

Preston

The Mayor of Preston, Councillor J.F. Gray, will preside over a meeting in the Town Hall. A signed copy of the Highway Code will be presented to Mr. Tom Finney, the International footballer, and to Dr. C.R. Hardman, a well known Rally driver and a member of the R.A.C. The principal speaker will be Mr. T. Rutter, who is the Chairman of the North Lancashire, Cumberland and Westmoreland Federation and a member of the Executive Committee of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Reading

Speeches urging road users to buy and study the new Highway Code will be made at a meeting in Reading by the Bishop of Reading; the Chairman of the Berkshire County Council, Mr. W.J. Cumber; the Divisional Road Engineer of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, Mr. H.S. Keep; and the Chief Constable of Berkshire, Mr. S.L. Waldron. The Mayor of Reading, Councillor A.E. Smith, will preside, and signed copies of the Code will be presented to the Mayor of Reading and the Chairman of the County Council by Mr. K.G. Hall, Divisional Organiser of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

To be checked against delivery

The following is the text of the broadcast talk to be given by Mr. John Boyd-Carpenter, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, in the Home Programme, on Monday, March 21, at 9.15 p.m.

HIGHWAY CODE

Good evening. I want to talk to you for a minute or two about the new Highway Code. It is out to-morrow, and it will be on your local book-stall in the morning. It costs 1d. - the same price as before the war. It is a very good pennyworth.

First let me explain what it is. It is not a regulation or a law or anything like that. It is a code of common sense and decent behaviour on the road.

You know, in most jobs, there is a code of one sort or another. That does not mean rules that people get punished for breaking. It means a sort of standard of behaviour which sensible people use towards each other. In professions, in business, in trade unions, in most of the activities in which we earn our living, there are often un-written rules - things one simply doesn't do. Just as at cricket a bowler doesn't suddenly turn round and stump the batsman at the bowling end.

That is what the Highway Code does for us as road users. We are all road users in one way or another - everyone of us. And it is not just a body of rules invented by a Government Department. On the contrary, I have tried very hard for a good many months, to get together the best ideas as to what should go in the Highway Code from every sort of organisation, and from ordinary people who had something to contribute. The result is that we have got in the Code, I think, a body of good sensible advice contributed to by the general good sense of all sorts of people who use the roads. And Parliament has approved it.

The main point of having a Highway Code is to try to make our roads much safer. Nowhere do good sense and good manners matter so much as on the roads. If we break some of the rules of the other codes I was talking about that operate in connection with our jobs, we will probably make ourselves pretty unpopular, but we are not likely to do anybody else much harm. But if we break the rules of common sense on the road, we can easily kill somebody, or maim a child for life - something which could haunt us all our lives with the feeling that whoever's fault it was we might have avoided it. We have just got to be sensible on the roads.

Now I find the trouble when one talks about road safety is that everybody thinks everybody else ought to do more about it. Motorists say it is mainly up to pedestrians. Pedestrians say it is the motorists' job. They both think the cyclists could help more. And everybody says the Government ought to do more about it.

On this we are all right. We all ought to do more about it, and we all must, if road casualties, and all the misery and loss they cause are to be cut down.

Do you know that nearly a quarter of a million people were hurt on our roads last year? And about 5,000 killed? If even quite a small number of people are hurt in an accident on the railways or in the air, there is a great deal to do about it. And rightly so, for all transport ought to be made as safe as human skill can make it. But many of us are apt to get rather fatalistic about these road casualties, and are a little inclined to think that nothing can be done which will really check them.

That just isn't true. On the contrary, road safety measures have done a lot. That is why although we have twice as many vehicles on the roads as we had 20 years ago, and four million more people in the country, the total killed and injured is only about the same as it was 20 years ago. And the members of our Road Safety Committees up and down the country have very good reason to be proud of the work they have done.

But there are still far far too many accidents, and the Highway Code, if we all both read it and act on it and don't just leave it to other people, can do much more to get these numbers down. But we have all got to act on it if it is to get results. I am not gunning for any one section. I do not believe any one section is to blame. But if motorists will drive with the care and consideration which the Code recommends, if cyclists will read their part of the Code and act on it, and if all of us as pedestrians will do our part, the roads really will be safer. And the Government of course, must do its part. I hope that the road schemes, which we are going to carry out in the coming year, will get rid of some hundreds of black spots, those places where the roads, for one reason or another are particularly dangerous, and where therefore accidents are particularly likely to happen.

Now let me say a word about what is in the Code itself. I think you will like the look of it. It is clear and to the point. I have tried to cut out any unnecessary fussy advice, and to keep it to clear precise recommendations. The diagrams are in colour, and we all ought to be grateful to the Central Office of Information and to the Stationery Office who have taken an infinity of trouble to get the lay-out and the colour and the type just right. I think they have made a rattling good job of it.

There is a lot of new material in it. For example, there is the whole of the suggestions about pedestrian crossings. These can help us a lot if we use them sensibly. And may I add one suggestion which isn't in the Code? That is that on crowded crossings, when a lot of people are going over, it is a good thing to keep on the left-hand side of the crossing, and not get jammed up with people coming the other way. The Code has a good bit of advice on the use of crossings. We are asked, before stepping on to a crossing, to wait for a gap in the traffic so that drivers have time to give way. And of course, if the crossing is in charge of a police officer, we must wait for his signals and not cross until he holds up the traffic. There is a suggestion, too, for drivers at crossings. When stopping at a crossing give a slow-down or stop signal. Other drivers will realise that this means that they should slow down and stop too, and not overtake.

Then for motor-cyclists, there is a good suggestion. They are asked, even though they have a mirror, to look back before moving-off or turning or overtaking.

One very useful thing in the Code is the diagram just inside the back cover, which shows how far it takes to stop a car at different speeds even under good conditions. Even at thirty miles per hour, 75 feet are needed. It is terribly important that both drivers and other people should realise that cars don't just stop dead, and make allowance for that.

You will find tomorrow that there is going to be a lot of publicity about the Code. Will you help with that? The next best thing to buying

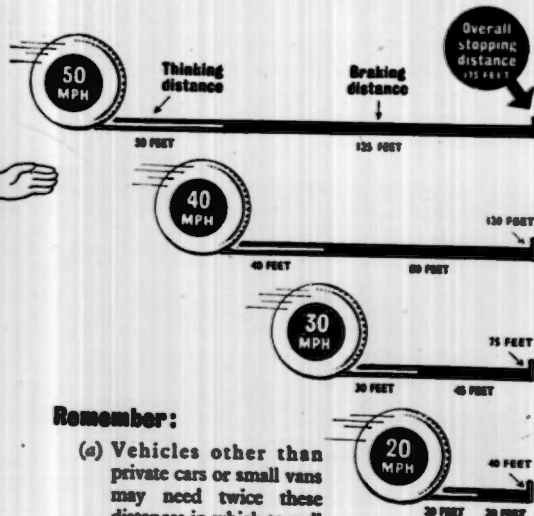
it yourself is to remind other people to buy it. There have been meetings all over the country to-day, very often with the Lord Mayor or the Mayor presiding. Any support or encouragement you can give them will help.

But above all, do get hold of a copy of the Code, then read it, then act on it. You will find it interesting. But much more important you will find it will help you to save yourself and others from accidents on the road. And it will help in the best way, by voluntary effort. That is a thing we do pretty well in this country - probably better than anywhere else. If you get hold of the Highway Code you won't regret it. If you don't, one day you may be very sorry. Anyway, its a good pennyworth. Good night.

VEHICLES CANNOT STOP DEAD!

Imagine: A good driver—a vehicle in perfect condition—good weather—broad daylight—good dry roads. Under these conditions a vehicle cannot stop in distances less than those shown below.

STOP
Vehicles
approaching
from both front
and behind



Remember:

- Vehicles other than private cars or small vans may need twice these distances in which to pull up on dry roads.
- On wet roads, for all vehicles, allow twice the normal margin of safety.

"I am
going to
SLOW DOWN
OR STOP"

*This signal should be used also when slowing down or stopping at a red crossing.
It is NOT an invitation to overtake.*



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