



■ AMBER GAMBLERS: THE TRUTH ABOUT BRITAIN'S HAZARDOUS DRIVERS

-85% of drivers gamble amber lights

-35% didn't know it was an offence

-88% 17 year olds have had an accident or near miss when ignoring the lights

A craze of risky amber gamblers is sweeping the nation as hasty drivers admit to breaking the law and steaming through traffic light signals because they haven't got time to stop, new research reveals.

A poll of 3,000 motorists by Thrifty Car & Van Rental reveals a staggering eight out of ten (85%) drivers admit to gambling amber lights in an attempt to race through

the traffic, with nearly four out of ten (38%) saying they rarely stop if the lights are on amber. Sixteen per cent (16%) even confess that amber is like a green light to them.

Worryingly more than one in ten (13%) motorists has had an accident or near miss as a result of belting through an amber signal. Half (50%) have been shouted at by their passenger and more than a quarter (26%) have been sworn or beeped at by other drivers.

If a driver crosses a light on amber, it is an offence, unless they can show that it was unsafe to stop. For some time The Department for Transport has been researching the use of continuous flashing amber signals on traffic lights at quiet times, in a bid to ease traffic flow. However, this move has been rejected by safety groups in light of confusing drivers and pedestrians.¹

Young drivers pose the biggest threat when it comes to reckless driving, with almost nine out of ten (88%) 17 year olds admitting to having driven through an amber light as it was about to turn red. Of these new motorists, more than three quarters (80%) have had an accident or near miss yet continue to zip through the lights. Older drivers, over the age of 55, are much less likely to take this risk, opting to slow down and wait for the reliable green signal before moving off.

When it comes to repercussions for breaking the traffic light sequence law, staggeringly more than a third (35%) admit they didn't know it was an offence to pass through an amber signal as it's about to turn red, and weren't aware of the £60 fine or penalty points if caught. Sixteen per cent (16%) say they do worry about being caught and twelve per cent (12%) reveal they only have cause for concern if they spot a police car.

Excuses from the irresponsible amber gamblers range from not having time to stop (33%), being in a rush to get to work (27%) and not noticing the signal (12%) to

trying to beat the sat nav (5%) and believing it's more considerate to other drivers to speed through the lights (7%).

Linda Paul, director of central services at Thrifty Car & Van Rental, comments:

“Our survey clearly demonstrates that British motorists have a penchant for gambling amber lights, even though it's extremely dangerous and is breaking the law. The traffic light sequence is in place for a reason, and is designed to keep the roads and the motorists who drive them, as safe as possible.

“When it comes to chancing the lights in a rental car, it is still a very serious crime which could land the motorist a £60 fine or three penalty points. Drivers must think twice and understand that by ignoring an amber light which is about to turn red, they could be putting themselves and other road users' lives at risk.”

The Top Ten worst places in the UK for 'ambler gamblers' are:

1. Chelmsford
2. Leeds
3. Coventry
4. Liverpool
5. Brighton and Hove
6. Wrexham
7. Oxford
8. Belfast
9. Glasgow
10. Bristol

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