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Monday 24th January 2005

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HI-VIS VESTS TO BECOME MANDATORY

Be visible at night

UK motorists who drive to Italy or Spain this year will have to carry a high-visibility vest in their cars, as well as a warning triangle and GB sticker. It's likely that Portugal and France will follow suit, making it illegal for motorists to get out of their cars on dual-carriageways and non-urban roads without such clothing.



Make it the right vest though, since most don't meet safety standards --see survey results below.

According to statistics compiled by lcu-ucme.com, which sells high-visibility vests, someone wearing one is likely to be seen by a motorist three seconds sooner in the dark. At 30mph, this is a distance of 42 metres.

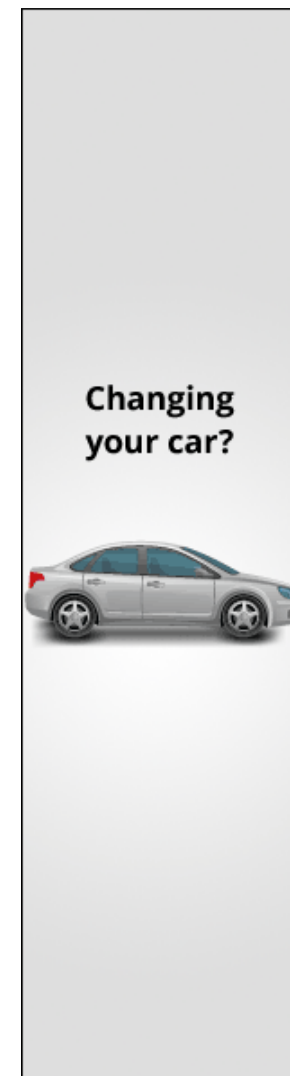
A spokesman for the company said: 'A study by the American Automobile Association found that of 400 interstate pedestrian fatalities, one third were drivers or passengers who had left their vehicles following an incident, and three-quarters of the fatalities occurred after dark.'

However, the AA is concerned that motorists in Italy and Spain will risk injury by staying in their cars rather than getting out without a vest and facing a potential fine.

More than 10 people are killed on the hard shoulder of British motorways every year; it is far safer to wait for help behind the crash barrier.

There are no plans for the UK to make the carrying of illuminated vests a requirement, according to the Department for Transport.

[Survey details](#)



Mr Cosworth's Sierra to be sold

However, a survey conducted on behalf of the Royal Spanish Automobile Club has revealed that 63 per cent of all hi-visibility vests sold have safety problems.

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The Royal Spanish Automobile Club (RACE) teamed up with the Spanish Department of Transportation and the National Consumer Institute to carry out a study in the course of which more than 100 reflective vests gathered from all over Spain were examined.

The results show that 63 per cent of the vests have safety problems, either with regard to the design of the garments or to their day-time visibility (coefficient of luminescence) or night time visibility (coefficient of retro reflection). Taking into account insufficient marking and information leaflets, this percentage of non-compliant garments increases to a total of 87 per cent.

A number of renowned organisations participated in this study, which was conducted over a period of more than 5 months. Among them were AITEX, an accredited institution for CE certification in the area of personal protective equipment (protection and safety) and Lumaquin, a company specialised in the manufacturing and distribution of measuring devices for laboratory quality control.

The collection/procurement of the vests constituted one of the major parts of the work. In a first step, a survey was carried out among more than 540 drivers asking them, among other questions, where they bought their reflective vests and whether they were aware of the regulations.

The results show that 98 per cent of the drivers know that they must carry a reflective vest in their car. Fifty-nine per cent of those interviewed know what a reflective vest looks like, and most of those who had already obtained a vest bought it in a specialist store for automotive parts or in a supermarket.

A team was then commissioned to buy the vests using the same buying criteria, keep the receipts and to note down the place, the date and the price of purchase, as well as all other relevant information. The study covered all other purchasing channels, including buying vests via the Internet. The vests were then numbered and submitted to analysis institutions for evaluation.

www.icu-ucme.com

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