



Jesse Norman MP
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

1 October 2018

Dear Minister,

Slow down, move over – Joint call for action from the AA, the RAC and Green Flag

We are writing to express the growing collective concerns from the AA, the RAC and Green Flag at the danger to both vehicle occupants and roadside assistance providers at the scene of a breakdown.

Following the letter sent to you by the AA regarding changes to the Highway Code¹, there have been numerous roadside incidents including cases involving both a RAC roadside technician² and an AA patrol³. These have, sadly, served to re-emphasise the dangers faced by those involved in breakdowns.

But most harrowingly, there have been three fatalities of roadside technicians in the last 12 months. Most recently on 16 June there was a fatal crash involving an RAC patrol while working at the roadside. The tragic death of the 33-year-old technician while he was assisting a member has deeply affected employees at all our businesses.

As a result, we have strengthened our resolve to work together to do all that we can to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The safety of our staff, our partners and our members at the roadside is our number one priority. We continue to invest in new technology, safety equipment and health and safety training. We are also committed to continuing to work collectively with public and private sector stakeholders through SURVIVE, to identify and share best practice and to raise awareness of the risks our people face when rescuing stranded motorists.

However, the growing volumes of traffic on our roads⁴ and schemes like All Lane Running smart motorways⁵ present new challenges and risks and we now need government support to minimise these.

You will be aware there is an active petition calling for new legislation to protect roadside technicians by making it a legal requirement for vehicles approaching the scene of a breakdown to slow down and move over, in order to leave more space between the broken-down vehicle and passing vehicles on the carriageway⁶. However, we accept your department's position that a new law is not required and that there are situations where moving over may increase the risk for other road users.

Nevertheless, we believe greater awareness is needed among drivers to show the risks our operatives face and clear guidance needs to be provided to drivers on how to proceed when they see and pass a breakdown incident. This is just as important on local roads as it is to motorways.

Therefore, the AA, RAC and Green Flag are calling on the Government to introduce guidance in the Highway Code to encourage drivers to 'slow down, move over' if it is safe to do so when approaching a broken-down vehicle and/or a patrol vehicle.

In addition, we would welcome the support of a THINK! road safety campaign to ensure all motorists recognise the importance of reducing their speed and leaving plenty of space.

We would be very happy to work collaboratively with your officials, including the THINK! Team, on this guidance and campaign and to build support with other key stakeholders including: Highways England, the motorway service operators, freight organisations, the police, local authorities and other road safety organisations.

Should you have any queries, please feel free to contact us. We are very happy to meet with you and/or your officials if you would find this helpful.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely,



Edmund King OBE
President
Automobile Association



James Knight
Chief Operations Director
RAC Motoring Services



Dean Keeling
Managing Director
Green Flag

1. Copy AA letter & appendix attached
2. Image of RAC vehicle involved in an incident on the M4 attached
3. Image of the AA vehicles involved in an incident on the M20 attached
4. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/722302/road-traffic-estimates-in-great-britain-2017.pdf
5. <http://www.highways.gov.uk/smart-motorways-programme/>
6. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/222462>