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## The Association of Drivers Against Daytime Running Lights – UK

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**President George W. Bush**  
**The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington DC**  
**USA**

and

**Prime Minister Anthony Blair**  
**10 Downing Street, London SW1A 2AA**

Gentlemen,

3 February 2003

### Daytime Running Lights - how to save oil and lives

My profession is an Energy Auditor. Since starting my independent business in 1989 I have assisted Industry, Schools and Hospitals to save energy.

As I drive to survey sites, I witness a huge amount of energy waste from thousands of inefficient 55 watt tungsten halogen car headlamps burning unnecessarily in good daylight.

You maybe about to commit troops to a war on Iraq for which oil supply is perceived by the general public to be a major factor. According to the London Times (Tuesday 14 Jan) North Sea oil is predicted to end by 2020.

Since 1997 General Motors has forced most USA motorists to use daytime running lights (DRL). Generating electricity from a vehicle engine is extremely inefficient due to mechanical and engine heat losses. To run two 55 watt headlights and associated lamps takes 970 watts of fuel energy. It is calculated that DRL will cost \$600 million dollars using 406 million US gallons of fuel p.a. creating 33 million tonnes of carbon dioxide pollution p.a.\*\*

Across the EU, probably the emissions would be similar to the USA. May I quantify the waste for the UK:

UK Daytime driving only	No. of vehicles	Litres of fuel p.a.	MWh	Costs	Tonnes of CO2 p.a.
Present DRL users	670,000	15.8 million	167,360	£11.8 million	41,840
Total UK vehicle parc	26 million	612,707 million	6,494,694	£495.5 million	1,623,673

The facts are not firm, it is hard to quantify how many boy racers blaze around with headlights AND fog lights on or how many inconsiderate drivers use rear fog lights on motorways, so we are open to fine tuning of the data.

To put the potential waste in perspective this is more than the annual output of Oldbury on Severn nuclear power station - more than 2.4 TIMES all the power generated by green renewable sources last year in the UK!

Whilst the energy waste is a professional observation, my real concerns are the dangers daytime headlights create for other road users. I represent a group of experienced drivers in the UK called Drivers Against Daytime Running Lights (DADRL) and we have links to our parent organisation in the USA.

### Dangers to other drivers or "Safety claims"

We submit that the use and abuse of daytime headlights increases the dangers posed to vulnerable less conspicuous groups of road users. They reduce the ability of other drivers to perceive hazards. It is not people cocooned in padded metal boxes with multiple airbags who need protection but walkers, cyclists and motorcyclists who are far less visible to other drivers.

According to DoT figures, it is these groups who are suffering an increase in accidents despite a general reduction elsewhere in the UK. Since General Motors introduced DRL in the USA, there has been no benefit, in fact accidents to motorcyclists have increased.

Some drivers misguidedly think it is safer, in reality the distraction and eye fatigue caused to other motorists puts all other less conspicuous, more vulnerable road users at risk.

There is no evidence to support extra safety. Various studies by Koornstra 1997, Elvic, Arora 1994, Andersson 1976, NHTSA 2000 et al claiming benefits have been proven to use flawed methodology \*\*.

Like the Emperor's new clothes, they are making fools of the world (in particular General Motors) with a marketing gimmick because "safety sells".

DADRL are a group of experienced motorists concerned about the safety of all road users. We have the support of the British Motorcyclists Federation, the Cyclist Touring Club and the Pedestrians Association. As you may be aware, due to representations by the Federation of European Motorcyclists Associations (FEMA) to the EU vehicle manufacturers (ACEA) were prevented from introducing DRL in 2002.

We believe DRL were introduced by the Swedish when they changed from driving on the left to the right and have kept them up as a marketing gimmick.

In response to pressure from vulnerable road users, starting this week, the EU has commissioned a new report, but this will take two years to conclude.

### **A solution**

It is accepted that some form of low intensity DRL may be beneficial. As most vehicles have 5watt side lights built into the headlamp reflector giving a wide spread of luminance, would not the use of front side lights (not rear lights which detract from brake lights) be a more reasonable and acceptable solution? Long life Light Emitting Diodes could easily be developed for these lamps as light output is not critical and no extra costs would be incurred by manufacturers. Maybe the boy racers using blue illuminated screen washer nozzles are onto something?

We make submissions to your government officials but find they are passing the buck. The NHTSA refuses to decide if DRL are a good thing. The UK Minister of Transport says it up the EU commission, the EU say it is up to member states. As for the media, what editor is likely to speak out against the power of Ford and General Motors when a large proportion of his advertising revenue comes from car adverts?

Gentlemen, we appeal to you to stop this prolific waste of energy and lives. We appreciate with the magnitude of world events this is a low priority but a few words and the stroke of a pen is all it would take from either one of you.

If you are not agreeable, we submit that the present situation is untenable, so all vehicles should be made to use DRL.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Roy Milnes UK co-ordinator Drivers Against Daytime Running Lights**

### **References:**

**[www.dadrl.org.uk](http://www.dadrl.org.uk)**

**[www.lightsout.org](http://www.lightsout.org)**

\*\* [www.howstuffworks.com/question424.htm](http://www.howstuffworks.com/question424.htm)

# Stephen Prower [30 years on: Do motorcar daytime lights reduce accidents?](#) + other BMF reports.