

CONTACT DETAILS:

David Wilkinson, Sales Director • e: dwilkinson@mfm.ie • t: 01 2061118



D R I V I N G E X C E L L E N C E

Launch of new website:

Merrion Fleet are delighted to announce the launch of our new website.

Please visit this site to find out more about Merrion Fleet and our Team.

We also have an interesting Driver Section that is consistently updated with interesting news.

www.mfm.ie

Happy New Year and best wishes for 2008

The environment and CO2 emissions are an important topic for fleet managers at the moment. This is because not only can a green fleet help save the environment but it can also save companies money.

This will become more important from 1st July when both VRT and road tax for new vehicles will be based on CO2 emissions. Therefore companies who change towards an ECO friendly fleet with lower CO2 emissions will save money on the cost of their vehicles and also on running and taxation costs. The companies who run vehicles with higher CO2 emissions will cost their business more.

This E-newsletter will give you some additional information regarding 'Going Green' as well as other information that will keep you up-to-date. Please feel free to contact us regarding anything that you read here.

Alternatively, if you wish to benchmark your current provider, to ensure that you are receiving the best service and value available, contact us today.

- *David Wilkinson*
Sales Director

Merrion Go Green

Merrion Fleet is proud to announce a new partnership with The Tree Council of Ireland. Dave Wilkinson of Merrion Fleet stated, "Merrion Fleet is making an annual contribution towards the planting of trees in Ireland. The contribution made, and the number of trees planted, will be based on the number of new vehicles that we supply to our customers. This means that our customers know that their vehicle fleet will in future be making a positive contribution to the environment" The Tree Council of Ireland is a voluntary non-governmental organisation which was formed in 1985, to promote the planting, care and conservation of trees in both urban and rural areas. It is the umbrella body linking together 50 organisations connected by their appreciation of trees, and it aims to foster a tree and wood culture among Irish people. Customers and their employees can also support this project through financial contributions.

www.treecouncil.ie

Sales of Toyota & Lexus Hybrids increase as drivers 'Go Green'

The European sales of Toyota and Lexus hybrids have topped the 100,000 mark since their launch in 2000. Sales figures released reveal that the brands combined had sold 101,235 on July 31st of 2007.

In addition to the sales of Toyota and Lexus other brands have reported an increase in the sales of their hybrid lines with Honda reporting sales of 14,089 over the same period. The statistics seem to suggest that the trend of purchasing environmentally friendly cars is on the increase. The announcement of the sales figures from Toyota comes at the same time as the company have begun trials of their new prototype Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle (PHV) by energy giant EDF in France. EDF are presently testing a limited number of these PHV's in its fleet and it is

anticipated that if these tests are successful PHV may be expanded to the rest of Europe.

The Plug-in Hybrid Vehicles are based on Toyotas existing hybrid technology, which consists of a petrol engine and battery which are powered by an electric motor. The batteries can be recharged using a standard electric plug and from energy used in braking. In addition to the latter, Toyota and EDF are aiming to make electric power more accessible on public roads by developing a charging system which is compatible with public charging stations.

The demand for environmentally friendly vehicles has led to a radical change in the development of vehicles in the industry and based on the growth in the market for such vehicles it seems that this is a trend set to continue.

Carbon site

A website has been developed with an online carbon calculator - www.direct.gov.uk/ActOnCO2 - which enables people to work out the size of their carbon footprint and provides them with a personal action plan to reduce it. Individuals are responsible for more than 40% of CO2 emissions in the UK and Ireland - mainly from energy use in the home and travel.

www.mfm.ie

Fleets Fuel Future

Fleets cut CO2 emissions

An increase in fleets changing over to leasing greener, lower emission cars has seen the company car sector more rapidly reducing their CO2 emissions compared to the national average in Britain. As a result, British fleets have cut their carbon footprint by three million tonnes over the past three years and fleet managers have started to demand that their drivers cover fewer annual business miles.

David Wilkinson of Merrion Fleet stated "The Irish fleet market need to approach the reduction of CO2 emissions by addressing the attempts by other countries in recent years. The 'Green' issue is very important to us at Merrion Fleet and we have already taken measures to address our impact on the environment. New initiatives such as our tree planting scheme to off-set our CO2 emissions is just one of those small contributions. However, we are approaching the future with the environment in mind and would encourage all fleets to make the necessary steps to reduce their impact on our environment.

Figures recently released by the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) in the United Kingdom in 2007 saw average new car CO2 figures dropped 1.4% year-on-year to 164.9g/km, a fall of 13.1% since 1997. The SMMT claims that improvements in vehicle technology have seen savings of around one million tonnes per year across the whole new vehicle parc of fleet and private registrations. This suggests that almost all the CO2 savings are coming through the registrations of fleet vehicles, and that the effect on private buyers of tax incentives such as graduated VED are less effective than those incentives in the fleet market. Carbon emissions in the fleet sector have dropped steadily since the introduction of CO2-based company car tax.

David Wilkinson claimed "Tax combined with the high price of fuel is also concentrating fleet minds. Ireland

has a long way to go before CO2 emissions are at a level acceptable to the legislators and the general public but we feel that we have a responsibility to do our part.

As we can see in the British market, they have seen positive results following their implementation of 'green policies'. The retail new car market may have some difficulty hitting the target of 125g/km average for all new cars by 2015 that the European Parliament is keen to introduce but with new initiatives and forward thinking the fleet sector could well be the first to achieve it."

Many manufacturers have yet to introduce fuel and emissions saving technology across their entire ranges, instead offering only a small selection of 'eco-friendly' models, meaning low emission choices are still relatively limited. If all manufacturers managed to make the leap in emissions reduction that BMW made last year with the introduction of its Efficient Dynamics technology, then it is conceivable that CO2 savings could accelerate noticeably. Key fleet models such as the BMW 320d saw CO2 emissions fall 16% to 128g/km. Should other major manufacturers manage to make such savings in the next three to four years across their ranges then the UK and Irish fleet industry, with its predilection for low CO2 diesel cars, could find itself way ahead of any other sector in Europe for running cleaner cars.

David Wilkinson of Merrion Fleet stated: "What would be the advantage in using low CO2 cars if drivers are still spending unreasonable periods of time driving? Unfortunately the current Benefit in Kind system encourages company car drivers to travel more miles in order to reduce their BIK tax, and hence is counter productive. We would expect that BIK will ultimately need to be changed to a system where it will be based on CO2 emissions. Companies should look at reducing their overall mileages because of the high cost of fuel, congestion and their own Corporate Social Responsibility. This can be done by cutting the burden on high mileage drivers and reducing their carbon footprint through the use of home working and employing more advanced communication technology.

Results of Nationwide Seatbelt Survey Revealed

The results of a nationwide survey conducted by the Road Safety Authority (RSA) in 2006 regarding seatbelt wearing were published on August 30th 2007.

The study revealed that the percentage of drivers wearing their seatbelt remains unchanged at 85%. The figures are a good result for the efforts in road safety and the study has seen a steady improvement since 2002 when just 71% of drivers wore a seatbelt.

The overall front seat rate, which includes both drivers and their passengers, also remained unchanged at 92% for females wearing their belts while the rate of males wearing their seatbelt saw a one percent drop to 82%.

The overall percentage of passengers in the rear seats of cars that are wearing their seatbelts saw an increase from 46% in 2005 to 63% in 2006.

Although the increase is welcomed the results mean that over a third of passengers in the rear seats of cars continue to ignore the law and advertising campaigns aimed at heightening the awareness of the dangers of not wearing a belt.

Safety warning on portable satellite navigation systems

It has been reported that vehicles with aftermarket satellite navigation systems fitted to their windscreens may be a safety concern as they may impair a driver's field of vision.

The concerns regarding the potential hazard that the satellite navigation systems may cause were raised in the UK where the system may potentially contravene The Road Vehicles Act 1986, which states that vehicles must provide a clear view of the road. If the systems are deemed to be hazardous to driving it would seem certain that Ireland will also address these concerns under their own driving laws.

The concerns have already resulted in one police force in the UK instructing their staff to remove all such systems from its vehicles. Northamptonshire Police removed objects such as satellite navigation systems from their own vehicles as a

precautionary measure while the issue is being investigated. It has also been stated that although the police have removed their sat-nav systems, they would be taking an 'advisory approach' with members of the public.

It is the responsibility of each driver to ensure that they have a clear field of vision and that any attachments including sat-nav do not limit their safety. A spokesman for Northamptonshire Police stated that drivers who are using systems incorrectly are not a significant contributor to casualty statistics.

Fleet operators concerned about the safety of fitting satellite navigation systems or other items fitted to screens are being advised to carry out a risk assessment for each vehicle to ascertain if the item is potentially obstructive to the drivers' field of vision.

Breath testing to become compulsory at accident scene

The Government is set to introduce mandatory breath testing of drivers involved in road accidents.

The Department of Transport intends to amend existing legislation to make it compulsory for Gardaí to carry out breath tests at the scene of car accidents. To date Gardaí could only test motorists at random checkpoints or if they had a strong suspicion that a driver involved in a crash was drunk. The new legislation will mean that breath-testing will no longer be based on an insinuation of the Gardaí but a standard routine for all drivers involved in a crash.

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) has welcomed the proposal with Chief Executive, Noel Brett commenting that the measure would affect driver behaviour and save lives on our roads. Brett also stated that the move could be as significant as random-testing and would act as deterrent to drivers who may take a chance by drinking and driving.

RSA released figures that indicate that the number of people being killed on Irish roads has dropped by almost a quarter since the introduction of Mandatory Alcohol Testing in July 2006.

Council plan 30kmh limit to protect cyclists and pedestrians

Dublin City Council has elected to introduce a reduced the speed limit of 30km/h for motorists in Dublin. It is understood that the limit, reduced from the current 50km/h, is being introduced as part of a new initiative to prevent the deaths of pedestrians and cyclists.

The 30km/h limit will be applied to key arteries around Dublin city centre including O'Connell Street, Westmoreland St, Dame St, D'Olier Street and both the north and south quays.

The city council has already held top-level discussions with the National Roads Authority (NRA) regarding the delisting roads in the capital which are currently designated as national primary roads.

The 30km/h limit currently applies to Temple Bar and parts of Talbot Street; however the majority of roads in Dublin city are set at 50km/h.

Motoring organisations have welcomed the proposed reduction of the speed limit in the city centre.

The Society for the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) said it would agree to the limit as it will improve road safety. The City Council has stated that the change is imminent and reduction in the speed limit radically improves pedestrians and cyclists safety.

However, the limit may not be imposed for a number of months as it must first be put before councillors or go for public consultation.

Merrion Fleet's Advice & Checklists for Winter/Spring motoring

David Wilkinson, Merrion Fleet stated that *"preparing your car for the changing weather is essential"*.

Merrion Fleet firstly advise that you thoroughly check the vehicle over for faults before setting out on any lengthy journeys that could potentially cause the vehicle to break down or not run correctly.

Merrion Fleet's safety tips for driving in rainy conditions...

- Tell someone of your route and arrival time at your destination
- Always bring a mobile phone with you but do not use it while driving
- Clear windows of ice before you set out and bring a de-icer and scraper with you
- Ensure that your vehicle is well maintained and serviced
- Ensure tyres are a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm and check tyre pressure regularly

Merrion Fleet's top tips for driving in rainy conditions...

- Avoid harsh breaking and acceleration. Manoeuvre gently
- Ensure that you drive slower than normal and leave extra space between you and the vehicle in front as it takes longer for the car to stop in wet conditions
- When breaking, avoid a wheel lock by reducing the gear you are in, allowing your speed to fall and gently use the brake pedal
- To avoid a wheel spin use the highest gear possible

Merrion Fleet's top tips for dealing with a skid...

- If you start to skid, release the brake pedal fully and stay off the brake
- Turn the steering wheel to the same direction as the skid and at the same time ease of the accelerator
- Avoid over correction with too much steering

Client profile: **Graham Harford**

Head of Procurement – Meteor Mobile Communications Ltd.

Appointment at Merrion Fleet

Tom Clancy has recently been appointed to the position of Sales Manager at Merrion Fleet. Tom's responsibilities are to increase Merrion's overall customer base along with managing the sales department.

Tom joined Merrion Fleet in Sept of 2007, prior to this Tom spent over a year working as a Sales Account Manager with BT Ireland. There he worked with a portfolio of over 350 SMEs, working closely with various other departments and directly with his clients, negotiating prices and contracts.

Prior to BT Ireland, Tom worked with Bank of Ireland in the Credit Control & Collections section and also worked as a Logistics Accounts Manager with HP.

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How long has Meteor been a customer of Merrion?

Meteor commenced doing business with Merrion in 2005. With our phenomenal growth recently, commanding over 900,000 subscribers (over 18% of the Irish mobile telecommunications market) our demands for services have also grown considerable within our fleet needs.

How did you find the transition when changing to Merrion?

The transition was seamless, we made the decision to move to Merrion based on new vehicles and then transitioned during the following 5 months to move all other vehicles over to them also. Merrion drove and lead the transition working within a set of parameters and basically managed every detail with each driver up to final approval.

So why did Meteor choose Merrion?

Too much time was being spent in the function of Fleet Management, we found that by employing Merrion to manage this area we could spend time more effectively in other areas of the business. We worked with a number of offers but felt the level of reporting offered from Merrion was 'best in class' and seemed to offer us the ability to understand the needs of our drivers better than was previously available. As they say the 'proof was in the pudding' it worked and they have delivered.

What is the biggest area of importance to you and the management of your Fleet requirements?

Simple – for me I have two area's that are of importance;

1. Communications: As a communications provider I need to ensure that my fleet drivers have a fully managed service that ensures they are available wherever and whenever our customer requires them. If a customer has an issue that needs our assistance in resolving, Merrion have to ensure that they can provide us with a fleet that can meet these demands from the top of the tallest mountain rages to the most southerly/northerly points of the country!

2. Reporting: Reporting regularly on the actual data of our fleet costs ensures that our providers are speaking with our drivers on a regular basis and as Meteor is also the sole provider of Mobile Telecommunications services to Merrion we ensure that we are working in the true partnership spirit.

Staff profile: **Merrion Fleet**

Natasha Ramsay – Driver Services Manager

How long have you worked within the fleet management / motor industry? – I've been working in the motor industry since leaving College in September 1997 (over 10 Years). Initially working for a company specialising in Japanese Imports and exporting them to the UK and from there I moved to Mitsubishi Motors/Motor Import(BMW) as a Warranty Administrator. In October 2003, I moved to BMW Ireland when they took over the distribution of BMW and MINI from Motor Import. During this time I performed a number of different roles working with BMW (UK) and the BMW Dealer network setting up the Aftersales operations of the new subsidiary. I joined Merrion Fleet in July 2005.



What is the Driver Services department responsible for? Ensuring we deliver a very high level of customer service, seeking to exceed our driver's expectations at all times. We pre-authorize and analyse all expenditure for our clients and ensure all maintenance work is carried out professionally and at competitive rates.

How do you ensure that our drivers receive the highest level of service? We have developed a very strong Customer Services team and each member is trained to the highest level. We always strive to keep driver's downtime to a minimum with quick response times and turnarounds. We build strong relationships with all our suppliers and ensure their service level matches our client's expectations and is kept to a very high standard.

How do you monitor Maintenance costs? We would always put ourselves in the client's situation and monitor costs as if they were our own. At Merrion we tender our supplier business on an annual basis so that rates are agreed in advance. This ensures that our Clients receive the best possible prices and value for money. Our new state of the art system, which we installed in 2005, enables us to be more focused on monitoring spends per vehicle, per client and ensuring costs are allocated accurately.