

Police promote road safety as darker nights set in

Police in Norfolk and Suffolk have launched an operation to improve road safety and reduce collisions as the darker nights set in.

Collision rates tend to increase at this time of year and police are warning drivers to be prepared for the change in conditions as the clocks go back on Sunday 31 October.

Operation Dark Nights will see officers carrying out roadside checks throughout the next month focusing on defect offences involving lights, tyres, windscreens and screen wash and anything else which may impact on the roadworthiness of a vehicle.

The aim is to educate drivers about the risks of driving with defective vehicles while also enforcing offences where appropriate. The operation which launches today (Friday 15 October) will run in both counties for a month ending on Monday 15 November.

Collisions tend to increase in October and November with the driver error of failing to look properly being the biggest contributing factor along with losing control and poor manoeuvring.

Chief Inspector Jon Chapman, head of the Joint Roads and Armed Policing Team said: "We often see a rise in collisions at this time of year which can be due to a number of factors including lighting defects, poorer weather conditions and people not used to driving in the dark.

"As part of this year's campaign officers will be conducting roadside checks to ensure that motorists are driving to the relevant weather conditions, and that their vehicle is safe to drive.

"It is so important that as a driver, you check your vehicle regularly to ensure it is road worthy. For example, if you drive a car with one headlight out, you are effectively reducing your visibility by half and the chances of being seen are a lot slimmer.

"Please prepare for the winter months by checking that both your lights and your windscreen wipers are working, that your tyres have the correct tread depth and that your windscreen wash is regularly topped up.

"As we say all too often, you must watch your speed and always keep a safe distance between you and the car in front. Please take your time to look out for other road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

"Drivers who fail to check for vehicle defects pose a risk to not only themselves but to other road users. Those caught will face a fine and could face points on their licence, with the most serious cases resulting in court action. Police also have the power to prohibit the use of unroadworthy vehicles at the roadside."

Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner Giles Orpen-Smellie, said: "As the darker nights draw in it is important we all heed the warnings by the Constabulary to make sure our vehicles are road worthy and extra caution is taken while driving on our county's roads to ensure they are a safe place for everyone.

"No-one should be taking any chances and putting the lives of themselves or other road users in danger."