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Working Party on Road Traffic Safety
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REVISION OF THE CONSOLIDATED RESOLUTION ON ROAD TRAFFIC (R.E.1)

Daytime use of lights

Note by the secretariat

The members of WP.1 will find below a draft text prepared by the Chairman of the Working Party concerning the daytime use of lights. On the basis of the structure proposed in document TRANS/WP.1/2005/15 this text could be included in chapter 1, section 1.6.

R.E.1 Section concerning the daytime use of lights

Chapter 1. General rules concerning behaviour in traffic

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1.6 Daytime use of lights

According to the statistics, not having noticed “the other vehicle” is the cause - or at least the concomitant cause - of 50% of daytime collisions. This rate can even be 80% at junctions.

Numerous psychological studies reveal that switching on lights in the daytime improves perception, particularly peripheral perception (the manoeuvres of other road users within the driver’s peripheral field of vision are more readily perceived). It also enables drivers to evaluate speeds and distances better. An analysis of 24 independent studies, made in 9 countries in Europe and North America, shows overall favourable results. The intensity of the effects of the measure varies, however, according to light conditions depending on the country’s latitude, with more important effects in countries located in the North than in those located in the South. According to estimates, the number of fatal collisions could be cut by 25% if, theoretically, the rate of use of lights in daytime went from 0 to 100%.

It emerges from the foregoing that daytime use of lights gives better protection to all road users. Pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, who are not perceived any the less clearly, also profit from it since they have a better view of approaching vehicles and can modify their behaviour accordingly.

There seems to be one adverse effect: petrol consumption increases by more or less 0.9%.

In view of the overall conclusions of these studies, drivers are recommended to drive with their passing lights on by day. This recommendation concerns all users (car drivers, motorcyclists and drivers of heavy vehicles, coaches, tractors and motorized tricycles and quadricycles).
