

Driving during Ramadan

During Ramadan which begins on 5th May and finishes on 4th June, it is important to consider the impact that fasting and changed sleeping habits may have on a driver's ability to concentrate and remain alert.

Research by The Emirates Driving Institute and the Institute of Advanced Motorists indicates that motor accident rates increase across the Gulf States during Ramadan. We therefore recommend that Muslim drivers pay additional attention to their driving performance during Ramadan.

So what are the issues?

Fasting means blood sugar levels will be low during the late afternoon and evening. Low blood sugar levels and dehydration can cause loss of concentration, dizziness and headaches.

Prayer times can disrupt sleep patterns. This can cause daytime drowsiness, poor concentration and reduced alertness.

Research by the Emirates Driving Institute found that fasting affects spatial awareness as well as reaction times including the speed of braking and the speed of reading road signs. Tiredness has been found to increase impatience with other drivers; yawning and daydreaming can result in drivers missing road signs and junctions.

Actions for drivers

We recommend that drivers

adopt a robust schedule to maximise nighttime sleep

avoid travelling to work at peak commuting times

if possible, give consideration to increased use of public transport

keep a safe distance away from the vehicle in front

take regular breaks during driving and take a walk away from your vehicle if possible to improve circulation

focus on driving home responsibly at sunset

guard against dehydration.

In summary

Drivers should pay particular attention to their driving performance during Ramadan. Practise defensive driving and keep to a structured routine to maximise the amount of sleep you obtain. Talk openly with your colleagues and managers as a team approach can provide you with support during your fasting period.

The practical steps in this guidance note should help keep you and other road users safe.