

Vehicle Avoidance Lighting (VAL's) – Press Release

Vulnerable Road Users

People walking, cycling or on motorcycles are known collectively as Vulnerable Road Users (VRU's). People walking are the most vulnerable of them all.

'Area of High Risk'

An 'area of high risk' is an 'area', 'territory', or a 'distance of acceptable limit' surrounding a person or vehicle, which should be avoided and not obstructed by one or the other. In doing so could result in personal injury or sadly a fatality to life.

'Vehicle Distancing Margin'

The phrase 'Vehicle Distancing Margin' (VDM) is being at a safe distance from vehicles. Police Forces up and down the UK advocate and are policing a 1.5 metre VDM clearance when drivers are passing or overtaking VRU's and when carrying out their #OpClosePass or 'Operation Close Pass' campaign. The VDM must be given by everyone, to everyone, when nearing one another's proximity. VRU's are often at risk if they get too close to vehicles or, if vehicles are getting too close to them, during everyday activities.

When vehicles are overtaking or passing VRU's, and when some VRU's too, are nearing proximity to other vehicles, the VDM and its associated 'area of high risk' should be avoided and kept unobstructed by all. We all have a responsibility and obligation to ensure each other's safety by staying safely distanced from each other.

For the past six years some companies in the logistics industry have been using the Jimmy Beam Down Light (JBDL) system which fits underneath, but up to the edge of the truck or trailer and projects the VDM and its associated 'area of high risk' outwardly from the vehicle but along the sides.



The downlights on the trucks were found to be effective and so prototypes were designed for the bicycle fraternity. They too have been trialled by various people over the past five years including West Midlands Police Group (WMPG) and Police Scotland. WMPG found the Vehicle Avoidance Lights for bicycles (now known as Lunar Cyclelights – <https://www.lunarcyclelights.com>) to be effective and their thoughts can be found on the West Midlands Police website:

<https://trafficwmp.wordpress.com/2018/03/>

or you can view a video clip with some interviews from Police Scotland:

<https://youtu.be/gHgStg2h9ol>

Buses and other vehicles with panels fitted close to the ground could not use the JBDL's since they could only fit underneath the vehicle and not on the outside vertical surfaces. So, prototypes were designed and made of the new Vehicle Avoidance Light (VAL) which includes the 'patent granted' side marker and adjustable angular downlight all in the one unit. They were trialled on a bus for over 12 months and these too were found to be effective. By using the VAL's 'patent granted' angular adjustment the 'area of high risk' being projected can be adjusted outwardly or inwardly, to suit the height that the VAL's are fitted from the ground.



The vehicle avoidance lighting along the sides of the bus is not just a warning to other road users to steer clear, it also reminds VRU's of their own safety obligations by not getting too close, by keeping the 'Vehicle Distancing Margin' and its associated 'area of high risk' unobstructed.

To assist with TfL's Bus Safety Standard and London's Vision Zero, TfL and Metroline are trialling the VAL's on 24 London Buses. Phase two of the trial, the switching ON of the VAL's, started on Monday 12 October 2020. Phase three, the VDM and the associated 'area of high risk' will flash during the bus indicator cycle, has now started late December 2020.

So, during the trials and to help VRU's and vehicle drivers in realising the 'Vehicle Distancing Margin' and the associated 'area of high risk' some London Buses may be seen using the VAL's (daylight intensities permitting). The 'area of high risk' should be avoided by VRU's, and not projected into others, by the principal vehicle driver alike.

