

## **THINKING OF BUYING DRIVING LESSONS AS A GIFT FOR SOMEONE FOR CHRISTMAS?**

### **Press Release**

#### **Public warned to steer clear of unregistered driving instructors**

Environment Minister Edwin Poots today warned the public to steer clear of lessons offered by unregistered driving instructors.

The Minister who has responsibility for the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) appealed to anyone thinking of buying lessons for themselves or others that they could be exposing themselves to a number of risks unless they check the bona fides of driving instructors properly.

He said: **“Illegal instructors don’t have the necessary qualifications to teach and may not have proper insurance. More alarmingly, they may not have undergone the rigorous criminal record checks that driving instructors must pass before they are able to teach young people on a one-to-one basis.**

**“Illegal instructors may appear legitimate. They may advertise in local newspapers, have dual controls fitted and have their vehicles covered with logos. However learners could be putting themselves at serious risk if they take lessons from such illegal, uninsured or potentially dangerous instructors. That is why anyone buying lessons should check out the credentials of those offering lessons.”**

The Minister outlined a number of steps that learner drivers should take to check driving instructors are approved and authorised to give lessons. He urged learner drivers to:

:: Check with the Driver & Vehicle Agency to see if the instructor is registered either on the website [www.dvni.gov.uk](http://www.dvni.gov.uk) or by phoning 028 905 47933.

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:: Ask the instructor to produce a valid Approved Driving Instructor or Trainee licence.

:: Refuse to pay for lessons until they have established the instructor is registered.

:: Report an instructor they know to be unregistered to the Police Service of Northern Ireland or DVA.

The Minister added: **“Learner drivers should check the status of their instructor by asking him or her for their Approved Driving Instructor certificate or Trainee Licence. They should also pay careful attention to the expiry date. If it has expired they should not take lessons with this person.**

**“If there is any doubt about the status or existence of a valid licence you should call the Approved Driving Instructor section of the DVA who will clarify the position for you.**

**“You should make these checks even if an instructor has taught others you know or works for a driving school.**

**“Those paying for lessons, particularly if they are buying lessons in bulk, should ask to see the driving instructor’s licence before handing over money for lessons. Cheap lessons may indicate “illegal instruction.”**

**Notes for Editors**

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1. Further information and a list of ADIs in any area can be obtained by calling DVA at 028 9054 7933 or by checking the Agency website at [www.dvni.gov.uk](http://www.dvni.gov.uk).
2. There are currently over 1100 ADIs on the Register and a Trainee Licence scheme exists which allows certified trainees to offer instruction for reward under the supervision of an Approved Driving Instructor.
3. Approved Driving Instructors are subject to a comprehensive police check, carried out by Access NI (ANI).
4. For further information, contact Press Office, Tel: 028 9054 0003 and out-of-hours contact the EIS Duty Press Officer on pager 07699 715 440 and your call will be returned.