

Slow motorists equally blamed for road mishaps - paper

Saturday, 16 January 2010



SOFT DRIVERS: According to the report, just 256 accidents were caused by women drivers last year. (Getty Images)

Women driving too slowly are causing accidents and traffic jams and can lead to as many problems on the roads as speeding drivers, the Ministry of Interior said, according to a report on Saturday.

While the vast majority of road accidents are caused by men, the Ministry said on Friday that this was "despite [women] driving their vehicles at a very slow speed", according to *The National* daily.

It added that the Ministry released on Friday, the findings from an investigation titled Soft Driving: Confusing for Others, or a Model?

According to the study, 2,916 of the 3,172 traffic accidents recorded last year in the capital were caused by men almost 92 per cent.

Just 256 accidents were caused by women drivers. The term "soft driving" refers to female motorists, *The National* said.

According to the findings, 135 fines were meted out for driving below the minimum speed limit on highways and inner-city roads last year.

"Slow motorists cause accidents when frustrated commuters, perhaps anxious to get to school or work on clogged roads, try to overtake lagging vehicles, the Ministry said, with women apparently being identified as frequent culprits," *The National* said.

However, despite the investigation's claim that women are often slow drivers, Jihad Sebeitah, the general manager of Emirates Driving Company, said in a joint statement with the Ministry that "there is no male driving or female driving, but there are common behaviours".

He added: "Some say that males are more rushed and have an adventurous spirit, whereas females are by nature less rushed and more deliberate." However, driving rules are the same for men and women, Sebeitah said.

The report emphasised the dangers of slow driving, chastising those who often delay other motorists in the middle or left lanes, "preventing them from reaching work on time, and putting them at risk of accidents while attempting to overtake cars that are travelling slowly, particularly on outer roads".

"There are general guidelines for road users, male or female," Col Hamad al Shamsi, the head of the Abu Dhabi Police Traffic Department said.

The official called on slow drivers to use the right lane, particularly on highways.

Mahmoud Abdul Qader, a researcher at Abu Dhabi Police's Centre for Research and Security Studies said that driving slowly on the left or centre lanes is a violation because it causes congestion, and at dangerously slow speeds it is difficult to avoid accidents.

According to *The National*, Qader said that slow drivers in these lanes, particularly on highways, increase the risks of rear-end collisions and crashes among vehicles trying to overtake them.

Motorists involved in minor accidents in Abu Dhabi will be charged AED200 less from January 2010, it was announced last month.

Currently, motorists involved in accidents in the UAE capital are charged AED500 (\$136) for the services of Saaed, a company assigned to handle accidents in the emirate.

However, from 2010 the charge will be reduced to AED300 (\$81.6), according to the WAM news agency.

