



AVZ Blog (September 2021) - New campaign to tackle drivers leaving the scene

Drivers should be held to account for the harm they pose. But, this is exactly what is not happening with drivers leaving the scene of a fatal or serious injury crash.

The problem

Following a fatal/serious injury crash, drivers are supposed to report to the police as soon as possible but within 24 hours. This makes it difficult to test for drink driving. This reporting time dates back to 1988 and is out dated. We have had widespread use of mobile phones for many years. There is no excuse for such a long time for reporting. Impaired drivers should not have this incentive to flee a crash.

When drivers are identified and investigations conclude they were aware of the crash and chose to leave, then they only face a summary charge of *Fail to Stop*. It makes no difference if the crash involved a dent or a death. A summary charge is relevant for damage-only crashes but not for serious crashes where life is at stake.

Suspect drivers are also allowed to continue driving until they are convicted of an offence. Interim bans are only to be used if there is risk of re-offending. It should be enough that these drivers are suspected of already having seriously offended.

Walkers and cyclists most likely harmed

In 2019, 86 people were killed in collisions where the driver left the scene. Of these, 52 (60%) who were on foot were killed whilst another 12 were killed whilst cycling (14%). So, three out of four people killed in crashes where a driver left the scene were walking or cycling.

This means that those posing the least harm to others are the most likely to be killed in crashes where drivers leave the scene.

Our campaign

Action Vision Zero and RoadPeace West Midlands are working together to tackle this injustice. Our Remain and Report campaign has four key calls:

1. **New charge.** We are calling for *Fail to Remain at the scene of a fatal/serious injury collision* as the police have explained that although drivers may stop they do not then remain at the scene.
2. **Requirement to report.** Time for reporting to police should be shortened to two hours; and drivers should have to contact the emergency services.
3. **Licence suspension.** The new charge would carry a mandatory driving ban. We want drivers arrested for offences with mandatory bans to face immediate licence suspensions. This should be a licence condition and not involve the criminal justice system.

4. **Terminology.** There is nothing accidental about a driver absconding and leaving someone seriously if not fatally injured. This new charge should refer to leaving the scene of a crash or collision—not accident.

We know we are not alone in calling for change. Several families are campaigning for reform, including some for many years. Cycling UK has joined the calls for a new criminal charge. Action Vision Zero and RoadPeace West Midlands will seek to collaborate and work with others on our common aims. Join us. See our [campaign page](#) or [Remain and Report](#) for more information.