

18 June 2004

MOTORCYCLISTS START TO USE BUS LANES

An experimental scheme, allowing motorcycles to use certain bus lanes in Northern Ireland, came into effect on 1 June 2004, for a maximum period of eighteen months.

Welcoming the experimental scheme, Minister of State, John Spellar, MP, said: **"The impact of the scheme on other road users and pedestrians will be monitored and a decision will then be taken on whether or not to allow motorbikes to use bus lanes on a permanent basis."**



DRD Roads Service considered the objections raised by members of the public before deciding to proceed with the experimental scheme on 1 June 2004. This scheme follows on from the introduction of certain taxis into some bus lanes on 5 June 2002. Monitoring of bus lane operations since that date has shown no significant impact on the provision of bus services or the safety of road users.

The Minister expressed his hopes that all users would treat the extended use of bus lanes responsibly.

Motorcycles are still excluded from some bus lanes for road safety reasons. New signs will be erected to show clearly which bus lanes motorcyclists can use.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

1. Buses, Belfast public hire taxis, taxis licensed to operate a bus type service and cyclists are currently permitted to use the bus lanes.
2. Further investigations are currently underway to consider permitting access by all taxis (including private hire taxis) to bus lanes in the future.
3. Motorcycles will be permitted to use all bus lanes in Northern Ireland, **except** the following:

Galgorm Road, Ballymena (access to bus stops)

George Street, Ballymena (access to bus stops)

Corporation Street, Belfast (contraflow bus lane)

Duncrue Street, Belfast (contraflow bus lane)

Garmoyle Street, Belfast (contraflow bus lane)

Nelson Street, Belfast (contraflow bus lane)

East Bridge Street, Belfast (bus gate)

Westlink, Belfast (bus station access)

M1 hard shoulder bus lane (Motorway hard shoulder)

Smithfield Street, Lisburn (bus station exit)

Needham Bridge, Newry (contraflow bus lane)