

Safety message increases with more tram tests on the way

CAREFUL NOW: SAFETY MESSAGING STEPPED UP AS TRAM TESTS GO SEVEN DAYS

The City of Edinburgh Council and Edinburgh Trams are ramping up their tram safety campaign in preparation for the next phase of testing and training.

With testing set to go seven days a week and increase in frequency from Monday 7 April, a new campaign dubbed #carefulnow has been developed to harness social media to get safety messages across to all road users.

Anecdotal evidence from tram drivers suggests that while the majority of road users are behaving responsibly around trams, there are a number of individuals still taking unnecessary risks when trams are running.



Drivers have reported pedestrians stepping out between two buses to try and cross in front of a tram, or making a dash across the tram lines instead of waiting for the green man.

We certainly saw quite a lot of that when we were on the tram during Operation Salvador recently.

As well as a social media campaign through Twitter and Facebook, the #carefulnow drive will include refreshed signage and updated messages to schools, universities and higher education colleges, businesses and community councils, highlighting the [existing safety advice and videos](#).

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Transport Convener, said: “Trams have become a much more common sight in the city centre over the last few weeks, which has given us all a chance to get used to sharing the roads with this new mode of transport.

“From next Monday, we’ll see many more trams out testing right the way through the week and over the weekend as well. It’s a good time to remind everyone how they can keep safe when walking, cycling or driving near trams. If you follow @EdinburghTrams on Twitter, look out for our #carefulnow messages and please spread the word!”

Tom Norris, Edinburgh Trams Director & General Manager, said: “Testing and training have been going really well and it’s good to see that most people are interacting sensibly with the trams.

“Our drivers are driving very carefully to cope with the unpredictable behaviour of some road users, however. It’s vital that everyone heeds the warning bell and that people don’t gamble rather than wait for the green man.

“As we get ready to start testing seven days a week at a much greater frequency, we want to see the #carefulnow messages shared as widely as possible.”

The push on safety advice comes as Edinburgh Trams invite seven-year-old budding animator Chapman Whitefield Mathers on a tram trip to congratulate him on winning his school’s Tram Safety Competition.

[Chapman’s animated tram safety film](#) scooped top prize at Flora Stevenson’s Primary School, where he is in Primary 3. You can watch it here:-

Irene Brennan, Head Teacher at Flora Stevenson’s Primary School, said: “We’re all absolutely delighted to see Chapman’s film getting such widespread recognition. His film was the

worthy winner of our Tram Safety Competition organised by the school's Junior Road Safety Officer team but praise is also due to all the children who entered. Every one of them had thought carefully about how to stay safe around the trams and came up with lots of bright ideas on how to get the messages across."

Alongside the safety campaign, the Council has issued a renewed warning to drivers that they risk having their vehicle towed if they park irresponsibly and obstruct the trams.

A tow truck is now on standby to respond swiftly to any incidents and vehicle owners can face a £180 charge to recover their vehicle if it's towed away.

✘ In addition, parking attendant patrols are paying particular attention to 'hotspots' along the on-street tram route, including South St Andrew Street, West Maitland Street and Haymarket Yards.

Already, two vehicles have been towed, one from West Maitland Street and one from York Place.

Cllr Hinds said: "We have to ensure that trams can run smoothly and with testing stepping up a gear soon, this is even more crucial now. Park responsibly and there won't be an issue. Park irresponsibly and you'll risk incurring a £180 charge to get your vehicle back if it's towed away."

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