

Baby On Board Signs: Life-Saver Or Danger?

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ACCORDING TO a new study 37% of parents (almost 2 in 5) have displayed a 'Baby on Board' sign either currently or in the past. Now it's time to find out if they are a help or a hazard.

The research among 2,000 drivers (50% of whom have children under 16) found that:

- 80% of the parents who use baby on board signs think they improve safety
- 46% of drivers who have children under 16 and display a Baby on Board sign do not remove it when the child is not in the car
- 5% of all drivers surveyed have been involved in an accident due to stickers and toys in car windows obscuring their view
- 46% of drivers think 'Baby on Board' signs obscure vision when driving.

Safety experts at the charity, Brake, are advising drivers that while these signs can offer useful information for paramedics in the case of a crash, to bear in mind the following:

1. Display a 'baby on board' sign to aid emergency service officers in case of a crash, but only when there is a child present. If you go out in the car without your child, remove the sign
2. Do not display more than one sign
3. Do not place signs in a way that obscures the driver's view

The survey discovered that clutter is a concern among many drivers, and having too many novelty items displayed could be a safety issue. 51% of all those questioned said they think other drivers display too much clutter in their car windows, such as stickers and novelty items. 15% of drivers who do exhibit these signs admit they do so simply because they are a cute/novelty item while 4% only display one because they received it as a gift.

Brake's experts have confirmed that window clutter can be an issue on the road, but acknowledge that baby on board signs can also have a safety benefit. Julie Townsend, Deputy Chief Executive at Brake, said: *"Baby on board signs can be incredibly helpful for emergency services at the scene of a crash, in knowing whether there's a child involved. But this help can become a hindrance if drivers display signs when their child isn't in the vehicle. Worse still is the danger that can be posed by drivers obscuring their view by cluttering up windows with lots of signs. Drivers' priority should always be getting there safely, without putting themselves, young passengers or other road users at risk. That includes ensuring your view isn't obscured and you remain fully focused on the road."*

The investigation also found that drivers who have never displayed a Baby on Board sticker or do not drive children around are more likely to think the signs are tacky (34%) or dangerous as they obscure vision (18%).

Meanwhile, 46% of people who drive kids around say they have driven with a 'Baby on Board' sign and 22% of these say they ALWAYS display the sign. The survey also reveals that 14% of parents with under 16s think Baby on Board signs are uncool/not trendy and 33% of drivers think the signs are 'tacky'. Interestingly its women who are most likely to disapprove of the signs, with 35% of women questioned saying the signs are 'tacky' while only 31% of male drivers felt the same.

The research also found that a quarter of parents aged 18-24 (who have young children) ALWAYS display a Baby on Board sign when they drive. This age group is also most likely to display novelty stickers in their car window, compared to drivers of other ages. 18-24 year-old drivers are LEAST likely to say that other drivers display too much clutter in their car windows.

To join the debate via Facebook, please go to: <http://www.facebook.com/confused>

For more road safety advice for parents see www.brake.org.uk/resources/parents.htm

