



## The ‘Safe Distance’ Christmas Jumper You’ll Want to be Seen Wearing this Festive Season

As people start pulling out gaudy Christmas jumpers from the backs of their wardrobes ready for the festive season, Ford has created one that you’ll actually want to be seen in. In fact, that’s the whole point.

It may look like any other over-the-top festive attire, but the ‘Safe Distance’ Christmas Jumper has a special gift for cyclists and e-scooter riders: small projectors hidden within the reindeer’s antlers, nose and tail illuminate the floor around the wearer, marking out a 1.5m ‘safe zone’ in the shape of a Christmas tree so other road users know to give them enough space when overtaking.

Developed as a concept, the jumper is part of Ford’s on-going ‘Share The Road’ campaign and uses the popular and growing trend of novelty Christmas jumpers to highlight a key issue cyclists and e-scooter riders experience when it comes to feeling safe on the road. Almost 80 per cent of cyclists claim close-passing vehicles are their biggest threat and around nine in ten regular cyclists state they are ‘close passed’ at least once a week<sup>1</sup>. While countries across Europe have different rules about safe overtaking distances, 1.5m is generally considered a safe distance in slower moving traffic<sup>2</sup>, rising to 2.0m when travelling at speeds above 48 km/h (30 mph).

It comes at a time of year when cyclists and e-scooter users are particularly vulnerable too due to longer periods of darkness. Although, in 2020, the ‘Safe Distance’ Christmas Jumper could be equally as useful for pedestrians as safe distances have become part of the common psyche.

Earlier this year, Ford also revealed an [Emoji Jacket](#) as part of the campaign which aimed to reduce tension between drivers and cyclists. The cyclist wearing the jacket could display how they were feeling and also their intentions via large light-up emojis flashing up on the jacket’s back, helping to promote better communication and tolerance between road-users.

### Share the Road

Ford’s ‘Share The Road’ campaign seeks to foster harmony between road users and underlines the company’s belief that enabling more people to cycle and scoot safely, especially for short journeys, benefits everyone.

The company has produced an award-winning virtual reality experience so that drivers and cyclists can better understand the challenges of each other’s journeys. ‘WheelSwap’ enables motorists and cyclists to see how inconsiderate driving and riding can be at the least hair-raising –and potentially fatal – for their fellow road users. Initial studies show that after undergoing the experience, nearly all participants said they would change their behaviour.

### Ford wearables

The ‘Safe Distance’ Christmas Jumper is the latest in a line of wearable creations from Ford to help promote awareness. In 2015 it revealed a [drug-driving suit](#) to help users experience similar effects to those felt by drug users to highlight the high level of impairment. In 2016 it created similar but to show the often ignored effects of a hangover with the [Hangover Suit](#). Ford has also produced a “Third Age Suit” and a “Pregnancy Suit” to better understand the needs of older drivers and expectant mothers.

### Quotes

“In 2020, we may have become good at keeping a safe distance in shops or on the pavements but we’re not always so good at it on the roads. The ‘Safe Distance’ Christmas Jumper may be fun, but the message is serious; we all need to be mindful of other road-users and make sure everyone gets home for Christmas, no matter what form of transport they take .”

*Emmanuel Lubrani, ‘Share The Road’, Ford of Europe*

## **Links**

- The ‘Safe Distance’ Christmas Jumper:<https://youtu.be/0i4HMXycRQQ>

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<sup>1</sup> *British Cycling’s State of Cycling report can be found under [this link](#).*

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cyclinguk.org/blog/why-we-need-minimum-safe-overtaking-distances-highway-code>

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