

**V8**

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Concern with LED bulb upgrades on classic cars

In a recent article Classic Car Weekly noted "classic car

owners should not replace exterior bulbs with LED items because no LED replacement bulbs on the market in the UK

can comply with legally required technical standards. Only LED bulbs in purpose-built housings are legal. Used in original housings some bulbs can dazzle oncoming traffic, while others are too dim". CCW quoted "Tim Shallcross, head of technical policy at the Institute of Advanced Motorists, saying purchasers of LED bulbs may think they are enhancing their safety by fitting a conversion bulb, but that good intention is misplaced".

The article also noted "a spokesperson for the Department of Transport says the Government position on LED aftermarket conversions is the same as it is on HID conversions which are only permitted when the entire lamp unit, not just the light source, is replaced by a Type Approved lamp".

Bulbs are one of the few aftermarket replacement parts that have to comply with compulsory technical standards and LED bulbs do not do this. Using an LED conversion bulb

might cause you to commit the offence of driving an unroadworthy vehicle leading to a risk of prosecution under the Road Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations (1986) and the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations (1989).

What seems clear is the regulations have not caught up with the new technology and are still talking about electrical "power" (wattage) of bulbs and not the actual measured light output. Anyone driving around the roads these days can see LEDs are fitted to many modern cars for indicators, side, tail and brake lights. It's clear LEDs offer superior visibility to traditional bulb fitments on classic cars. For classic car owners the concern is "relative visibility" – on a comparative lighting basis classic cars tend to be less visible.

We understand the Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) is "on this case" on our behalf. See our "More" webpage at www.v8register.net/more.htm