

A Guide to Understanding Your IAM and NAM Subscriptions and the Difference Between Them

(Based on an original article by Mary Holmes)

The IAM renewal process can cause confusion and difficulties for members of NAM both long-standing and new, so I will attempt to explain it here.

In a nutshell

- .All members of NAM need also to be paid-up members of IAM
- .NAM subscriptions are currently £20 and should be paid in January to NAM
- .IAM subscriptions are currently £43 and should be paid to IAM when you receive your renewal reminder with next year's membership card.
- .Do not assume that because you got a new card it means you have paid. You may have done so if you have set up automatic payment, but it is worth double checking.

NAM membership

NAM is an active group of keen motorcyclists who enjoy being part of a club of like-minded people. Most clubs charge a subscription fee and NAM is no different. Full members currently pay £20 each January for a year's membership. This entitles them to take part in club activities including club nights, rideouts, training events and to participate in discussions on the Facebook page which can only be accessed by paid-up members.

Your first year's membership of NAM

Most of us in NAM will have started out as Associate members. This may be a distant memory for some, but before you could join NAM you had to sign up with IAM for the training course. Your joining fee paid for your first year's membership of both IAM and NAM.

You possibly didn't realise the significance of this at the time. You had paid one sum of money to IAM and that entitled you to go out on observed rides and then take your test. It is highly unlikely that your first thoughts were 'when do I need to renew my subscription, and how do I do it?' Similarly, you probably didn't ask yourself 'why am I a member of two organisations, IAM and NAM, both of whom expect me to pay an annual subscription?' You will also have been unaware that IAM sent a portion of the money you paid to NAM after you joined to help finance your training.

If you want to remain a member of NAM

Let's go back to the case of a newly joined Associate. If all goes well he/she will pass their test within the first year of membership. There are then two choices. One is to renew his/her membership of both IAM and NAM in order to continue being part of NAM as a Full member. Alternatively he/she may decide that passing the Advanced Test was the only goal and it is unnecessary to remain a member of NAM or IAM.

The second option is easy. You just don't pay the IAM any money when they send you your renewal notice on your anniversary. But if you do want to remain a member of NAM you will now need to start paying two lots of subscriptions, one to IAM and one to NAM. All members of NAM must also be paid up members of IAM. It is our parent organisation and we are administratively tied together with one shared database of member information called DARTS. IAM owns the database and if

you're not in IAM you're not on DARTS. If you're not on DARTS then NAM have no contact details for you.

The IAM Roadsmart renewal process

The IAM renewal process can cause confusion and difficulties for members of NAM both long-standing and new, so I will attempt to explain it here. It hinges around the fact that the IAM send you an apparently valid membership card even BEFORE you have paid them for it.

To set the background: shortly before the anniversary of the date you joined IAM, they will send out a shiny new membership card. It states that you have been a valued member for X years and gives an expiry date in a year's time. The IAM send this out regardless of whether you have paid your membership fee!

Some members pay annually by Direct Debit , so all is well. But if you pay by another method then it is very easy to forget to make that payment. After all, you have a brand new membership card that confirms you are a member of IAM for another year. You think you have paid and all is well.

Sadly all is not well. The IAM knows you haven't paid. They have the database DARTS. It puts the label 'expired' against your name. Sometime later they erase your details completely, as they are doubtless obliged to do for confidentiality (GDPR) reasons.

Why does this matter? You might well ask. One reason is that without IAM membership you cannot be an active member of NAM. That means you cannot take part in club activities, nor are you entitled to access the Facebook page. A second reason is that the IAM have erased your details from their DARTS system, so the officials within NAM have no way of contacting you. NAM has no locally held record system, again because of confidentiality/GDPR. Most full members do pay their annual fee to IAM when it falls due. If they don't then the Membership Secretary sends out a polite message asking whether they really do wish to end their membership of IAM/NAM.

For Associates the situation is more serious. Without IAM membership they cannot continue with their training. This leads to a potentially 'dangerous' situation. When next year's IAM membership card arrives in the post it looks like they are good to go for another year. But until they actually pay the IAM renewal fee they are not a member of either IAM or NAM. It is very easy even for seasoned Full members to forget to pay – the IAM reminder gets buried in a pile of letters perhaps, and the membership lapses.