

Motorists urged to make Friday 19 July 'check your vehicle day'

As schools break up and holidays begin across the country, Highways England is calling on motorists to check their vehicles to help keep traffic flowing.

Published 15 July 2019 From: [Highways England](#)



The company has teamed up with organisations working with drivers to urge people heading off on the great summer getaway to be prepared and to check their vehicles in advance to avoid breaking down.

The joint call to make Friday 19 July 'check your vehicle day' comes as part of Highways England's ongoing safety campaign about motorway driving.

It advises motorists what to do if they break down and reminds them to follow speed limits, to keep left except when overtaking and not to ignore red X signals above closed lanes.

The 'check your vehicle day' is being supported by 1992 Formula 1 World Champion Nigel Mansell CBE, in his role as IAM RoadSmart president, the RAC, Michelin UK, Green Flag and Halfords Autocentres.

Highways England's head of road safety, Richard Leonard, said:

Breakdowns are still too common. We'd urge motorists to check their vehicles on a regular basis and this week is really important because we know that many schools break up for summer and people are setting off on holidays and getaways.

Nigel Mansell added:

The 'check your vehicle day' is a great initiative from Highways England. As someone who raced in Formula 1 for well over a decade, I know a thing or two about good vehicle preparation – and what this means for getting to your finish line.

Making sure your car is fully ready for the journey ahead could not only save you and your family a lot of heartache on the way to your destination; but ensure that you, your occupants and other road users are as safe as possible.

It should be a weekly task for the driver to make sure all lights are working on his or her car, all glass areas are clean, wipers clear the windscreen properly, tyres at least meet legal requirements and water and oil levels are topped up.

I am delighted to give my stamp of approval to Highways England's call to action and please pay attention to it, as it could save your life and those around you.

July and August are the busiest months for breakdowns on motorways and major A-roads with one breakdown reported every two minutes during the final weekend in July and first weekend in August.

Highways England is expecting to respond to an extra 700 breakdowns a week for the next six weeks, taking the average number of motorway breakdowns each week to almost 5,000.

RAC patrol of the year, Ben Aldous, said:

No-one wants a breakdown to ruin the start of their holiday, yet so many of the problems we go out to at this time of year are perfectly preventable if drivers check over their car before they take to the road.

We urge holidaymakers to take part in this initiative by Highways England and spend just a few minutes checking the basics like oil, coolant and tyres on their cars before they get packed up. Doing this could make the difference between a smooth and trouble-free journey, and one plagued by the stress and frustration of being broken-down at the roadside.

Highways says simple checks are a way to make sure the vehicle is roadworthy. Things to consider are:

- check tyres: prior to setting off on a long/significant journey, check your tyre pressures are suitable for the load and the condition of your tyres, including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil regularly and before any long journey, and top up if needed. Take your car back to the garage

if you're topping up more than usual

- check water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen
- check lights: if your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself and your family at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MoT
- check fuel: before setting out, check your fuel levels and make sure you have enough to get to your destination

Highways England has also issued five basic safety tips to follow if your car does break down on a motorway:

- get away from the traffic. Exit the motorway or get to an emergency area or hard shoulder and use the free phone provided
- if that's not possible, move left onto the verge
- get out of the left side of your car and behind the barrier if you can and it is safe to do so
- get help – contact your breakdown provider or Highways England on 0300 123 5000
- if you break down in moving traffic and cannot leave your car, keep your seatbelt and hazard lights on and call 999

Brian Porteous, technical manager for car, van and 4x4 for Michelin UK, said:

Tyre maintenance is critical to road safety. Your tyres are the only point of contact your car has with the road.

A car tyre contact patch is approximately the size of your hand, but is responsible for delivering braking, traction and handling, so it's easy to understand why there can be serious consequences if tyres are not maintained properly. You should inspect your tyres regularly for wear and damage and ask a professional for advice if uncertain. Tyre pressures should be checked against the car manufacturer's recommendation at least once every month and before every long journey.

Claire Hildreth, national service delivery manager at Green Flag, said:

Last year the breakdown industry dealt with over 600,000 breakdowns over the school summer holidays, throughout the entire road network; many of these could have been avoided.

Green Flag is pleased to be backing Highways England and is throwing its support behind 'check your vehicle day' because while no-one plans to break down, it is important to plan your journey and check your vehicle to reduce the chances of it happening.

Ella Colley, Halfords summer motoring expert, said:

Holiday road trips can be tiring as drivers put up with rowdy passengers, roadworks and wrong directions, so when it comes to having a less stressful holiday being prepared pays dividends. This is a great initiative by Highways England and it shows the importance of proper vehicle checks.

Our research also shows that only a quarter of drivers get their cars checked every four months or less frequently.

Although these are fairly simple, it is important they are carried out frequently to help avoid hassle and breaking down on long road trips. It's probably worth giving your car a quick health check this weekend or taking it to Halfords Autocentres where our expert colleagues and technicians will do it for you for free.

Highways England will again be doing its bit to help keep the country moving with its dedicated traffic officer service on-hand to those who run into problems.

You can find more advice on [our website](#), or download a [vehicle safety checks leaflet](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

All new rapid chargepoints should offer card payment by 2020

- all new electric vehicle rapid and higher powered chargepoints should provide 'pay as you go' debit or credit card payment option
- government prepared to intervene to ensure a good deal for consumers by using powers in the Automated and Electric Vehicles Act
- announcement follows the Prime Minister's commitment that the government will work with industry to build out the national network of high speed electric vehicle charging

The government has today (15 July 2019) set out that it wants to see all newly installed rapid and higher powered chargepoints provide debit or credit

card payment by spring 2020.

One year since the launch of the [Road to Zero Strategy](#), the government has signalled it expects industry to develop a roaming solution across the charging network, allowing electric vehicle drivers to use any public chargepoint through a single payment method without needing multiple smartphone apps or membership cards.

Government and industry have supported the installation of over 20,000 publicly accessible chargepoints in the UK, including more than 2,000 rapid devices, making it one of the largest charging networks in Europe. There are now more locations where you can charge your car than there are petrol stations, with almost every motorway service area having at least one rapid chargepoint.

To increase confidence in the charging network and reduce range anxiety the government is working with industry to make chargepoint data freely available, helping drivers easily locate and access available chargepoints.

Future of Mobility Minister, Michael Ellis, said:

The government's vision is for the UK to have one of the best electric vehicle charging networks in the world, but we know the variety of payment methods at the moment is a source of frustration for drivers.

It is crucial there are easy payment methods available to improve electric vehicle drivers' experiences and give drivers choice. This will help even more people enjoy the benefits electric vehicles bring and speed up our journey to a zero-emission future.

Business and Industry Minister Andrew Stephenson said:

Initiatives like this are essential as we move towards a net zero economy, making it easier than ever for people to own and use electric vehicles.

Investing in batteries, technology and infrastructure through our modern [Industrial Strategy and Faraday battery challenge](#) will ensure the UK leads the world in the global transition away from fossil fuels while supporting the future of our automotive industry.

This announcement comes as BP Chargemaster, the operator of the UK's largest public charging network, has taken a major step forward for industry by committing to introducing card payment on all new 50kW and 150kW chargers from today. It will also retrofit its existing UK-made rapid chargers with the technology over the next 12 months.

David Newton, CEO at BP Chargemaster, said:

As the operator of the UK's largest public charging network, including the greatest number of rapid chargers, we support the government's vision for all new rapid and ultra-fast chargers to support contactless bank card payment.

We will be going one step further, not only by introducing this facility on all new 50kW and 150kW chargers from today, but also by committing to retrofit our existing UK-made rapid chargers with this technology over the next 12 months.

This follows the Prime Minister's announcement last week that the government wants to see the development of a [high speed electric vehicle charging infrastructure nationally](#); with the Office for Low Emission Vehicles to lead a review on the vision for the network.

The government has made clear that if the market is too slow to deliver improvements across the entire network it is prepared to intervene to ensure a good deal for consumers by using powers in the [Automated and Electric Vehicles Act](#).

Following regulation from government, improvements have already been made by operators, including increasing the accessibility of their chargepoints by offering payment via smartphone apps and contactless payment systems.

Flagship UK Government Hub in Edinburgh named 'Queen Elizabeth House'

The new Hub, located near Waverley Station in the heart of Edinburgh, is a seven story, 190,000 square feet, ultra-modern office space. It will bring together nearly 3,000 UK Government civil servants from a range of UK Government departments.

The keys to the building were formally handed over to the UK Government on 13 June 2019, and staff will begin moving in from Spring next year.

Mr Mundell said:

I am absolutely delighted that Her Majesty has agreed to the naming of the new UK Government Hub in Edinburgh as 'Queen Elizabeth House'.

The Royal title is hugely fitting, given the Hub will be the focus of the UK Government's work in Scotland, hosting 10 UK Government departments.

The building will contain a dedicated Cabinet room, the first of its kind outside of London, and I very much look forward to inviting the Cabinet to meet in the building once it is open for business.

I am very grateful to Her Majesty for acknowledging the importance of the building by conferring the Royal title.

The outside of the new UK Government Hub in Edinburgh

The Hub will improve the work of the UK Government, helping it deliver better services for people across Scotland. It will enable closer collaboration between departments, smarter working, and use of the latest technology.

The Edinburgh Hub is a great example of the UK Government's extensive support for the capital's economy – which we are also driving through the ambitious Edinburgh and South East Scotland Growth Deal.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is delivering the Edinburgh Hub on behalf of the UK Government, and will be the largest department based there when the first teams start to move in from April 2020.

Working with the Government Property Agency (GPA), HMRC has been at the cutting edge of delivering the UK Government's Hub strategy and is playing a leading role on delivering this programme for the UK Government, enabling closer working between UK Government departments.

Departments to be located in the Edinburgh Hub include: HMRC, the Competition and Markets Authority, the Office of the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Office of the Advocate General for Scotland, the Office for Statistics Regulation, the Information Commissioner's Office, the Health and Safety Executive, the Office for Statistics Regulation, the Government Actuary's Department, the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury. It is due to open in March 2020 on a 25 year lease.

The new Edinburgh Hub will be 'Queen Elizabeth House'

The UK Government Hub is part of the award-winning New Waverley development delivered by Artisan Real Estate Investors. As well as the Hub, it includes three hotels, the Arches, shops and 150 homes, in a new quarter set round a public square. It is one of the UK's most important city-centre regeneration sites, located in the World Heritage Site of Edinburgh's Old Town. The area is also home to Edinburgh City Council, several international finance companies and the British Council.

Developers Artisan worked hand in hand with construction partners McAleer & Rushe and designers Allan Murray Architects to deliver the Hub ahead of time and on budget.

Work is also underway on the first Glasgow hub. The Edinburgh and Glasgow hubs are a key part of the UK Government's commitment to delivering excellent public services for people in Scotland, building a strong Civil Service outside London and leading the way in regional regeneration. Across the country, the UK Government hubs programme will save significant amounts of public money over 20 years, relocating civil servants from existing, often fragmented office locations, to modern, cross-departmental workplaces.

Detailed guide: Part B activities: combustion and incineration permits

Find out if Medium Combustion Plant Directive (MCPD) or specified generator regulations apply to your operations.

Detailed guide: Medium combustion plant: apply for an environmental permit

The types of permit available, how much they cost and how to apply for your environmental permit.