

Press release: Highways England driving home the importance of towing safely

Highways England traffic officers joined Road Safety Engineer Irene Stewart at the M5 Junction 19 service area to provide information and practical tips to all motorists with caravans, trailers and horse boxes.

Behind the North East, the South West region has experienced the highest number of caravan/trailer incidents statistically, with 850 incidents across the network between January 2017 and May 2018, and 460 of those occurring in the summer months of May to September last year.

And as part of an ongoing campaign, Highways England is encouraging drivers to carry out a few simple safety checks before setting off on journeys.

Beverley Hannah, South West Regional Safety Co-ordinator for Highways England, said:

Safety is always our priority and we're delighted that so many people came along to speak to us while we were at the event.

We received interest from general motorists, as well as caravan and motorhome owners, and it was a great opportunity for us to meet people that were taking their caravans or trailers away on holiday this summer and offer them pointers on how to stay safe while towing.

Those stopping off at the services were able to learn more about Highways England and how it manages the safety of drivers and controls traffic following incidents, and also received key tyre safety tips and guidance from the Tyresafe awareness group.

Both Highways England and Avon and Somerset Police, advise anyone towing a caravan, boat, horse box or trailer to take some simple steps to ensure a trouble-free journey, including:

- Carry out a final maintenance check before setting off, and leave plenty of time for your journey
- Be aware that driving while towing will inevitably affect the vehicle's performance, especially braking distances
- Check that the vehicle and load are secure and the weight is correctly distributed in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications
- Make sure you are adequately covered for recovery and breakdown
- Know the correct speed limit for your vehicle and the roads you travel on, and don't drive faster than the speed limit for the type of road
- Towing mirrors not only allow you to view to the rear, in most cases

they are a legal requirement when towing a wider trailer

- Driving licences place restrictions on the trailers that you can tow, you may need to take a further test to progress to towing larger trailers
- If your caravan or trailer starts to snake or swerve, it's a sign you're going too fast or the trailer is loaded incorrectly. Ease off the accelerator and reduce your speed gently
- Don't brake harshly on a bend, as it makes the trailer unstable. Reduce your speed in plenty of time for any hazard
- You shouldn't drive in the right hand lane of a motorway with three or more lanes

Supt Andy Williams, Head of Road Safety for Avon and Somerset Police, said:

We want everyone to arrive safely at their destination so if you're towing any sort of trailer please take extra steps to ensure you're prepared before the start of your journey.

Remembering these simple road safety rules while you're driving can also reduce the risk of having an incident.

Stuart Jackson, TyreSafe chairman, said:

TyreSafe is a firm supporter of Highways England's engagement activities with motorists as both organisations seek to reduce the number of incidents on the roads.

Tyre checks are essential to reduce risks as they are the only part of the vehicle in contact with the road and, if they're not roadworthy, steering and braking will be compromised, too. TyreSafe encourages all drivers to check their tyres at least once a month and before long journeys.

Three further towing and tyre safety events are planned at Gordano Services – on Friday, 29 June, Monday, 2 July, and Friday, 6 July, between 10am and 3.30pm – and similar events are also planned for other areas of the South West.

Highways England interviewees will be available at Gordano Services on Friday, 29 June between 10am and 12 noon. Please contact Neville Smith on 0300 470 4337 or Nicola Wesson on 0300 470 6218 to arrange.

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.

[News story: Scottish GDP figures](#)

Responding to the [Scottish GDP figures](#) published this morning, Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell said:

It is good to see that Scotland's economy is growing – especially in the manufacturing sector – however, over the year, Scotland's economy has lagged behind the UK's.

The UK Government is investing to boost economic growth through its ambitious modern industrial strategy, and direct investment into Scotland's cities and regions through growth and city deals. The Scottish Government needs to work with us and use its extensive powers to make sure that it is supporting productivity and growth in Scotland.

[Press release: China lifts ban on exports of British beef](#)

China has today lifted its longstanding ban on exports of beef from the UK, in a landmark move for British producers estimated to be worth £250 million in the first five years alone.

More than 20 years after the Chinese government first imposed a ban on British beef in the wake of the BSE outbreak, today's milestone is the culmination of several years of site inspections and negotiations between UK and Chinese government officials.

China is currently the UK's eighth largest export market for agri-food, with over £560 million worth of food and drink bought by Chinese consumers last year.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

This is fantastic news for our world-class food and farming industry and shows we can be a truly outward looking Britain outside the European Union. It is the result of painstaking and collaborative work by industry and the Defra team over many years.

Today's milestone will help to unlock UK agriculture's full potential and is a major step to forging new trading relationships around the globe.

The Government, and its team of trade specialists, continues to encourage and support UK businesses as they consider launching into overseas markets or expanding their current global customer base.

Food exports from the UK continue to soar with [record exports](#) of over £22 billion in 2017. Our food and drink businesses are now selling their products to 217 markets.

Today's announcement will allow official market access negotiations to begin, a process which typically takes around three years.

It follows the Prime Minister's trade mission to China earlier this year, where she agreed new measures to improve market access to China.

It also follows a successful inspection visit in April 2018 hosted by Defra and the Animal Plant Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, DAERA, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the UK Export Certification Partnership.

AHDB International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

We are delighted that China has lifted the ban on UK beef. This marks an important milestone in growing our meat exports to this all-important market.

Today's news follows years of collaboration between AHDB, government and industry to make this a reality and we now look forward to seeing UK beef exported to the country for the first time in over 20 years. We will now begin the work on the export protocols and approvals to allow commercial shipments to begin.

[News story: Support for game-changing ideas: apply for an innovation loan](#)

Innovate UK has up to £10 million in innovation loans to support game-

changing ideas being developed by small and medium-sized businesses in the UK.

The loans are for highly innovative late-stage projects in any area of technology or the economy that can demonstrate a clear route to commercialisation and economic impact.

They will be made available through Innovate UK Loans Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Innovate UK.

Innovate UK has already offered £8 million in loans to businesses developing solutions for the UK's urban infrastructure, energy and transport challenges. [Find out more.](#)

Projects must show significant economic impact

Projects must lead to innovative products, processes or services that are significantly ahead of others in the field.

They must have a clear business plan and demonstrate that they will deliver significant economic impact and return on investment as soon as possible after project completion.

The competition will fund a variety of projects across different technologies and markets.

About the innovation loans programme

Innovation loan competitions are being run as part of a 2-year pilot programme.

The programme recognises that innovations need different types of funding support. It offers flexible, low-interest loans for innovation projects that are nearer to market than those that typically receive grant funding.

It is aimed at innovative micro, small and medium-sized businesses that can manage a loan but struggle to access finance from commercial lenders or schemes backed by the British Business Bank.

This is the fourth of 5 loan competitions. A total of £50 million will be made available.

Competition information

- the loan competition opens on 2 July 2018, and the deadline for registration is midday on 29 August 2018
- you could get an innovation loan of between £100,000 and £1 million
- your project must be late-stage experimental development and last up to 5 years
- up to 100% of your eligible project costs are available

- only single, UK-based SMEs can apply
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Press release: UK support for Ukraine reform

Boris Johnson discussed the contribution at the [Ukraine Reform Conference](#) – a year after the UK hosted the inaugural summit in London.

Since then, Ukraine has made great strides in tackling corruption and improving transparency across Ukrainian institutions, and important progress on decentralisation and healthcare reform.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

“With Russia continuing its efforts to destabilise Ukraine, and the occupation of Crimea ongoing, Britain must help to lead the way on ensuring Ukraine has a bright, stable and prosperous future

“That’s why we continue to provide support, which will help Ukraine to build on the progress it has made since 2014 and on key reforms since the inaugural London Reform Conference last year

“We do all this because it is essential for Ukraine’s future security and prosperity, and because it is essential for upholding our European values, our security and our prosperity.”

The funding will provide practical support to strengthen Ukraine’s sovereignty and resilience, and ensure the reform momentum continues. It includes help for projects in Ukraine to bolster further reform across the country’s institutions, eliminate corruption, and increase independent oversight of state organisations.

The UK is already doing pioneering work in Ukraine to help tackle Russian disinformation. This includes support to Ukraine’s public broadcaster, a project to help Ukrainian schools to build resilience against disinformation, and funding for an NGO network across Europe to debunk fake media stories.

The Foreign Secretary also held talks with Danish foreign minister Anders Samuelsen while in Copenhagen.

NOTES:

Funding includes:

- £13.4 million on conflict, security and stability projects to bolster Ukrainian defence reform, promote peace-building, eliminate corruption

and increase civilian oversight

- £11 million to support reform in Ukraine through the Good Governance Fund with a wide range of programmes to help Ukraine drive forward governance, economic and political reform. Through this, we are supporting key institutions like the Business Ombudsman and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau.
- £6 million in humanitarian aid.
- £5 million this year to help Ukraine counter Russian disinformation.

Further information