

Highways England helps fans with festive football fixtures

To help journeys flow more smoothly and to keep disruption to a minimum, almost 98 per cent of motorways and major A-roads will be roadworks-free in time for Christmas, meaning sports lovers and shoppers can get to their destination as smoothly as possible.

Where it is safe to do so, more than 800 miles of roadworks have been lifted or suspended on England's motorways and major A-roads by 6am on Friday 20 December until 12.01am on Thursday 2 January.

The decision to lift roadworks has been welcomed by the English Football League (EFL) with football fixtures taking place across the length of the country on 26 December.

Director of communications at the EFL Mark Rowan said:

The EFL welcomes the decision taken to lift or suspend roadworks on England's motorways and A-roads over the Christmas and New Year period, one which remains an important part of the footballing calendar for thousands of fans up and down the country.

Every year, EFL Clubs play their part in bringing together friends and families as they travel to festive fixtures, so we hope this will make their journeys that little bit easier.

Highways England's customer service director Melanie Clarke said:

We know that the festive period is a busy time for football supporters and that's why we're doing everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible by keeping around 98 per cent of the road network we manage free from roadworks.

And we're asking drivers to be prepared too before setting off so they don't miss the big match. We know from experience that almost half of breakdowns can easily be avoided if motorists carry out simple vehicle checks before their journeys.

So, before you set off, check traffic conditions, check your vehicle, and make sure you're aware of the signs and signals on motorway.

Highways England is urging motorists to check the following before they set off:

- Check fuel: Make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- Check tyres: Check your tyre pressure 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 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 your lights: If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

And with more wet weather forecast over the coming days, Highways England is also calling on those travelling over the festive period to make sure they drive to the conditions.

Richard Leonard, Head of Road Safety at Highways England, said:

Most of us already slowdown in snow, ice or fog but when it rains we consider it normal so don't adapt our driving.

Rain makes it harder for tyres to grip the road and harder for drivers to see ahead – significantly increasing the chances of being involved in a collision.

We're encouraging drivers to check the latest weather and travel conditions before setting off on journeys, with heavy rain expected for much of today and more wet weather over the weekend.

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.