

M1 safety week reduces collisions by a third

200 dangerous drivers have been stopped by police and hundreds given safety tips at motorway services.

The number of incidents during the Highways England initiative fell from 90 collisions during the previous week to 64 during the week of action.

The M1 safety week, which took place between Monday 13 and Sunday 19 May, also recorded the fourth lowest number of collisions of 2019 and second lowest outside school holidays.

The week saw all three of Highways England's unmarked HGV supercabs take to the M1 to capture dangerous driving, with nearly 200 vehicles being pulled over by police officers during the week.

Highways England's traffic officers also joined forces with the emergency services to provide free tyre checks and safety tips to hundreds of drivers at motorway services along the M1.

And new footage was released showing a lorry driver using a credit card to make a payment on his mobile phone to raise awareness of the dangers of using mobiles at the wheel.

[You Tube.](#)

Similar safety initiatives are now being planned for other motorways across England following the success of the M1 week of action.

Richard Leonard, head of road safety at Highways England, said:

We've been really impressed with the results of our week of action on the M1 which shows how making little changes to the way you drive can make a big difference to safety on our motorways.

Our HGV supercabs helped the police identify almost 200 dangerous drivers who could have caused collisions if they hadn't been pulled over, and our safety tips at motorway services and in the media also helped to make the M1 safer for everyone.

As part of our current motorway driving campaign, we're encouraging drivers to remember the basics of motorway driving to help keep us all moving so that the number of accidents continue to fall in the weeks and months ahead.

The HGV supercabs, which are funded by Highways England, allow police officers to film evidence of unsafe driving behaviour by pulling up alongside

vehicles, and drivers are then pulled over by police cars following a short distance behind.

They have derestricted speed limiters which mean they can travel at speeds up to the national speed limit, and flashing lights have been installed for use by police forces in an emergency.

The supercabs were used by six police forces during the M1 week of action to record nearly 200 offences. They included 57 drivers on mobile phones, 37 not wearing seatbelts and 26 who were driving carelessly or not in proper control of their vehicles.

Police officers filed 133 traffic offence reports – usually requiring drivers to attend a driver education course – and there were also five prosecutions for more serious offences.

Northamptonshire Police was one of the forces involved in the week of action. PC Dave Lee from the Safer Roads Team said:

It is always disappointing to catch drivers breaking the law. However, with a high number of motorists observed throughout the operation, these figures show it's a small minority who continue to commit these types of offences.

Our main priority is to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads by clamping down on the fatal four offences, which are speeding, drink/drug driving, seatbelt and mobile phone use. Working with our partners on such operations enables us to take a strong and robust approach to identify road traffic offences.

Tom Cotton, Road Haulage Association's head of licensing and infrastructure policy, said:

A minority of drivers think it's okay to endanger other road users by taking unnecessary risks behind the wheel – it's not. No phone call or text is so urgent that it can't wait until the driver is safely parked.

We're pleased to see police and Highways England working together on initiatives to improve road safety.

A new Highways England safety campaign is currently taking place highlighting the basics of motorway driving, including what to do if you break down, keeping left except when overtaking, and obeying red X and variable speed limit signs.

Red Xs are displayed on overhead electronic signs to close lanes for several reasons, including an accident or breakdown, debris in the carriageway, or

because of a person or animal on the road. Lanes are also closed to help emergency services get through or to provide a safe space for road workers.

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.