

Press release: Hitting the road for the holidays? Check before you travel

Campsite bookings in the UK are reportedly up by as much as 5 per cent year on year as people take advantage of the weather.

And drivers enjoying a staycation in this country or travelling further afield as schools break up for the summer are urged to have a good look at their vehicles before setting off on journeys.

Almost half of all breakdowns are caused by simple mechanical problems that could be avoided with simple checks and nearly a quarter are caused by tyre problems.

Meanwhile, around 20 motorists break down every day because they have run out of fuel.

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

We want all drivers to arrive at their destinations safely this summer and I'd urge motorists to make sure they are ready for their journey by checking their vehicles beforehand.

Simple checks on tyres, fuel and oil levels help prevent breakdowns and it's also worth making sure you're prepared for the journey, especially in hot weather, by stocking up on water and checking travel conditions before setting off.

Iain Geddes, from the Camping and Caravanning Club, supported that message, saying:

The strategic road network presents the best way for campers to get away this summer. We recommend planning your route and considering what time you travel to avoid being part of a rush-hour bottle neck.

Don't forget the basic checks of the tyres and vehicle fluids before you go. Also watch out for traffic advice on the matrix signs overhead to help you have a drama-free journey.

And Martin Spencer, from the Caravan and Motorhome Club, added:

Our members take numerous trips each year, especially during the summer, and England's motorways and major A roads are vital in enabling them to get to their destination.

For anyone who is thinking about going on a caravan holiday but is intimidated by the idea of towing, they should be reassured that towing can be relaxed, easy and comfortable on our roads – you just need to get the basic set-up right and follow expert advice.

Highways England has produced five short [instructional videos](#) featuring traffic officer Siobhan Wares, explaining how to check tyre pressure, tyre tread, oil and water levels and lights to help prevent needless breakdowns and cut the unnecessary delays they cause.

The videos cover:

- checking 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.
- checking 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.
- checking water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen.
- checking 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.

Motorists are also urged to:

- check fuel: before setting out, check your fuel levels and make sure you have enough to get to your destination.

And people are urged to make sure they are prepared for their journey when the weather is hot.

Drivers should:

- take a bottle of water before setting out to ensure you stay hydrated
- plan in breaks and leave plenty of time for journeys
- check the weather forecast for your destination
- check travel conditions before setting out and, where it is safe to do so, during journeys
- ensure you and your car are fit for the journey

For more information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, visit the [Vehicle Checks website](#).

As more smart motorways are introduced it is becoming increasingly important that drivers familiarise themselves with driving on them. One of the most important signals – the Red X – is used to identify when a lane is closed and indicates that drivers should move into an open lane to continue their journeys. Driving in a closed lane is risky, as there could be debris in the

road or an accident or breakdown up ahead. Keeping the lane clear gives the emergency services the access they need to help. For further advice, please visit our web page on [Driving on a Smart Motorway](#).

More information can be found on our [website](#) or by calling our information line (0300 123 5000) where you can keep up to date with conditions on the roads.

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.