

Want to go on a road trip with your dog?

Drivers planning a post lockdown trip with their dogs are being urged to take a break and enjoy one of the many outstanding walks that can be found just off England's motorways and major A roads this summer.

After the restrictions of the last few months it's completely understandable that people want to get out and about again and many will be including their dogs in the fun.

To make sure drivers and their pooches stay happy and safe on road trips Highways England has teamed up with the [Driving with Dogs](#) website to suggest some top stop off ideas for a mid-trip break or day out.

Highways England Head of Road Safety Richard Leonard said

We want all our customers, including the four-legged ones, to arrive at their destinations safely this summer and I'd urge drivers to make sure they plan a break into longer trips as well as preparing for any journey, especially in hot weather, by stocking up on water and checking travel conditions before setting off.

Walks that would make brilliant stop offs close to Highways England roads include:

- A38, Plympton, Devon – Saltram House Park is a National Trust mansion with a most imposing vista. Dogs are welcome in the woods and parkland.
- M5 Junction 18 Bristol – Blaise Castle estate is an enormous outdoor space, with a mixture of woodlands, meadows and limestone gorge spread over 650 acres. Signed trails lead from the car park in all directions.
- M6 Junction 5 or 7 Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands – A former deer park with 2,400 acres of open space – including 7 lakes. Dogs are welcome, but there are a few restrictions in certain areas to protect the wildlife at breeding times.
- M60/M62 various junctions Greater Manchester – With 600 acres of parkland, Heaton Park is a massively popular open space for walkers and their dogs. You can get here easily from several M60 junctions and also the M62.
- A46 Lincolnshire – A super park for dogs, with flat walking in 200 acres of woodland and wetland. The area is a combination of both Hartsholme County Park and Swanholme Lakes Local Nature Reserve.
- A12 Blaxhall Common, Suffolk – A peaceful nature reserve where you can relax and enjoy the sounds of birdsong and chirruping insects. It's very handy for a doggie comfort break.
- M25 Junction 8 Reigate Hill, Surrey – Countryside dog walk just yards from junction 8. Excellent stop off when travelling. Access to both

carriageways. Adjacent to North Downs Way / Gatton Park. Massive view over the North Downs and Reigate.

Lezli Rees, Driving with Dogs Director, said:

Since lockdown ended we've seen a big increase in visitors to our site so it would seem this year more than ever people want to go on adventures with their dogs.

Whether you're planning a fun day out or driving a long way and need a stop off en route there are literally thousands of lovely dog walks within a stone's throw of most major roads and motorways and we would urge people to get exploring!

As well as taking a break on road trips, veterinary charity PDSA is offering safety advice to anyone travelling with their dog this summer.

PDSA Vet Anna Ewers Clark said:

As camp-sites, holiday homes, and places where we can enjoy a day out – like national parks – begin to re-open, many of us will be planning days out and holidays in the UK. It's important to remember to keep our pets safe and happy as we do that, especially if you'll be spending a long time in the car.

PDSA's top tips include:

- Keep your pet restrained and secure in the car, not only will this keep them safe but it's also required by the Highway Code. We recommend using car safety harnesses for medium sized and large dogs, and pet carriers for small dogs and cats. The harness fits around the dog's chest, back and shoulders, and is then attached to one of the rear safety belts.
- Consider travel time. Lengthy journeys can be stressful for many pets, so keep travel as short as possible, and plan in plenty of rest breaks along the way. If your pet is likely to get stressed, consider staying closer to home.
- Check the temperature in the back of the car. Although most cars have great air conditioning for the front seats, the back seat or boot can heat up very quickly and can become dangerously warm for your pet, especially if they are in a carrier.
- Make sure you put your dog on the lead before you open the car doors and get them in and out of the car on the pavement side, away from the road. To prevent eye injuries and accidents, don't let your dog put its head out of the window.
- Carry plenty of drinking water and a bowl, even on short journeys and stop frequently so they can go to the toilet and stretch their legs in the fresh air.

View more [tips and advice from the PDSA](#).

The RSPCA offers advice on what to do in the event of a breakdown:

- Dogs should be removed from the broken-down vehicle if it is safe to do so.
- The animal should be kept under secure control i.e. kept on a lead at all times.
- Both animal and owner must position themselves as far away as possible from the roadside behind the crash barrier.

And whether you are heading off with a pet or not Highways England is offering the following information to ensure all your road trips are successful.

Highways England provides [real time traffic information](#)

Journey planning advice, including making sure vehicles are ready for the road, can be found here: [Think! vehicle checks](#)

You can find information about how to avoid tailgating by giving fellow road users enough space here: [Stay safe – Stay back](#)

Advice about [loading your vehicle safely](#)

Details of the above walks and many others can be found at [Driving with Dogs](#)

(Photo courtesy of Driving with Dogs)

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.