

# Call to check vehicles before travelling as 41,500 breakdowns caused by tyre issues

Many of those breakdowns could have been avoided if drivers had carried out basic vehicle checks before setting off including checking their tyres.

Now National Highways, which is responsible for motorways and major A roads across the country, has launched a new campaign reminding drivers to check their tyres regularly and always before long journeys.

Tyre issues were the main reason during 2021 that people broke down on National Highways roads with 41,560 people doing so, compared to 35,892 in 2020 when traffic numbers were impacted by the Covid-19 lockdowns. So far this year, there have already been more than 19,300 breakdowns due to problems with tyres.

National Highways Head of Road Safety, Jeremy Phillips, said:

With schools breaking up for summer soon there will be more people on the roads and taking longer journeys. We know that breaking down can be a very upsetting experience, nobody wants to start off their holiday stranded at the side of the road, next to fast moving traffic.

So we are reminding drivers to check their vehicles, particularly the tyres, before setting off. Unsafe tyres put you and others at risk as well as running the risk of attracting a hefty fine and penalty points.

A simple check on tyre tread and pressure could prevent a breakdown and make sure you get to your destination safe and sound.

The summer holiday period is the busiest time of year for breakdowns, National Highways figures show.

In 2021 there were 21,307 breakdowns on the network in July and 20,526 in August, an average of 5,000 breakdowns each week.

As well as running the risk of a breakdown, driving without the legally required amount of tread on tyres can adversely affect grip, braking distance and steering.

While driving with under-inflated or over-inflated tyres can adversely affect braking distances, steering, fuel efficiency and the lifetime of tyres.

If stopped by the police while driving with illegal tyres, motorists face

finer of £2,500 and three penalty points per tyre.

National Highways' advice to motorists is:

- ensure tyre pressures are suitable for the load and check the condition of tyres, including the spare.
- look out for cuts or wear across the whole tyre including sidewall.
- all tyres are legally required to have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm – to check your tyres place a 20p coin into the main grooves of the tread. If you can't see the raised outer rim of the coin (with the words "Twenty pence" engraved), then the tyre has sufficient tread depth

Each vehicle has a different recommended tyre pressure, which may vary depending on the load you're carrying. You can usually find this on the inside of the driver's door, petrol cap or in your vehicle manual.

Stefan Hay, National Tyre Distributors Association (NTDA) Chief Executive, said:

The latest statistics show that tyres remain the most common reason behind breakdowns on the strategic road network. This comes as no great surprise to the NTDA, as our own research showed that 60% of motorists questioned, admitted to never checking their tyres and most had very little knowledge regarding tyre management issues such as the legal tread depth limit.

The NTDA and its members are delighted, therefore, to once again support National Highways with this extremely important Summer Tyre Safety Campaign.

For more advice visit the [National Highways website](#).

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.