

Don't let your tyres ruin your summer holidays

Only one in six drivers remembered to check their tyre pressure before setting off on a long journey, according to research commissioned by Highways England. Yet one in five motorway breakdowns are caused by worn or incorrectly inflated tyres and nearly a third of drivers confessed that they're not confident checking tyre pressure.

Roads are set to be busy this summer as people head off on day trips and holidays in the UK and abroad (depending on travel restrictions). In addition, reduced vehicle use following months of lock down and/or working from home in many cases, means essential pre-travel checks have never been more important.

Siobhan Wares, Traffic Officer for Highways England, who patrols the M25 and other major routes, said:

You are more likely to experience a breakdown or a collision if your tyres are incorrectly inflated or in a poor condition. It only takes a few minutes to check your tyre pressure before you go on your day trip or staycation this summer, and it could save you time and money in the long run. Help yourself and your family reach your destination safely by checking your vehicle before you go.

The advice from Highways England is simple; check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare, before you set off on a long journey. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit. To check your tyre pressure, visit most fuel and service station forecourts, which have an air machine for checking and inflating your tyre pressure.

If you are stopped by the police and found with illegal tyres, you could receive a £2,500 fine and 3 penalty points per tyre.

Driving with underinflated or overinflated tyres can make your braking distance longer and make it harder to steer. Correctly inflated tyres are also safer and better for the environment too – using less fuel, reducing your carbon footprint, creating less environmental pollution and reducing waste, as the tyres don't wear out as quickly.

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

The NTDA welcomes this excellent Summer Checks campaign and applauds the innovative and intelligent way that Highways England drives home such an important message to motorists.

Tyres are the only thing keeping a vehicle in contact with the road and many vehicles have been standing idle for long periods of time during the Covid-19 lockdowns and further restrictions. Now more than ever it is essential that motorists check their tyres on a regular basis and if in doubt about their roadworthiness, have them inspected by a professional tyre technician.

RAC Breakdown spokesperson Simon Williams said:

As we head into what looks like being one of the busiest summers ever on the roads, it's vital drivers check their vehicles before setting out as this could prevent a very unwelcome breakdown.

Tyres should have good amount of tread and be inflated to the correct pressures, and oil and coolant levels should be topped up if they are low. Our message to staycation drivers is: a few simple checks before travelling can greatly reduce your chances of being stuck at the side of a busy road when you least want to be.

Clare Egan, Head of Motor at Admiral, said:

It's easy to forget to check your car is ready for a long drive, especially if you haven't been using it much recently. It's important to take some time before you head off to check your fuel, oil, coolant, and screen wash levels, and most important of all, your tyres.

A tyre blowout could be at best inconvenient and at worst very dangerous. If a tyre blows while you are driving, it makes your car very hard to control and you could end up in an accident.

If you experience problems with your vehicle and you can't leave the motorway you should always try to go left – to an emergency area, a hard shoulder, motorway services or slip road hard shoulder.

But if that is not possible and you have stopped in a live lane or feel your life is in danger you must stay in your vehicle with your seatbelt and hazard lights on and call 999 immediately.

Before you set off, check your tyre pressure.

For more information related to checking your tyres, [please visit our tyre checks webpage.](#)

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.