

# Footage shows driver making rude gesture to police after being filmed without a seatbelt and using mobile phone

But what he doesn't realise is the vehicle alongside him is a National Highways unmarked 'supercab' – and there are two police officers inside. When he sees he's being filmed, he makes a rude gesture.

The driver was using a mobile phone and wasn't wearing a seatbelt as he drove along the A1(M).

[View video footage.](#)

The footage, taken on the A1(M) near Wetherby by North Yorkshire Police, captures one of over 26,000 offences recorded by officers in the Operation Tramline HGV cabs since the national safety initiative was launched by National Highways. The driver was issued with a fixed penalty notice for not wearing a seatbelt and using a mobile phone. He was handed six penalty points and a £200 fine.

The cabs are now being used as part of a multi-agency campaign on the A1, running from Monday, 21 March to Friday, 1 April, which aims to reduce the number of incidents on the busy route and highlight the risks of dangerous driving.

Under the banner of Operation Mainline, the campaign takes place along the A1 from Northumberland down to North Yorkshire. Three police forces will be taking part – Northumbria, Durham and North Yorkshire.

In addition to the supercab patrols, vehicle checks will also be carried out at a number of locations by the DVSA and Health and Safety Executive. National Highways Traffic Officers will visit motorway service areas at Washington, Wetherby and Skelton Lake to offer advice to drivers such as how to carry out basic vehicle maintenance.

National Highways deals with incidents on the A1 every day with 9,675 reported in 2021 including 614 traffic collisions.

Since the launch of Operation Tramline in 2015, more than 26,200 offences have been recorded across England. The most common offences have included:

- not wearing a seatbelt – 7,727
- using a mobile phone – 6,804
- not in proper control of vehicle – 1,927
- speeding – 1,378

In total, 23,971 vehicles were stopped during Operation Tramline between July 2015 and January 2022.

National Highways Regional Director Simon Boyle said:

Safety is our highest priority at National Highways. The Operation Tramline campaigns are an important part of our commitment to tackling dangerous driving and those who take unnecessary risks with their own safety and that of others on the road.

The number of people found not wearing their seatbelt, or using their mobile phone while driving is quite alarming. Through this fortnight of action on the A1 we want to make all of our roads safer by raising awareness and encouraging motorists to consider their driving behaviour.

It's great to be collaborating with our partners in the police on this important campaign.

Superintendent Emma Aldred, Head of Specialist Operations at North Yorkshire Police, said:

As police officers, we see too many people taking serious risks on our roads – and those risks can, and often do, cost lives.

We are pleased to join Northumbria Police and Durham Constabulary in working with National Highways to create a really robust team, in order to target those who break the law on our road network.

This operation has shown remarkable results previously and we know this time will be no different. Officers will be covering the stretch of the A1 24/7 and will not let up in their efforts to target those who have no regards for others on our roads.

Inspector Kevin Salter from Durham and Cleveland Specialist Operations Unit said:

It is important for us to work with neighbouring forces to keep our road networks safe for everyone to use especially as drivers regularly cross force borders. By carrying out these operations together, we are able to engage and educate drivers on a larger scale about the importance of driving safely, and not becoming another statistic. We would much rather engage with road users to prevent incidents that have to deal with the aftermath of a tragic incident.

Sgt Glen Robson, of Northumbria Police's Motor Patrols Department, said:

This operation is a fantastic example of the holistic approach Forces and partners are committed to taking to keep our roads safe for all.

If you are driving whilst on your mobile phone, or distracted by something else in the car, you are more likely to miss potential hazards and cause an accident – and these accidents can cost someone their loved one.

We urge drivers to think before they act, anyone found to breaking the rules of the road will see swift action and face the consequences of their choices.

From their elevated viewpoint in the unmarked HGV cabs, police officers are able to spot people driving dangerously – whatever vehicle they may be in.

Among the incidents witnessed during Operation Tramline have been a driver steering a lorry with his knees while eating lunch on his lap and also using his phone in the East Midlands. While in West Mercia, officers saw a driver eating lasagne with a knife and fork while driving along a motorway.

Surrey Police spotted a HGV driver boiling a kettle on the dashboard and another eating pickled gherkins from a jar with his elbows on the steering wheel.

One driver was caught twice in one day – in the morning and afternoon – using their mobile phone while driving along the A38 in Derbyshire.

Consequences for the drivers range from warnings to fixed penalty notices, court summons or even arrest.

Police forces across the country have been using the supercabs since 2015

DVSA's Head of Enforcement Delivery, Ian Bain said:

DVSA's priority is protecting everyone from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

Partnership operations play a vital role in clamping down on drivers and operators breaking the rules and endangering everyday road users in the North East.

DVSA examiners' knowledge and expertise play a central role in identifying and preventing dangerous vehicles from operating on our roads.

We hope this joint action will remind operators of their responsibility to maintain road safety.

Nina Day from HSE's Transport Sector, said:

Employers must ensure that drivers, other workers, and members of the public are kept safe when vehicles are used for work. There are legal requirements for employers to have robust procedures in place to manage vehicle safety, including ensuring suitable procedures are in place, providing workers with appropriate training and equipment, maintaining equipment and vehicles, and supporting drivers when they raise concerns.

HSE works closely with our partner agencies to help vehicle operators and load consignors understand their legal responsibilities and effectively manage risk.

### **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.