

HGV 'supercab' patrolling M25 to reduce road accidents

Using specially adapted, unmarked HGV cabs, officers will patrol the M25 and record drivers of all types of vehicles committing mobile phone or other safety offences that are the leading cause of many accidents.

The fortnight of action, called Operation Orbital, runs from Monday 16 March to Friday 27 March. A similar safety week on the M1 in 2019 led to the number of collisions falling by almost a third.

Colin Evans, Regional road safety officer, for Highways England in the South East, said:

The busiest sections of the M25 are used for nearly 200,000 journeys every day, ranging from commuters getting to work to haulage firms delivering goods along the route or overseas.

We know that the vast majority of drivers obey the law but a few are risking potentially devastating consequences by driving dangerously.

Over these two weeks of action, enforcement agencies will be carrying out a coordinated series of checks all around the M25 to help improve safety for everyone.

As well as driving offenses, officers will also check on vans and lorries for road worthiness, secure loads, weight and drivers' hours to reduce the risk of incidents along the route. In December 2018 alone, there were over 400 collisions along the 117 mile route, often leading to congestion and delays for drivers, and affecting companies travelling to ports, airports and making deliveries to towns and cities by the motorway.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing Chief Constable Anthony Bangham said:

I welcome initiatives to reduce the number of people killed or injured on our roads. We have seen similar successful collaborations between the police and Highways England in the past and I am pleased to see us working together again.

We want all of those using our roads to do so safely and we will prosecute drivers who put themselves and others at risk by breaking the law.

Operation Orbital is being co-ordinated by Highways England and involves

police forces from the Metropolitan Police, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey and Thames Valley Police.

The HGV supercab, which is funded by Highways England, plus three more HGV tractor units will be used on the M25 by police forces across the South East during the two week initiative. The HGV cabs allow police officers to film evidence of unsafe driving behaviour by driving alongside vehicles, and drivers are then pulled over by police cars following a short distance behind.

The cab has a derestricted speed limiter, which means it can travel at speeds up to the national speed limit.

As well as the police enforcement activity, Highways England's traffic officers will be providing free tyre checks and safety tips to drivers at motorway services around the M25. The activity starts today and runs until Friday 27 March.

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.