

Motorists urged to check tyres and journeys before setting off this bank holiday

Research commissioned by National Highways shows that only one in six drivers check their tyres before setting off on a long journey, meaning some could be taking to the road with a potentially serious vehicle defect. To underline the risks, separate figures show that a fifth of motorway breakdowns are caused by worn or incorrectly inflated tyres.

National Highways is now urging motorists to carry out some basic vehicle checks before setting off on journeys ahead of the Easter bank holiday with more than 1,000 miles of roadworks being lifted to help drivers. It will mean that around 98 per cent of England's major A-roads and motorway network will be free from roadworks.

Dave Harford, Traffic Officer for National Highways, who patrols the M5, M42, M50 and other major routes said:

This is the first bank holiday of the year, so we expect the roads to be busy with people looking to make the most of a long weekend.

The last thing anybody wants on the way to their destination is to have a vehicle breakdown. That's why it's really important people spend a few minutes checking the condition of their tyres before setting off.

The advice from National Highways is simple: check your tyre pressure, tread depth and tyre age including the spare, before you set off on a long journey.

Look out for cuts or wear over the full width of the tyre and don't forget to check the side of the tyre wall.

Dave added:

Although the legal limit for tyre tread depth is 1.6mm, we recommend you don't let the tread get that low. Changing the tyre at 2mm in summer and 3mm in winter is good practice and maintains overall good tyre performance in all conditions. 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.

National Highways says simple checks are a way to make sure the vehicle is roadworthy. Things to consider are: Tyres: 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.

Engine oil: Check oil levels regularly and top up if needed. Take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual.

Water: Always keep your screen wash topped up with a good ratio of water and screen wash to maximise the cleaning efficiency so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen easily.

Lights: If your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself and your family at risk. In addition, your vehicle may fail its MoT.

Fuel: Before setting out make sure you have enough fuel to get to your destination. Running out of fuel can put you, your family and other road users at risk unnecessarily.

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.

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.

Drivers should also take a few minutes to plan their journeys in advance. Live updates on traffic flow can be found on the [Traffic England website](#).

Get more information related to [checking your tyres](#)

For people travelling to the Kent ports, drivers are also being reminded that Operation Brock is active on the M20.

Operation Brock is a traffic management arrangement for traffic wishing to use Eurotunnel and the Port of Dover.

Drivers crossing the channel should:

- Plan ahead and check before they travel
- Leave plenty of extra time
- Bring some supplies in case of delays (water, food etc)
- Follow the signs when they get onto the M20

Drivers heading for the Kent ports can [check on the status of Operation Brock here](#)

Roadworks will be removed by 6am on Thursday 14 April and not put back in place until 12.01am Tuesday 19 April.

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.