

Motorists urged to check tyres before setting off this bank holiday

Motorists are being encouraged to check their vehicles before setting off this August Bank Holiday.

Only one in six drivers remembered to check their tyres before setting off on a long journey, according to research commissioned by National Highways (formerly 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. And with National Highways lifting almost 990 miles of roadworks this bank holiday, meaning around 98 per cent of England's major A-roads and motorway network will be free from roadworks, the message is to plan ahead and carry out some basic vehicle checks before setting off.

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

This is the last bank holiday of the summer, so we expect the roads to be busy with people looking to make the most of a long weekend. But the last thing anybody wants on the way to their destination is to have a vehicle breakdown. 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 sidewall.

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 3 mm 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.

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.

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

Visit our website for more information on [checking your tyres](#).

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.