

Press release: Fuel for thought as Highways England launches motorcycle response vehicles on M5

It is the first time fuel bikes have been used by Highways England while a major repair scheme is underway in England.

Since the 1 August this year, there have already been 17 fuel related incidents recorded.

Highways England is working closely with recovery service firm Egertons Recovery to manage the service.

Fuel bike and traffic officer

Highways England project manager, Alastair Warnes, said:

Since the contraflow came into effect, we've already seen a number of fuel-related breakdowns in the roadworks section. In fact, on the very first day of the contraflow coming into effect, the first breakdown was caused by someone that had run out of fuel.

This type of situation can cause delays for fellow motorists. Safety is our top imperative and we're calling on motorists to do their bit and ensure they have plenty of fuel for the journey before setting off.

We're always there to help motorists who need it in an emergency and by offering this type of assistance we're able to minimise disruption to others driving through the roadworks.

The major repair scheme, valued at more than £100 million, includes concrete repairs and waterproofing on the ageing M5 Oldbury Viaduct in the West Midlands.

To keep the motorway open, a contraflow system is in place with traffic currently using the northbound carriageway and two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit. This means that motorcycles can reach motorists quicker with fuel to reduce delays and traffic flowing.

Motorists are also being reminded to consider using alternative routes while the vital work takes place. At the link between the M6 and the M5 southbound, one lane leads onto the M5, with three lanes continuing onto the M6, to encourage drivers to take the alternative route around Birmingham.

On the M5 northbound at junction 4a one lane continues onto the M5 through the junction while still providing two lanes to the M42.

The dynamic hard shoulder sections on either side of the M42 and on the M6 are currently being opened much earlier than usual and left on later to see if this helps traffic. The dynamic hard shoulder is used by traffic when the motorway is at its busiest.

Slip roads at junctions 1 and 2 on the M5 are being kept open, to ease effects on the local network, but drivers are advised to expect delays.

The work continues until autumn 2018, with some minor work continuing into spring 2019.

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.