

Press release: Gearing up for the August getaway

To help those miles flow as smoothly as possible, teams from Highways England are working around the clock to remove more than 300 miles of roadworks – meaning more than 97 per cent of motorways and major A roads will be roadworks-free for the last weekend of the month.

Highways England's customer service director, Melanie Clarke, said:

We're doing everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible for this August getaway and that's why we're keeping more than 97 per cent of the road network we manage, free from roadworks.

We'd remind people about the importance of checking their vehicle before setting off and simple things like checking fuel and oil levels, tyre pressure and that all the lights work properly, can keep you moving and the network flowing.

Where it is safe to do so, roadworks will be lifted or suspended on England's motorways and major A-roads from 6am Friday 24 August until 12.01am on Tuesday 28 August.

Highways England traffic officers will be working around the clock, patrolling the network to help those people who do get into difficulty.

Highways England traffic officers will be working hard to keep traffic flowing

And to help ensure road users get to their destinations safely, Highways England is once again calling on motorists to check their vehicles before setting off.

Research shows almost half of all breakdowns are caused by simple mechanical problems which could be avoided with simple checks and nearly a quarter are caused by tyre problems.

Before they set off, Highways England is urging motorists to:

- check fuel: make sure you have enough to get to your destination
- check tyres: check your tyre pressure and the condition of your tyres, including the spare. Look out for cuts or wear and make sure the tyres have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm, which is the legal limit
- check engine oil: use your dipstick to check oil before any long journey, and top up if needed – take your car back to the garage if you're topping up more than usual
- check water: to ensure you have good visibility, always keep your screen

wash topped up so you can clear debris or dirt off your windscreen

- check your lights: if your indicators, hazard lights, headlights, fog lights, reverse lights or brake lights are not functioning properly, you are putting yourself at risk. In addition, light malfunctions can be a reason for your vehicle to fail its MOT

It is also advising anyone towing a caravan, boat, horse box or trailer to take some simple steps to ensure a trouble-free journey, including:

- carry out a final maintenance check before setting off, and leave plenty of time for your journey
- be aware that driving while towing will inevitably affect the vehicle's performance, especially braking distances
- check that the vehicle and load are secure and the weight is correctly distributed in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications
- make sure you are adequately covered for recovery and breakdown
- know the correct speed limit for your vehicle and the roads you travel on, and don't drive faster than the speed limit for the type of road
- towing mirrors not only allow you to view to the rear, in most cases they are a legal requirement when towing a wider trailer
- driving licences place restrictions on the trailers that you can tow, you may need to take a further test to progress to towing larger trailers
- if your caravan or trailer starts to snake or swerve, it's a sign you're going too fast or the trailer is loaded incorrectly. Ease off the accelerator and reduce your speed gently
- don't brake harshly on a bend, as it makes the trailer unstable. Reduce your speed in plenty of time for any hazard
- you shouldn't drive in the right hand lane of a motorway with three or more lanes

Highways England also has a series of specialist videos online to help people carry out basic vehicle checks before they set off on their travels. The videos can be viewed on the [Think! website](#).

Highways England is also urging drivers to stay safe this August by adhering to motorway signage.

If you are driving through roadworks on a smart motorway, look out for one of the most important signals – the Red X. When displayed it will identify when a lane is closed and indicates that drivers should move into an open lane to continue their journeys. Driving in a closed lane is unsafe, as there could be debris in the road or an accident or breakdown up ahead. Keeping the lane clear gives the emergency services the access they need to help. Visit the website for further advice on how to [drive on a smart motorway](#).

Drivers planning to use the Dartford Crossing are reminded to pay Dart Charge in advance or by midnight the day after crossing.

Real-time traffic information for England's motorways and major A roads is available via the [Traffic England website](#), local and national radio travel bulletins, electronic road signs and mobile apps. Local Twitter services are

also [available](#). More information can be found by calling the Highways England Customer Contact Centre (0300 123 5000).

For more detailed information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, visit the [Think! website](#).

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.