

Press release: Highways England lightening the load for hauliers and motorists this Christmas

Since it was created in 2015, Highways England has completed 18 road improvements across the country, which is a welcome bonus for haulage firms preparing to deliver millions of parcels over the next few weeks.

And Highways England is also going the extra mile this Christmas to help motorists and hauliers reach their destinations hassle-free as it prepares to lift and complete almost 400 miles of roadworks across the country. Almost 99 per cent of motorways and strategic A roads will be roadworks-free in time for Christmas, meaning people travelling to meet up with families and friends can more easily reach their destinations.

And that is a welcome bonus for UK next day parcel delivery firm, DPD, as it prepares to deliver 16 million parcels over the next three weeks.

Its 9,000-strong army of drivers will notch up more than 15 million miles of driving.

Justin Pegg, UK Operations Director for DPD, said:

Time is always of the essence in our business, so the work Highways England does throughout the year and especially in December is hugely appreciated. We're out there every single day in December – quite literally delivering Christmas – and if the roads are clear, it makes a huge difference to the service our drivers can provide.

DPD will be moving a record number of parcels the length and breadth of the country this December and the vast majority will need to be delivered the next day. We started planning for Christmas in January and every aspect of that plan is painstakingly put together, but there are still elements that remain outside of our control, such as traffic and the weather.

(LtoR): Finn Owens from DPD with Highways England customer service director Melanie Clarke and Highways England traffic officer Vicki Lawton who will be working on Christmas Day to keep traffic moving on the Midlands motorway network.

To help make journeys better in December, Highways England repair teams will be working around the clock to complete hundreds of miles of road improvements in time for the Christmas getaway.

The roadworks embargo runs from 6am on 22 December until 12.01am on 2 January to help people get away this Christmas with as little disruption as possible.

By suspending or completing roadworks, more lanes will be open and many speed restrictions will be lifted. Highways England's customer service director, Melanie Clarke, said:

We're doing everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible this Christmas and that's why we're keeping 99 per cent of the road network we manage free from roadworks.

Over the past two years we've already added 190 lane miles of much needed capacity and that will make life easier for those travelling around this month, as the Christmas countdown begins.

The majority of the 18 large-scale improvements already completed by Highways England have added much-needed capacity to some of England's busiest roads.

And this Christmas, more than 5,000 Highways England staff including traffic officers and control room operatives will be working around the clock, helping to clear incidents and manage congestion.

During 2016/17 Highways England traffic officers attended more than 49,000 incidents, clearing just over 85 per cent of them within an hour.

Those wishing to find out more about driving on smart motorways, you can [view our webpage](#).

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

More information can be found on our website or by calling our information line (0300 123 5000) people can keep up to date with conditions on the roads.

For more detailed information on how to carry out your vehicle checks, search Think!

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.