

Press release: Highways England scoops three awards in safety 'drive' to customers

The government agency responsible for managing England's motorway and major A-road network won three awards at the TyreSafe Awards 2018. It scooped the prestigious 'Safety in the Community' category and Online and Social campaign for its 'Vehicle Checks' campaign.

It was also presented with an Emergency Services Award which was a joint initiative to pilot tyre safety checks at the charity car wash events with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS), Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service (LFRS), The Fire Fighters Charity (FFC).

This is the first time the Fire Fighters Charity have introduced a theme to its charity car washes. The drivers and occupants of the vehicles going through the car washes received information and education about the importance of the tyres on their vehicle, how and when to carry out checks, and the consequences of unsafe tyres.

The national Highways England 'Vehicle Checks' campaign ran across television, radio and online platforms last summer and called on motorists to consider basic checks such as topping up oil, checking tyre pressures and ensuring there was plenty of fuel in the tank.

The campaign underlined the importance of checking the vehicle before setting off and drew comparisons with the high-level of safety placed on those travelling by plane.

By taking a humorous approach to the advert – which featured a pilot announcing he'd done no pre-flight safety checks whatsoever to the aeroplane – the 'passengers' quickly set about disembarking underlining the seriousness of safety checks before travelling.

Head of Road Safety at Highways England, Richard Leonard said:

These awards are testament to the evidence-based approach that marketing have taken since 2015 when our Health and Safety five-year plan was launched.

We work closely with TyreSafe to promote tyre safety. Our vehicle checks campaign focused on the six most important checks – two of which are tyre checks – that drivers can make to ensure they have safe journeys.

Head of Marketing at Highways England, Alison Holliday said:

We delivered four phases of this campaign during 2017/18 following a strategic review of the causes of breakdowns and collisions leading to people being killed and seriously injured on our network.

Persuading drivers to carry out vehicle checks before a long journey offered a high potential for change and the great creative approach taken in comparing the critical nature of aircraft checks to vehicle checks really caught people's imaginations. Most importantly, the summer 2017 campaign led to a recorded drop in vehicles breaking down on our network. This is evidence that our vehicle checks campaign has contributed towards behaviour change.

Highways England has a target to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on its network by 40% before 2020 – so raising awareness of tyre safety can make a significant contribution to achieving this. Each breakdown is a major inconvenience for driver and passengers. Even if no-one is hurt, the knock-on effect has the potential to cause congestion for thousands of other road users.

TyreSafe chairman, Stuart Jackson, said:

The diverse range of activities to engage communities in the tyre safety message and the breadth of organisations delivering them always makes this a hotly-contested category. However, this year's winner stood out with the scale of its ambition and proven results.

Highlights included the significant reduction in breakdowns on the Strategic Road Network month-on-month during the campaign.

Some 48 per cent of the target audience saying they were more likely to perform vehicle checks having been exposed to the campaign. And 15 per cent of respondents have carried out vehicle checks prior to a recent journey having been exposed to the campaign.

Congratulations Highways England for the Vehicle Checks campaign, which claims this year's Safety in the Community Award.

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.