

[Press release: Motorway litter droppers warned not to put lives at risk](#)

Highways England is launching a new initiative in the North West after over 40,000 sacks of litter had to be collected from motorways in the region last year – an average of 108 sacks for every mile of motorway.

New signs are being trialled with the message 'Workers lives are put at risk picking your litter' and extra litter picking patrols are being carried out to help tackle the issue.

Newly-released CCTV footage shows a lorry driver discarding an oil container at the side of the M62 near Rochdale after pulling over to the hard shoulder to add oil to his vehicle's engine.

Drivers are being urged to keep their rubbish with them rather than leaving it at the roadside, risking the lives of the workers who have to collect it.

The footage is available to [watch here](#):

Paul Cooper, 46 from Bolton, has been collecting litter from motorways for 19 years as part of his job as a maintenance team supervisor for Balfour Beatty Mott MacDonald. Paul's other duties include filling potholes, repairing safety barriers and clearing drains. He said:

I think most drivers who sling litter out their windows don't really think about what they're doing, and that someone like me has to come along and clear up after them.

It tends to be worst on slip roads or where there's standing traffic, as that's when drivers seem to decide to have a clear out of their cars.

There's always an element of risk when you're working on the network as you're near traffic so my message to drivers is please stop dropping litter and take it home with you instead.

It costs taxpayers an estimated £40 for each sack of litter collected from motorways – roughly the same cost as fixing a pothole.

Litter poses a risk to other drivers if it lands on windscreens, causes a threat to wildlife and leads to flooding if drains become blocked so litter picking is regularly carried out across the network.

Paul Elliott, Service Delivery Team Leader at Highways England, said:

Our teams of workers do a fantastic job removing litter from motorways every year but we'd much rather they were able to spend more of their time carrying out maintenance work.

Litter has to be collected close to fast-moving traffic – putting our workers at risk – and lane closures are often needed, causing needless disruption to drivers.

We'll have extra patrols out on the network over next few weeks to target areas where litter regularly builds up, and we're encouraging drivers to help do their bit by saving their litter for the bin.

Earlier this year, the government launched a consultation on proposals to almost double fines for dropping litter to £150. Under the proposed new measures, vehicle owners could also receive penalty notices when it can be proved litter was thrown from their car – even if it was discarded by somebody else.

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.