

# [Press release: Santa backs Highways England's call to motorists to check their vehicles this Christmas](#)

Santa Claus checks his sleigh to make sure it doesn't break down as he prepares to deliver presents to children the world over.

And the company responsible for motorways and main A-roads is urging people driving this Christmas to make sure their vehicles are also ready for seasonal travel.

Santa can be seen carrying out the vital checks on his sleigh in a special fun animation below – and he's got a little help from his festive friends including Rudolph!

[See our animation](#)

These checks include:

- checking that Santa has plenty of grip on his sledge – motorists should check their tyre tread to make sure it is within the legal limit
- making sure Rudolph's nose is shining bright – always make sure lights on the vehicle are working correctly before setting off
- making sure he feeds his reindeer before travelling – make sure that you always keep your tank at least one quarter full to avoid running out of fuel on your journey

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

This is a timely reminder from Santa and his festive friends that you should always check your vehicle before setting off.

But there is a serious point to this, too. Safety is our top imperative and we know from experience that almost half of breakdowns are avoidable and these can easily be averted with simple checks.

Christmas is always a busy period on the road network and we'd urge all motorists to make sure they do their bit to check their vehicle is roadworthy before setting off over the festive period.

She also highlighted that 99 per cent of motorways and strategic A roads will be roadworks-free in time for Christmas, meaning hauliers and motorists alike can enjoy last-minute shopping and delivery journeys with as little disruption as possible.

Latest statistics from Highways England show almost half of all breakdowns

are caused by simple mechanical problems which could be avoided with basic checks. Nearly a quarter are caused by tyre problems; meanwhile, 450 people were injured in incidents involving vehicles that weren't roadworthy over the course of a year.

And around 20 motorists break down every day because they have run out of fuel. There were 7,419 cases nationwide of vehicle breakdowns on the strategic road network due to lack of fuel.

The RAC is also backing the campaign and says that motorists should check their vehicle this Christmas, even if their journey is likely to be a short one.

RAC spokesman, Rod Dennis, said:

Just like Santa, millions of drivers can't afford a breakdown getting in the way of them reaching their destinations this Christmas.

So we're backing Highways England's call for drivers to give their vehicles a bit of 'TLC' before they set out on any long journey. Simply checking things like the condition of tyres could be the key to not wasting valuable time in the cold and wet this December, broken down at the side of the road.

Then, should the unexpected happen, motorists can be reassured by the fact that our patrols will be working tirelessly throughout the festive period to get them back on the move again as quickly as possible.

To help keep people moving this Christmas, Highways England has also produced a [handy pdf](#) showing people how to conduct basic vehicle checks before setting off this Christmas.

Those travelling over Christmas are also being reminded to make sure that they are prepared for an emergency by:

- charging a mobile phone and taking it with them in case they run into difficulty and need to use it in emergency circumstances
- taking warm clothing in the car with them in case of breakdowns
- taking food and drink in the car in case of any extreme weather

Motorists can head online to the [Think website](#) where they can watch bespoke videos showing how to carry out basic vehicle checks. Alternatively, follow Highways England on social media channels for more information.

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

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) they can keep up to date with conditions on the roads.

### **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.