

Unmarked HGV 'supercabs' will patrol M25 in bid to reduce road collisions

The new crackdown, which began today (Monday 15 November 2021), is called Operation Orbital. Police forces will use National Highway's unmarked HGV supercabs to patrol the M25 and record drivers of all types of vehicles committing mobile phone, seatbelt, and other safety offences.

The operation will also see enforcement agencies carry out checks on vans and lorries for road worthiness, secure loads, weight, and drivers' hours to reduce the risk of incidents along the route.

Colin Evans, regional road safety coordinator for National Highways in the South East, said:

Over 7,500 vehicles travel round the M25 every hour, ranging from commuters getting to work to haulage firms delivering goods along the route or overseas.

The vast majority of drivers obey the law but a few are risking potentially devastating consequences by not carrying out appropriate checks before setting off or by driving dangerously.

The two weeks of action will see enforcement agencies carrying out checks along the M25 to help improve safety for everyone.

The HGV supercabs, which are funded by National Highways, allow police officers to film evidence of unsafe driving behaviour by pulling up alongside vehicles, and drivers are then pulled over by police cars following a short distance behind.

The cabs have derestricted speed limiters, which means they can travel at speeds up to the national speed limit, and have flashing lights for use in an emergency.

Travelling along the M4 earlier this year an HGV driver can be seen holding two mobile phones, one to each ear, in this [startling video footage](#).

But what he didn't realise was the vehicle travelling alongside was an unmarked National Highways 'Supercab' – and there were two police officers inside.

The footage, taken along the M4, captures one of over 21,000 offences recorded by officers in the Operation Tramline HGV cabs since the national safety initiative was launched by National Highways, formerly Highways England.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Roads Policing, Chief Constable Jo

Shiner said:

Operation Orbital is a successful collaboration between the police and National Highways. We remain committed to tackling those who take unnecessary risks with their own safety and the safety of others on our roads by allowing themselves to be distracted while driving.

The consequences of these actions are often devastating. We will continue to work alongside National Highways on Operation Orbital and will take action against drivers who ignore the risks.

Operation Orbital is being co-ordinated by National Highways and involves DVSA plus police forces from the Metropolitan Police, City of London Police, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent, Surrey and Thames Valley Police. At Thurrock Moto Services on Monday, 15th November, the Police will also be joining forces with the DVSA, and National Highways to launch the fortnight (14 days) long Operation Orbital round the M25.

DVSA's Director of Enforcement, Marian Kitson, said:

DVSA's priority is to protect people from unsafe drivers and vehicles. This action, alongside our partners, is to stop people cutting corners on road safety. Every driver or operator has a responsibility to check their vehicle is in a roadworthy condition before beginning a journey.

DVSA is here to support those operators and drivers who do comply and are safe on our roads. We want to ensure they are not disadvantaged by dangerous and reckless road use.

We endeavour to support drivers and operators to remain safe, which is why we have produced guidance accessible on GOV.UK to empower commercial road users to make the M25 safe for everybody.

HGV Op Tramline – 2020/21

Area	Essex	Hampshire & Thames Valley	Kent	Surrey & Sussex	Metropolitan Police
Total vehicles stopped	177	206	48	481	256
Using mobile phone	49	95	23	170	169
Not in proper control	23	66	11	204	59
Not wearing seatbelt	105	45	14	107	28

National HGV Op Tramline figures – 2015/20

Drivers stopped	Offences	Interventions	Traffic offence report	Mobile phone	Speeding	Seat belts	Not in proper control
22,679	24,747	25,109	16,767	6,595	1,346	7,343	1,777

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.