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Don't get caught out by flat battery blues on New Year return to work

The RAC is warning motorists to make sure they don't become a Christmas return-to-work breakdown statistic on Monday 4 January by trying to set off only to be greeted by a flat battery.

The first Monday after the festive break is traditionally the biggest breakdown day of the year for the RAC as thousands of cars have been left idle over the holiday period, with tired batteries slowly draining to nothing. Every January for the last four years the RAC has been called out to over 10,000 breakdowns on the first Monday after the New Year celebrations, and

2016 is expected to be no different.

On Monday 5 January 2015 RAC patrols dealt with 10,388 breakdowns which proved to be the busiest day of the year, with flat batteries responsible for more than a quarter of these call-outs.

RAC patrol of the year Ben Wilson said: “Despite the unseasonably mild weather our patrols are still gearing up for what is normally the busiest breakdown day of the year as millions begrudgingly head back to work on Monday 4 January having enjoyed an extended festive break only to find their car is not up to the task.

“But it really doesn’t have to be that way, all people need to do is make sure they take their cars for a good run this weekend. That way they will revive the battery or have time to sort the problem out. Experience tells us that it is often families with two or more vehicles that tend to suffer most from the ‘Manic Monday’ flat battery problem.

“On the first working day of 2015 the vast majority of breakdowns we attended were for vehicles that wouldn’t start, with one in four being battery-related. The combination of a long break where vehicles aren’t used much and damp weather is a recipe for the battery blues. A vehicle’s electrical system has to work a lot harder at this time of year as drivers are more likely to use their lights and heated windows. The starter motor also has to work harder to start the engine on these cooler mornings, making a battery failure more likely.”

The RAC believes much of the stress of this coming Monday can be avoided if motorists take a little time to prepare for a smooth return to work by giving their battery some tender loving care during the rest of the festive season.

RAC’s top tips for battery care:

- Park your vehicle in a garage whenever possible
- Ensure everything is switched off when you end your journey including lights, heater, fan, heated rear windscreen, radio etc. Some sat-navs, in-car DVD players and iPods can also drain the battery if left connected – every volt is precious first thing in the

morning

- Check the battery connections, ensuring that they are tight and free from any corrosion and don't forget that battery acid is highly corrosive to skin and paint work
- It's worth getting your battery tested, particularly if it is over four years old
- Take your vehicle for a decent drive to get your battery well charged, and get the engine to its proper operating temperatures, before you really need it – ideally the day before. Don't just turn it over

Ben Wilson added: "It's also a good idea to top up with fuel a day or two before you have to go back to work so you avoid the queues at filling stations. If it's a few miles away this will also give your battery a little bit of a boost too.

"And even if you have a full tank the best advice is to go for a reasonable drive a day or so before you need to go back to work after the holiday, especially if you don't have a battery charger yourself. However, don't just start the vehicle and then switch it off because that may do more harm than good."

Notes to Editors

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's roadside assistance, insurance, buying a used car, vehicle inspections and checks, legal services or up-to-the-minute traffic and travel information – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC is the motorist's champion and campaigns to support the interests of

its members and UK motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 34 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 98% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



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