



Dec 26, 2020 00:00 GMT

Drivers urged to act now to avoid starting 2021 on a flat note

The RAC is reminding drivers to take steps over Christmas to reduce the chances of starting 2021 with a flat battery breakdown, something it is warning is more likely than ever as a result of changing car use caused by the pandemic.

The first working day of January is normally one of the breakdown organisation's busiest as drivers across the country go to use their cars only to discover they are unable to start them. This year, the risk is even greater as millions of cars stay parked on roads and driveways over Christmas and far

fewer trips are made to see friends and family. The expected below-average temperatures that much of the country will experience into the New Year will also make breakdowns much more likely.

The RAC's expert local patrols recommend drivers make sure all cars in their household get a decent run between Christmas and New Year to cut the chances of future battery-related breakdowns happening drastically.

On 2 January 2020, the first working day of the year, the RAC attended 25% more breakdowns than on an average January day – with most of these as a result of flat batteries. Previous RAC research meanwhile shows that of those who have experienced a post-Christmas flat battery, the majority (58%) say it was because the car had not been used for several days.

RAC patrol of the year Ben Aldous, who is based in Stockport, said:

“Despite much of the country now under the strictest Covid restrictions and home working still being the norm for a lot of people, we still anticipate a lot of drivers needing assistance come early January – with flat batteries likely to top the reasons for calling us out.

“Drivers who make sure they use their cars, whether that's to fill up with fuel, visit the shops or drive to an open space for a Christmas walk, are much less likely to be the unlucky ones. Going for a proper drive actually charges the battery compared to just starting a car up for a minute or two and then stopping it again which can often do more harm than good. If a battery is already weak this might lead to it being drained even further, so it's definitely worth avoiding.

“On the first working day of 2020, we attended more than a quarter more breakdowns than on average for a January day. And there's a good chance that 2021 could be significantly busier for us if people don't use their vehicles over the next week – but so many of these breakdowns are avoidable if people do some driving between now and New Year.

“Even those with electric cars are advised to make use of their vehicles, with the vast majority still dependent on a 12-volt battery to get the main high-voltage battery packs that power the motor going.

“For any of our members who run into difficulty, our teams will be working hard throughout Christmas and New Year to keep them moving. And we’ll also be there for those who can’t get going in early January.”

Here are the RAC’s top tips to give drivers peace of mind that they won’t be starting 2021 on a flat note:

- Park your vehicle in a garage whenever possible
- Ensure everything is switched off when you finish your trip including lights, heater, fan, heated rear windscreen, radio etc. Sat-navs and other devices such as dash-cams can also drain the battery if left connected – every volt is precious first thing in the morning
- Take your vehicle for a decent drive to get your battery well charged, and get the engine to its proper operating temperature, before you really need it – ideally several days before. Don’t just check that it starts as this is likely to drain the battery more
- If you have more than one car, consider driving the one with the older, weaker battery more often
- 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

More information and advice about looking after car batteries during the Covid-19 pandemic can be found on the [RAC website](#).

If your battery does need replacing, visit the [RAC online shop](#) to find out which battery you need.

Notes to Editors

The press office email address is press.enquiries@rac.co.uk. **Please note:** the press office is unable to help with individual customer enquiries - please visit the [RAC contacts page](#) to find the right contact.

ISDN radio studio facilities are available for interviews Monday to Friday.

About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the UK, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **[Insurance](#)**. The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers '[black box](#)' [telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **[Other motoring services](#)**. The RAC leads in the development of new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the RAC Opinion Panel. The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request