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Nearly half of drivers of drivers are planning a leisure trip this weekend – but most are staying local

Following the first slight easing of lockdown restrictions in England, an estimated 15m leisure trips will be taken by car this weekend, with nearly half of these consisting of journeys of no more than 10 miles, according to new RAC research.*

Despite the guidance changing in England to allow people to now drive any distance for outdoor recreation or exercise, the figures suggest the majority

of leisure trips by car will be local – 23% of drivers responding said they were only planning to drive up to 10 miles to get to their destinations.

A smaller but not insignificant proportion of drivers are planning on venturing slightly further afield. One-in-10 (11%) said they were planning on driving between 11 and 30 miles specifically to get to a beach – while 6% expect to travel a similar distance to get to a national park or other beauty spot. Only 5% of drivers say they expect to drive any further than 30 miles for the purposes of recreation.

Despite the lockdown having been eased in England, guidance to drivers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is currently unchanged with everyone asked to continue to ‘stay at home’ and make essential trips only. This also means that drivers from England should not be tempted to visit either Wales or Scotland for leisure journeys – if they do, they face an unwelcome encounter with a police officer and potentially a fine.

RAC spokesperson Rod Dennis said:

“In normal times, the weather warming up in time for the weekend would spell traffic jams on routes leading to tourist hotspots. These figures suggest that’s less likely this weekend, with the vast majority of drivers we surveyed not jumping at the chance to drive very much further afield – most are choosing to stay very local indeed or even not getting in the car in the first place, which bodes well for control of the coronavirus.

“Those who are planning on venturing longer distances should be aware that few amenities – including public toilets – are open, and visits to motorway service areas should be kept as brief as possible. Tourist boards have also urged people to stay away from locations that are traditionally popular when the sun comes out. And as guidance on movement hasn’t changed in either Scotland or Wales, English drivers should regard the borders to these countries as effectively closed for leisure trips or potentially face a fine.

“Our roadside patrols have this week seen a 15% increase in breakdowns compared to last week, bringing them close to normal levels. This represents a 40% rise compared to the quietest week earlier in the lockdown.

“With more drivers potentially being on the roads this weekend the risk of

vehicles breaking down is very real. We'd urge anyone heading out to make sure their vehicle is up to the job and fully roadworthy. To ensure vehicles are in good condition we recommend checking the oil, coolant and tyres before getting behind the wheel.

"For drivers who do suffer vehicle issues, we're ready to assist with our trusted 'peace of mind' breakdown cover."

The RAC is, however, concerned there may be more 'unroadworthy' vehicles on the road as a result of the six-month MOT extension introduced by the Government.

Data obtained by the RAC from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) shows that the number of MOT tests completed on cars and small vans fell by an enormous 601,528 (78%) between the weeks of 16 March and 13 April 2020, to just 138,035 tests – a fraction of the normal weekly number. This was a direct result of the lockdown taking effect, with many garages closed and drivers keeping their vehicles at home. As a result of the virus outbreak, the DVSA introduced a six-month extension for MOTs due after 30 March 2020 although drivers can still take their vehicles in for an MOT during this period.

Notes to Editors

* Research conducted among UK drivers between 11 and 13 May 2020 on behalf of the RAC. Sample: 1,317 UK drivers

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 world, 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](#).

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