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Apr 28, 2023 00:01 BST

## **RAC ‘springs’ to the aid of more than 10,000 drivers who suffered pothole-related breakdowns in first three months of 2023**

**RAC patrols went to the rescue of 10,076 drivers who had fallen foul of potholes in the first three months of the year, a 39% increase on the same period a year ago, new breakdown data shows.**

Damaged shock absorbers, broken suspension springs and distorted wheels –

issues most likely caused by poor road surfaces – accounted for more call-outs than in any other three-month period since January to March 2021. In addition, the number of pothole-related breakdowns more than doubled from the 4,915 seen in the fourth quarter of 2022.

The RAC also saw a 14% spike in wheel changes compared to the same period last year. While some of these jobs were no doubt due to punctures from objects such as nails and screws, the increase points towards further deterioration of the UK's road surfaces caused by December's extreme freezing conditions.

The driving services company's long-term [Pothole Index](#), which tracks pothole call-outs from 2006 seasonally adjusted for weather, reveals drivers are now 1.6 times more likely to break down due to the repeated wear caused by potholes than they were 17 years ago.

**RAC roads spokesman Simon Williams said:**

“The high number of call-outs our patrols have attended in the first three months of the year – and the enormous increase compared to a year ago – is nothing short of scandalous. Drivers are telling us that the UK's local roads are in a worse state than ever and it's hard to disagree looking at some of the craters that litter so many of our carriageways.

“It's not right that drivers who are struggling to make ends meet are having to fork out for new tyres, wheels, suspension springs and shock absorbers simply because our roads have been allowed to fall into such a dire state of repair.

“Councils are not obligated to pay compensation to drivers who have suffered damaged to their vehicles after hitting a pothole. They will only consider doing so if the pothole has been picked up in their routine inspections or has been reported by a member of the public. This is why we urge everyone who spots a nasty hole in the road to report it via the [RAC website](#) or to the local authority directly.

“With the Asphalt Industry Alliance reporting that it would take nearly £14bn to restore the UK's roads to a fit-for-purpose condition, it's impossible to see a way back from where we are without the Government finally recognising

there's a problem and coming up with a new way to solve it. The extra pothole funding promised to councils just isn't enough.

“We implore the Government to think differently to end the pothole plague once and for all. One way could be to ringfence a proportion of fuel duty revenue for the maintenance, repair and improvement of our local roads, because as it stands the £28bn collected from drivers is currently just another form of general taxation.

“A change in funding strategy is massively overdue, not least as the lion's share of car tax paid to the DVLA by England's drivers goes to England's major roads whereas we estimate the budget for local roads is only around a seventh of that – despite the fact there are seven times more miles of minor roads.

“Drivers contribute billions in tax every year and it is ridiculous that the roads remain in such an awful state.”

### **Pothole-related breakdowns – in numbers**

	<b>Q1 2021</b>	<b>Q1 2022</b>	<b>Q4 2022</b>	<b>Q1 2023</b>	<b>Q1 2022 to Q1 2023 change</b>
Total pothole-related breakdowns (excl punctures)	14,827	7,265	4,915	10,076	+2,811 (+39%)

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### **About the RAC**

The RAC, an iconic UK brand, provides complete peace of mind to 13 million UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. As well as its premium nationwide breakdown assistance service – with an expert branded patrol workforce attending more than two million breakdowns every year – it

offers a wide range of market-leading products across insurance, legal services, vehicle inspections and service, maintenance and repair. The RAC is also at the forefront in helping drivers make the switch to electric vehicles and leads in the development of new solutions for businesses and OEMs, partnering with the best in the motoring and mobility space.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

## Contacts



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