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## RAC warns bank holiday drivers against summer motoring meltdown

Figures released by the RAC has shown the hot summer season has taken its toll on UK motorists with nearly half a millions engine failures, more than 100,000 frazzled air con units and a 20% increase on convertible roof faults since the beginning of May.

The figures also show more than 15% increase in the number of 'puncture no spares' breakdowns on the nation's roads in the same timeframe.

And, as 11m<sup>[1]</sup> cars are expected on the roads for the last long – and

potentially hot – weekend of the summer, the RAC is anticipating this trend will continue and it is increasing the number of its patrols around popular destinations by 25% and across the country as whole by 15%.

However, some of the most common causes of breakdown can be avoided with a few simple precautions.

RAC head of technical Phil Ryan said: "This really has been a summer of weather related car problems and with another weekend where more than 11m extra cars will be on the roads this looks likely to continue."

"To make sure the last bank holiday isn't blighted by an unexpected visit to the hard shoulder we always recommend motorists check the condition of their tyres as well as oil, water and coolant levels before taking to the road."

To help plan journeys the RAC [Route Planner](#) now features live en route traffic and weather updates, and download the free RAC Traffic app which gives the most up to date road information available including incidents and ongoing roadworks.

Alternatively, you can use the RAC traffic line by calling 64644 from a mobile phone or 09003 444999 from a landline.

Drivers looking to prevent their vehicles getting hot under the bonnet this weekend should carry out the following checks before setting out:

- Check oil and coolant levels following the instructions in the owner's handbook
- Have the cooling system checked – a leaking cooling system or inoperative cooling fan could cause the vehicle to overheat and cause extensive damage to the engine. If you have air conditioning, have that checked at the same time to make sure it's working correctly. It's worth noting that owners of vehicles with air conditioning will often see a small amount of water on the ground under the engine area– this is perfectly normal and is simply condensation of the air conditioning system
- The electric cooling fan is designed to run only when needed, it's worth getting this checked also to ensure it's operating as it should

- Check the operation of the convertible roof, especially if it hasn't been used for some time. Make sure you know how to open or close it manually if needed
- Check all wiper blades for wear or splitting, check the windscreen washer fluid level (screen wash additive is also recommended) and check that the washer jets are adjusted correctly
- Have the auxiliary belt (sometimes called the fan belt) checked on a regular basis by your local dealer/garage
- Check the operation of all exterior lights to ensure they comply with any legal requirements, especially if you're travelling to Europe
- Check the condition of the tyres (including the spare) for correct pressures and legal tread depth. The current minimum legal tread depth for cars and light commercial vehicles (up to 3500 kg gvw') is 1.6mm.
- Inspect the jack and wheel brace making sure they are in correct working order. If locking wheel nuts are fitted, ensure the locking key is safely stowed away in the vehicle. It may be useful to practice changing the spare wheel, following instructions from your owner's handbook. If no spare is supplied with your vehicle make sure you are familiar with the tyre repair kit in case you need it
- Ensure all dashboard warning lights operate correctly. If not, consult your owner's handbook or call your local dealer
- Make sure you have a spare set of keys for your vehicle in a safe place
- If you are towing a caravan, check the tyre condition – tyres can deteriorate quickly when not used for some time, so check for any cracking in the sidewalls. Also check the braking system, the indicators and brake lights and coupling gear. In addition, make sure that the caravan is properly balanced with the load distributed as advised by the manufacturer.
- Never overload your vehicle or caravan beyond their designed carrying capacity
- To view these tips online visit:  
<http://www.rac.co.uk/advice/summer-breakdown-advice>

The RAC recommends that you use 64644 to plan your journey before you depart, and park safely before using the 64644 service, or use a suitable hands-free device.

## **Notes to Editors**

### **About the RAC**

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members and championing the interests of drivers for more than 120 years.

Today it has more than eight million members and 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 drivers at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and 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](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

## Contacts



### RAC Press Office

Press Contact

[press.office@rac.co.uk](mailto:press.office@rac.co.uk)

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

ISDN number on request