



Image: RAC

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## **RAC warns drivers not to become a ‘breakdown statistic’ by failing to carry out basic checks before setting off**

**With less than a fortnight until most schools break up for summer, the RAC believes many holidays could be ruined by breakdowns as eight in 10 drivers don’t routinely check their cars before setting out on long trips.**

New figures from RAC Breakdown\* show only a fifth of UK drivers (17%) regularly check their vehicles are ready for long journeys while a quarter (24%) admit to never doing so, with the remaining 60% only doing it

sometimes – dramatically increasing the risk of breaking down and incurring costly garage bills.

The findings, released on the inaugural [National Check Your Car Day](#), have led the RAC to warn drivers not to risk making the most expensive summer ever on the roads even more costly by failing to check a car's oil and coolant levels, together with the condition and pressures of all the tyres. With pump prices at record highs, the cost of every summer trip by road will be dearer than ever, so it's vital drivers don't make matters worse for themselves with an avoidable breakdown.

It's also the case that summer is the one season that sees drivers suddenly demanding more of their cars than ever – with vehicles travelling much longer distances than normal and potentially towing as well. This means the chances of those that haven't had a bit of TLC lately breaking down goes up, potentially spoiling any part of long-looked forward to summer holiday.

To get drivers on the front foot ahead of the holidays and to reduce the chances of their vehicles letting themselves down, the RAC is launching the first ever Check Your Car Day today, Saturday 9 July. Using online advice from expert RAC patrols on how to avoid a breakdown, the initiative aims to get as many drivers as possible checking their vehicles this weekend – in the hope of identifying any problems early enough to get them fixed ahead of the great summer getaway.

The RAC expects to attend in the region of 350,000 breakdowns between today and the end of August, with most of these being for problems related to tyres and batteries. While some of these can't be avoided – for instance getting a puncture – many of them can be, so long as the RAC's preventative breakdown tips are followed.

**RAC Breakdown spokesman Rod Dennis said:**

“Every summer, tens of thousands of drivers end up broken down by the side of the road because their cars let them down – that's a lot of people whose summer plans are thrown into disarray. Add in the rising cost of the living and the fact this summer is set to be the most expensive for years due to the record-high price of fuel and it's obvious that unplanned repairs and hefty garage bills will be the very last things most drivers want.

“The good news is that it doesn’t need to be that way. Our patrols regularly go out to drivers who have suffered a breakdown because they didn’t check their tyres or have a quick look under the bonnet. Nothing can be more frustrating for someone desperate for a summer break than realising their breakdown was avoidable, but this is a picture we see all too often every summer.

“Today’s national Check Your Car Day is about changing things round and stacking the odds of a breakdown-free summer trip in drivers’ favour. By following our patrols’ advice takes just minutes but could genuinely make the difference between a non-eventful drive and one that involves waiting at the side of the road for a patrol van or, worse still, a flatbed recovery truck.

“Our message to drivers is really clear – don’t let your well-earned break be ruined by a breakdown, and don’t make this year’s expensive summer even more costly by having to take your car to a garage. But in the event something unexpected does happen, it’s also vitally important drivers have the right level of breakdown cover in place to deal with the situation.”

### **Don’t let the FORCES of summer lead to a breakdown – the checks to do this Check Your Car Day, Saturday 9 July 2022**

*Always complete these checks with the car parked on level ground and switched off, with the engine cold*

F is for FUEL: Ensure you have enough fuel for your journey. Cars use more fuel in heavy traffic and start/stop conditions typical of summer traffic jams. Don’t risk running out.

O is for OIL: To avoid overheating, engine damage and a potential breakdown, remember to check your oil level and top up when necessary.

R is for RUBBER: It sounds obvious, but your tyres are your car’s only connection with the road so it’s vital to look after them. Check them for signs of wear and damage and replace if necessary. If the tyres aren’t wearing evenly, then tyre pressures may be mismatched or there could be a fault with the steering. Then, check that all four tyres have at least 3mm of tread and are inflated to the correct pressures for whatever load you’re carrying (check

your vehicle handbook for these) - this is vital to maintaining good grip, especially during summer downpours. Also take a look at your wiper blades to ensure they're clearing the screen effectively and that the rubber has not perished.

C is for COOLANT: This does a vital job in ensuring the engine runs at the right temperature. If it's not between the 'min' and 'max' levels, this could be the sign of a problem so [contact a good garage](#) without delay.

E is for ELECTRICS: If you have trouble starting your car, it might be time for a new battery so again, contact a garage or the RAC without delay. Your wipers will help keep your windscreen clear of bugs, and you'll need your lights on during any heavy downpours. The electrics also control your indicators and windows, so check there are no problems.

S is for SCREENWASH: Top-up your windscreen washer fluid by using a good quality screenwash – this will keep your field of view clear of bugs.

The RAC has also put together a [comprehensive guide to how to avoid breakdowns experienced in warmer weather](#) to help drivers.

### **Top tips from RAC patrols on avoiding a breakdown**

Manchester-based patrol Ben Aldous said: "Put simply, a well-maintained car is much less likely to break down than one that hasn't been looked after. So, if you have a big drive coming up and suspect something on your car's not quite right then get it into a good garage as soon as you can this week."

Kevin Andrews, who works in the Bath area, advised: "Keep your locking wheel nut somewhere you can easily find it as this makes it quicker for us to do a tyre change if needed. Make sure that everything fixed to the outside of your car – bikes, roof boxes – are properly secured. If you're travelling with a dog, again ensure it's secure inside and has some food and water. And download and use the free MyRAC mobile app as it makes it much easier for us to find you."

Stuart Lurc, who is based in Salisbury, added: "Check your tyres every time,

especially the inside front edges. You can fully lock the steering one way or the other so you can see the condition of your front tyres easily. And whatever you do, don't start a journey with a known problem!"

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\* Figures based on an RAC survey of 500 UK drivers

The press office email address is [press.enquiries@rac.co.uk](mailto:press.enquiries@rac.co.uk) and media centre is at [media.rac.co.uk](http://media.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.

## 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



### **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