



RAC patrols dealing with unprecedented levels of callouts as the UK remains in the grip of the Siberian blasts

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Weather and travel update: the RAC remains on high alert with record number of breakdowns

RAC road safety spokesman Pete Williams said: "Thursday was treacherous on the roads for drivers across the UK as they were hampered by bitterly cold temperatures, heavy snowfall, ice and high winds. Visibility proved a significant problem and for drivers that did get about, they were sometimes let down by inadequate screen wash, failing windscreen wipers and, for diesel drivers, clogging fuel lines which forced them to prematurely abandon their journeys.

"Overall yesterday RAC patrols were exceptionally busy, dealing with a total of 9,500 breakdowns which was 43% than we had forecast even after we had factored in the extreme weather conditions and 59% busier than it should have been for the time of year.

"The top cause of breakdown was battery failure – which was double normal levels – but our patrols also dealt with an unprecedented number of vehicles which had become bogged down in heavy snow (up 162% on the last seven days), a massive increase (244%) in the number of diesel drivers encountering frozen fuel lines causing filters to become clogged. They also attended hundreds of road traffic accidents as drivers lost control on snow and ice and a significant number of callouts as the extreme temperatures caused washer bottles to freeze solid owing to poor quality or absent screen wash additive, and for wiper blades frozen stuck windscreens blowing fuses and breaking motors.

"Today the south west is still in the grip of the remnants of Storm Emma and will experience blizzard conditions with drifting snow, black ice and the risk of further snowfall and frozen rain. Many drivers in Hampshire remain stranded and our local patrols will be working hard to reach members surprised by the extreme conditions whose vehicles are now immobile with exhausted batteries, frozen engines or who have finally run out of fuel.

"For Scotland and the North East of England the conditions remain very challenging with many roads impassable and the emergency services are still trying to reach some stranded motorists in parts including the M62.

"In these regions the message remains – follow Highways England warnings and avoid all but the most essential journeys. For other parts of the country, particularly the Midlands and the North West, listen to local forecasts and traffic reports. Yesterday our patrols attended the biggest volume of breakdowns by far in these regions as drivers, probably believing they were safely outside the red and amber storm warnings, ran into difficulty with the extreme cold and snowy conditions they too faced.

"Today the risk of ice and extremely cold temperatures are going to be the biggest threat for everyone venturing out onto UK roads. Anyone venturing out should proceed with extreme caution and ensure they have plenty of warm clothing, sturdy footwear, a shovel, food, water, a flask with a hot drink and a fully charged mobile phone in case they are unfortunate enough to

breakdown or become stranded."

The press office email address is press.office@rac.co.uk and media centre is at 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 nearly 14 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. Included in this is the first-of-its-kind nationwide Mobile Mechanics service which brings the garage to homes and workplaces.

At the forefront of new solutions for business fleets and consumers, the RAC's breakdown service is electric-ready with mobile EV charging technology and can be called on using [myRAC](#) – the all-in-one route planner, fuel finder and breakdown reporting app.

Visit the [RAC website](#).

Contacts



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