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RAC sees 24% rise in vehicles damaged by potholes

Britain's potholed roads have led the RAC to see a 24% year-on-year rise in the number of call-outs to vehicles likely to have suffered damaged due to poor road surfaces.

Data released to coincide with [National Pothole Day](#) shows that RAC patrols responded to 5,010 more incidents involving broken shock absorbers, ruined suspension parts and distorted or damaged wheels in 2015 than they did the year before, potentially indicating that poor road surfaces were to blame. In 2014, patrols dealt with 20,477 of these jobs whereas in 2015 this grew to 25,487.

The single biggest increase recorded was for damaged suspension springs which saw a 42% rise from 13,101 in 2014 to 18,417 last year. There were also 10% more incidents of damaged wishbones – the part that shock absorbers and springs are fitted to – and a 10% rise in faults with vehicle subframes – the rigid structures under a car which support the engine, drivetrain and suspension.

While East Anglia saw the greatest number of pothole-related call-outs with 4,547, it only ranked third across the UK in terms of percentage increase of these faults with 31%. The South East was the worst region overall with a 62% rise as a result of 2,686 incidents. The North East, however, was a close third on 30% with 3,783 incidents.

The RAC's National Pothole Day vehicle damage top five was completed by Scotland which recorded a 27% uplift (2,537 call-outs) in this type of call-out and the Midlands, stretching down to South Wales which saw 19% (3,491).

RAC chief engineer David Bizley said: “Potholes can wreak havoc with vehicles and are therefore understandably hated by motorists. It is very worrying that our patrols have dealt with more pothole-related breakdowns in 2015 than they did the year before because we did not experience a particularly cold winter in either year.

“We know that a number of local authorities increased their spending in 2015 to try to catch up with some of the road maintenance and repair backlog but this evidence indicates that there is still some way to go. In the absence of freezing conditions, which are a major cause of potholes, this suggests that some highways authorities are still losing the pothole-repair fight. We shall only win the battle once sufficient preventative road surface maintenance is undertaken to prevent potholes appearing when the first bad weather arrives.

“On top of the £6bn already promised, the Chancellor made available further funds in the Autumn Statement and whilst this is still not enough to meet the shortfall, it may hopefully mean we will see a decline in ‘pothole generated breakdowns’ this time next year.”

The latest [RAC Report on Motoring](#) found the sorry state of Britain’s local roads to be the number one concern among drivers. Ten per cent of motorists surveyed said the condition of local roads was their top concern, while a further 20% listed the issue as one of their top four concerns. Half (50%) of the 1,555 motorists questioned for the report – now in its 27th year – said the condition of roads in their area had deteriorated in the past 12 months with just 10% claiming it had improved; the remainder reporting no change.

Knowing the frustration that poor road surfaces cause motorists, the RAC works with pothole-reporting website [StreetRepairs.co.uk](#) on the [RAC Report Pothole app](#) which makes the process of taking action to fix a pothole or other road defect straightforward and effective.

The app uses your mobile device’s GPS to locate the pothole or a range of other road defects you can select including broken manholes, abandoned vehicles and faulty street lights. You can add photos and then upload your report which is automatically delivered direct to the roads team of the responsible local authority, or agency in the case of strategic roads and motorways.

To report a pothole, motorists can visit the [RAC website](#) or download the free

[RAC Report Pothole mobile app](#) for their iPhone or Android smartphone.

Notes to Editors

About the RAC

With more than eight million members, the RAC 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 motorists at a national level, including advancing levels of road safety, supporting the needs of young drivers and voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring. The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – 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](#) or follow [#racfuelwatch on Twitter](#). This is a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump. RAC Fuel Watch analyses how prices changed through the previous month and compares the most recent prices with those from three, six and 12 months before.

Key facts:

- RAC patrols fix four out of five vehicles at the roadside and on average within 34 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 98% of members would recommend RAC Rescue to their friends and family

Contacts



RAC Press Office

Press Contact

press.office@rac.co.uk

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

ISDN number on request