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RAC warns motorists not to start 2017 on a flat note

Millions of cars left unused over Christmas increases chances of a flat battery

At the start of 2016, battery-related breakdowns accounted for a third of all breakdowns

Motorists are being urged to get their new year off to a strong start, rather than a non-start, by making sure they give every car they rely on a good run before the January return to work on Tuesday 3 January.

On the first working day of 2016, 4 January, the RAC had its busiest day of the year, attending nearly 10,000 breakdowns – a 40% increase on a typical day – with a third of these attributed to flat batteries. While a patrol might be able to jump-start a vehicle to get a driver on their way again, victims of a flat battery will nonetheless suffer the frustration of starting the new year being late for work.

Yet many of these breakdowns could be avoided if motorists remember to use their cars before returning to work. Just a 30 minute drive might well be enough to top up a flat, but otherwise healthy battery – sharply reducing the chances of an unwelcome breakdown at home.

RAC spokesman Rod Dennis said: “Traditionally, the first day back at work after the Christmas and new year break is one of our busiest for breakdowns. With millions of multi-car families in the UK, the long festive break often means at least one vehicle is not driven. Each of these unused cars represents a breakdown waiting to happen.

“Not running a car for a long period dramatically increases the chances of a flat battery so motorists risk starting January on a very flat note. Our advice to motorists is to give every car in the household a good run before the new working week. That way they can be much more confident of getting the new year off to a good start, rather than off to a non-start – and lessen the chances of having to ring the boss and explain why they are going to be late for the first working day of 2017.

“In 2016, we attended more than 3,000 stricken motorists who had suffered battery problems. The weather couldn’t be blamed for most these breakdowns as it was remarkably mild. If it were to be much cooler going into New Year 2017, it would make the problem worse with colder weather putting more stress on a car’s battery.”

The RAC’s tips for avoiding the battery blues this New Year:

- Drive every vehicle in your household before Tuesday 3 January, especially if you’re going to rely on that car for your return to work. Don’t just turn it over – go on a drive
- Cherish every volt – turn off everything electrical in your car once you’ve switched the engine off, and disconnect all equipment to give the battery its best chance of starting
- If you’ve had battery problems at all through 2016, think about getting it tested and, if needed, replaced before the new year
- Protect your car from the elements – cooler, damper conditions through winter put more strain on a battery so use the garage if you have one

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 30 minutes
- RAC vans carry more than 500 parts and tools to get members' vehicles going again
- 92% 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