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Lockdown speeders: more drivers seen breaking the limit

Nearly half of people have witnessed an increase in drivers breaking the speed limit during the government lockdown, according to research carried out by the RAC.

Forty-four percent of UK adults say they have seen more drivers speeding now than they did before the Government introduced the coronavirus lockdown. Roads with 30mph limits appear to be the most abused, with 23% of the 2,020 people questioned by the RAC saying they had seen drivers very

obviously breaking the law by going too fast.

Fifteen per cent said they had seen drivers breaking both 20mph and 40mph limits, whereas in 50mph limits only 10% felt there was an increase in speeders. In 60mph and 70mph limits the uplift in speeders is far less pronounced, with 6% and 5% respectively reporting they had seen these limits being broken – but this still represents an increase in observed speeding on these roads compared to before the lockdown.

Just under one in 10 (8%) people claimed they have seen more drivers using handheld mobile phones at the wheel than they would in normal, non-lockdown conditions. Shockingly, 5% of those surveyed believed they had witnessed vehicles racing on public roads.

Evidence from police forces across the country sadly backs up what people surveyed told the RAC, with the Met Police clocking one driver doing 134mph in a 40mph zone and Greater Manchester Police recording a driver going 129mph on the M62.

According to Department for Transport data, excessive speed was responsible for 4,652 road traffic collisions – or the equivalent of 13 road traffic collisions a day during 2018, although due to how data is recorded this figure may underestimate the true number of collisions.

RAC road safety spokesman Simon Williams said:

“The frightening conclusion from our research is that a significant number of irresponsible drivers are taking advantage of quiet ‘lockdown’ roads by driving far too fast, putting lives unnecessarily at risk.

“Since the Government told the nation to stay at home many roads have become almost deserted so it’s a concern this is being seen by some as an opportunity to illegally ignore speed limits. It would only take a fraction of a second when driving well over the speed limit for something terrible to happen. Couple this behaviour with the fact there are many cyclists on our roads and more people are having to walk in the road to maintain a safe distance from others on pavements and you have a recipe for disaster.

“The last thing the NHS needs as it works night and day to help patients with

coronavirus is to have to deal with people injured in avoidable road traffic collisions caused by motorists driving far too fast.

“While there are fewer drivers on the road, it appears police speed traps are more needed now than ever as some of the speeds in built-up areas appear to be excessive. Some police forces, including Greater Manchester and The Met, have already announced crackdowns and it looks as though a similar approach needs to be taken in other parts of the country. It seems very wrong that people who drive so far above the limit should get away scot-free especially during a national emergency.”

For more information about why motorists should be more careful when driving on empty roads during the COVID-19 pandemic visit the [RAC website](#).

Notes to Editors

* Research carried out for the RAC by Ragdoll Research from 16th- 21st April 2020 with 2,020 respondents.

About the RAC

The RAC provides complete peace of mind to 12m UK private and business drivers, whatever their motoring needs. Its services include:

- **[Breakdown assistance](#)**. Its highly-skilled, 1,600-strong branded patrol workforce attends more than two million breakdowns every year, fixing on average four out of five vehicles at the roadside. The RAC's patrol fleet is one of the most advanced in the world, and was the first to roll out both an [All-Wheels-Up recovery system](#), allowing the vast majority of vehicles to be recovered from a single patrol van, and [EV Boost](#) mobile electric vehicle charging units
- **[Insurance](#)**. The RAC is a top-five [car insurance](#) broker having surpassed the 500,000 policies-in-force milestone in 2018. It also offers [‘black box’ telematics policies](#), as well as home and travel insurance
- **Other motoring services**. The RAC leads in the development of

new solutions for business, fleets, electric vehicles and future car technology. Its additional products and services include a [personal loans offering](#), a [used car buying website](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#). It also has a network of [Approved Dealers](#) and [Approved Garages](#) which combine the trust of RAC brand with local service and convenience

The RAC also works to support the interests of its members and UK drivers on the most important motoring issues which it identifies via the annual [RAC Report on Motoring](#) and the [RAC Opinion Panel](#). The Report on Motoring is the longest running analysis of driver opinion in the UK having been published every year since 1989.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

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