

Easter break - or Easter breakdown?

Submitted by: Green Flag Group

Tuesday, 22 March 2005

As the Easter break approaches, motorists planning driving holidays and family outings are advised to be fully prepared for long journeys on the UK's busy roads.

Green Flag Motoring Assistance spokesperson, Melanie Denny, commented: "Not only should you plan journey carefully before departing, take plenty of refreshments and give the children something to keep them occupied, you should also remember the importance of your car's maintenance to avoid any preventable hiccups en route."

Green Flag suggests checking the oil, water, screen wash and tyre pressure before setting off. Last Easter, over a third of all breakdowns reported were non-starts. Other common causes included electrical faults, tyre problems and accidents.

While experiencing a breakdown, for whatever reason, Green Flag warns motorists to be careful when on the hard shoulder - one of the most dangerous places on the roads. According to the Department for Transport, 50 motorists are killed and over 600 motorists are injured while parked on the hard shoulder each year*.

To help motorists keep safe on the roadside this Easter, Green Flag has produced a must-read Glove Box Guide to Hard Shoulder Safety, written in association with road safety charity, Brake. It is an indispensable guide for anyone planning a long journey over the Easter holiday and is packed with practical safety tips to keep the family safe.

- Only stop on the hard shoulder in an emergency, a breakdown, or if stopped by the police
- Pull over as far left as possible and put on the hazard warning lights
- Get out of the car by the passenger door and wait for help on the verge, away from passing traffic
- Never attempt repairs yourself on the hard shoulder
- Call for help from the nearest emergency phone

Over the Easter period, Green Flag predicts it will receive an average of almost 5,000 calls per day but has estimated over 6,000 calls on Tuesday 29 March, which, for many people, will be the first day back to work after the Bank Holiday weekend.

To obtain a free copy of the Green Flag Glove Box Guide to Hard Shoulder Safety, please email your name and address to info@smartassoc.co.uk or alternatively post your details to: Green Flag Hard Shoulder Safety Guide, c/o Smart Association, 9 Blayd's Yard, Leeds LS1 4AD.

Ends

Casualties from road accidents while on the hard shoulder/lay by DFT

2000 2001 2002

Fatal 41 33 36

Serious 116 102 108

Slight 590 496 543

Total 747 631 687

Notes to Editor:

The recent four-car pile up on the M1 in South Yorkshire highlights how dangerous the motorway can be for people who have broken down. A young couple and their baby son were stranded on the motorway in a broken down Ford Fiesta when they were struck by another car travelling at high speed. Two more cars then ploughed into them, killing the mother and her baby, and injuring the baby's father.

Brake is a national not-for-profit road safety charity. Brake exists to stop the 3,500 deaths and 33,700 serious injuries that occur on Britain's roads every year and to care for people traumatised by road crashes. Brake produces educational road safety literature and runs events including Road Safety Week.

Press calls:

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