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More than half of UK drivers are to ignore tyre safety checks ahead of the festive get-away, reports The Motor Ombudsman

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Check your vehicle frequently, particularly the tyres and especially before long journeys!

The Motor Ombudsman tells us:

(All words and photographs from The Motor Ombudsman).

- With 'Frantic Friday' only a few days away, as millions start taking to the roads for the festive

break, research by motoring expert The Motor Ombudsman revealed that 53% of adults across

the nation would not check their tyres were safe and legal before setting off

- Drivers can be landed with a fine of £2,500 and three points on their driving licence per



illegal

tyre - an unwanted added expense at an already often-costly time of year

- Motorists are being urged to ensure that their car is fully roadworthy to avoid any unwanted

stoppages and breakdowns when travelling to their holiday destination

London, 16 December 2025 The festive getaway traditionally ramps up the weekend before Christmas,

when millions of motorists encounter 'Frantic Friday' and 'Snarl-up Saturday' on the roads. However, a poll

by a motoring expert has found that over half of individuals (53%) would simply forgo checking their car's

tyres were in a safe and legal condition ahead of setting off on their journey to celebrate the festive

season with friends and loved ones.

Whilst many often spend hours ensuring their gifts are carefully wrapped, decorating the tree, and

shopping for the celebrations, the latest research of 2,000 UK respondents by The Motor Ombudsman

revealed that, in contrast, just over four in ten (47%) would put in the time to make sure that all tyres were



inflated to the correct pressures recommended by the vehicle manufacturer according to the luggage and

number of people in the car, and that the tread depth of the rubber was at least the legal minimum of

1.6 mm.



As well as tyres being a critical safety component with only a small contact patch separating vehicles from

the road, drivers can be subject to a fine of £2,500 and three points on their driving licence



per illegal tyre.

In fact, the study showed that the country's newest drivers, i.e. 18 to 29-year-olds, are the least

contentious of any group when it comes to checking that the four corners of their car are in optimum

condition (at 42% of respondents), whilst those in the 45 to 59 bracket emerged as being the most

attentive (51%).

Rebecca Pullan, pictured below and owner of The Motor Ombudsman-accredited Carmaster Garage, said: "As well as

keeping an eye out for any cuts, lumps, or bulges, which could suggest internal damage, under-inflated

tyres can lead to hidden costs, such as premature and uneven wear, increased fuel consumption, and

significantly raise the risk of aquaplaning. This is a dangerous combination where water builds between

the tyres and the road, causing a loss of traction, steering and braking control, and heightening the

chance of an accident."



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Rebecca Pullan – Carmaster Garage.

The findings of the latest research equally showed that fewer than half of those questioned in the study

(47%) would pop open the bonnet to ensure that windscreen washer fluid was topped up to the right levels

- as wintry weather brings more challenging conditions and spray and grime being thrown up from the

road, and that the engine oil level can also be read between the right lines on the dipstick.

Rebecca added: "Inadequate or dirty oil circulating in the engine can lead to poor performance, whilst

eventual starvation can lead to a full engine replacement carrying an average cost of thousands of

pounds, highlighting the importance of having it changed annually and not skipping services. However, if

drivers see a warning light on the dash in the interim - a symbol similar to the outline of 'Aladdin's lamp',

they should never ignore it, as it means that the oil level or pressure has dipped, so it's important they take

their car to a reputable garage without delay."

With shorter hours of daylight over the festive season, and sunshine becoming more of a rarity, lights and



indicators working at their very best is vital. The study however, pointed to the fact that only about a third

of drivers (31%) would take a look at the front and rear to ensure everything was lighting up correctly,

including fog lamps. Similarly, only around one in three (28%) would check the battery charge level before

hitting the road if they owned a hybrid or electric car.

Worryingly, the poll saw nearly a fifth (16%) of survey respondents claiming they would make no checks at

all ahead of setting off, and would simply 'wing it' – essentially hoping for the best that their journey will be

free of any unforeseen hiccups.

Rebecca said: “As a long-awaited end-of-year celebration, it’s easy to get caught up in the excitement of

the festive spirit, and not give your car the due care and attention that it needs ahead of a long journey.

But this is where nightmares before Christmas can begin. Just like us, cars need regular check-ups and

maintenance to stay in shape, especially when undertaking long distance journeys that many are likely to

be doing throughout the coming days.



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“If you’re not sure what to look out for, use The Motor Ombudsman’s handy online Business Finder to

search for a local trusted repairer, because ultimately, a professional health check can save you hours of

avoidable stress and being out of pocket, especially at a time when the expense of the festive season

quickly mounts up.”

To see The Motor Ombudsman’s ‘Car-istmas’ tips for the festive season, visit

www.TheMotorOmbudsman.org/Car-istmas