

News Release

IS YOUR CAR READY FOR THE CHRISTMAS BREAK? Mondial UK urges motorists to prepare for a severe winter

Sub-zero temperatures, high snowfall and gridlock on the roads. Sound like a winter from hell? Well according to the Met Office, that could be what's in store for the UK this winter. With Christmas just around the corner, the last thing motorists need is a breakdown, so Mondial, Croydon based customer service and breakdown assistance provider, recommends a little planning to avoid Yuletide mishaps.

December 28th 2005 and January 3rd are predicted by Mondial to be the busiest days for calls for roadside assistance. Indeed, calls are expected to increase by 75% on these two days as everyone returns to work after the Christmas break only to find their neglected vehicles won't start or breakdown mid-journey. Mondial warns that motorists who fail to plan ahead are more likely to break down, be left stranded or be involved in an accident. Taking simple measures will help ensure you and your vehicle get through Christmas and the winter months unscathed.

Mike Webb, Managing Director of Mondial UK explains: "The hard truth is that many emergency roadside assistance calls could be avoided if motorists prepared their vehicle properly. Flat batteries account for one in five winter breakdowns, which could easily be avoided with proper maintenance. Batteries rarely last more than five years and drivers should regularly run their vehicle to keep the battery charged rather than leaving it idle over cold weekends or winter breaks – remembering not to drink and drive of course."

"Our research also reveals that wheel and tyre issues are amongst the most common causes of assistance. It is essential that drivers check their tyre pressure and tread depth to reduce the chance of an accident on icy roads."

"Freak snow storms often catch motorists unawares, but they need to get into the habit of good car maintenance. Something as simple as a torch and a blanket can be invaluable in an emergency situation, but more motorists think of a bag of boiled sweets for the journey before they consider something as essential as a first aid kit and a shovel. We advise all motorists to ensure they have a reliable roadside assistance provider – it could be a lifeline out on the road on a cold winter night."

Mondial urges motorists to act now to ensure they can survive the severe winter weather being predicted. Winter driving doesn't need to be risky – a little preparation and good breakdown cover means drivers are safe in the knowledge they won't get left out in the cold this Christmas.

MONDIAL REVEALS THE TOP CAUSES OF ASSISTANCE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS

- Flat Battery
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Wheel and tyre related incidents
- Lights not working
- Putting petrol in a diesel engine vehicle
- Running out of Fuel
- Alarm/Immobiliser faults

BEFORE HEADING OUT ON THE ROADS THIS WINTER MONDIAL SAYS...

- Ensure your anti-freeze has been checked
- Check your windscreen wipers for damage and replaced if necessary
- Ensure you have plenty of washer fluid in your windscreen washer bottle
- Check that the tread depths on all car tyres are legal (at least **1.6mm** across the central three-quarters of the breadth and in a continuous band around the entire circumference of the tyre). Also be aware that wet weather performance drops considerably below 2mm of tread
- Checked your tyre pressure, over inflated tyres are especially dangerous on icy roads
- Regularly clean your lights and mirrors
- Ensure you have sufficient breakdown cover

MONDIAL'S MOTORING EMERGENCY CHECKLIST

Things to keep in your car this winter:

- torch, spare batteries and bulbs
- screen scraper / de-icer
- jump leads
- warning triangle
- first-aid kit
- 'hands free' mobile phone / phone card / cash
- blankets and warm jacket (in case of breakdown)
- shovel (to clear snow if necessary)
- fire extinguisher
- rope (for towing if necessary)
- road atlas, maps etc
- breakdown assistance emergency number

ENDS

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Note to Editors

Mondial UK is a leading provider of customer support services to the motor and travel industries, insurance companies and other blue chip organisations. As a member of the global Mondial Assistance Group, Mondial UK provides services to customers 24 hours a day, wherever they are all over the world.

The Mondial Assistance Group, part of the world's largest insurance company Allianz of Germany, provides customer care contact to over 200 million individuals world-wide. Many of the world's leading organisations benefit from Mondial Group services each year, ranging from Motor Assistance, Customer Information and Care Contact, Marketing Programmes, Fulfilment, Breakdown and Accident Management, Warranty Services, Travel Insurance and Assistance, Property Assistance and Advice Lines.

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