



**EMBARGO:** Not for publication before 00.01hrs, Friday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2007

## Get ready for 'Black Friday' – our worst congestion of the year

- **Trafficmaster and RAC Foundation launch second UK Congestion Report**
- **Phenomenon of 'Black Friday' (October Half Term) revealed as worst day for congestion in the year**
- **Britain's worst congestion hotspot is M25**
- **Scotland hosts both most and least efficient motorway route**

Millions of motorists risk being caught in the worst traffic congestion of the year tonight, warn Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation.

The warning is the key finding of the second Trafficmaster/ RAC Foundation UK Congestion Report, which reveals this Friday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, will be the worst day for travelling by car because of a peak in traffic congestion named 'Black Friday', by experts.

Traffic jams may be traditionally associated with Bank Holidays or Christmas, but a number of specific factors combine to make tonight's rush hour longer and more congested than any of Britain's regular public holidays. These factors include darker (and possibly wetter) weather encouraging more drivers to use major roads, a high level of commuting and commercial traffic and a rise in accidents.

Philip Hale, spokesman for Trafficmaster, said: "It seems odd to think a Friday in October is busier than Christmas or Easter, but the 'Black Friday' phenomenon is very real and one all drivers should be prepared for."

According to the Trafficmaster UK Congestion Report, if the current trend continues, this year's congestion could be as much as 10 per cent\* worse than 2003.

"The first steps in reducing the effect of congestion are identifying and avoiding it. Just a minority of motorists re-planning their routes or the timing of their journeys could help make sure this Friday isn't the worst of all", said Hale.

**Summary of Trafficmaster Congestion Alerts\*\* on nine key UK routes:**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Easter getaway</b>	<b>August Bank Holiday</b>	<b>Black Friday</b>	<b>Christmas getaway</b>
<b>2003</b>	5,842	5,122	<b>7,344</b>	4,627
<b>2004</b>	6,059	4,522	<b>6,631</b>	3,668
<b>2005</b>	5,615	4,358	<b>7,860</b>	2,114
<b>2006</b>	5,253	6,392	<b>8,237</b>	5,035
<b>2007</b>	5,769	4,223	<b>????</b>	

Elsewhere in the report, the nation's worst congestion hotspot is revealed. Up from second position six months ago, the Western sector of the M25 is officially the most congested stretch of road in Britain, replacing the M1 in Hertfordshire, where traffic has eased slightly thanks to a higher temporary speed limit.

The report also reveals the real traffic speed of the UK's motorways. The average traffic flow speed of our motorways is a healthy 67.5 mph, although there are significant differences in their overall efficiency. Scotland can boast both the most efficient motorway – the A74(M), with an overall real average speed of 69.9mph – and the least – the M8, at only 53.4mph.

Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation recommend more careful planning of car journeys, stressing that drivers should consider alternative routes before they travel. Simple proactive steps to avoid congestion can save time, fuel and even CO2. The organisations also point out that only a minority of vehicles on our roads need to be diverted from congestion to allow traffic to flow freely.

Trafficmaster's Philip Hale concluded: "We have to acknowledge that environmental efficiency is not just about what we drive, but also where and when. In the case of congestion on our roads, literally one person can make a difference."

Edmund King, Executive Director of the RAC Foundation, said: "Today is named 'Black Friday' due to the expected extra congestion on the roads, but it could equally be 'Black Friday' for being the worst day of the week for fatalities and serious injuries on the road. More car users are killed and injured between 4 and 6 pm on a Friday night than at any other time during the week. So to avoid 'Black Friday' becoming 'Fatal Friday', motorists should take extra care on the roads."

**ENDS**

\* Average congestion increase in previous two years on Black Friday were 7.03% and 12.16% on 2003 levels.

\*\* Trafficmaster congestion alerts are received from Trafficmaster's sensor network when speeds fall below 30mph on motorways and major inter-urban A-roads.

**Interviews:**

Philip Hale (Trafficmaster) and Shelia Rainger (RAC Foundation) will be available for ISDN interview on Friday, or for pre-recorded interviews. Contact Jonathan Henderson at Citigate Dewe Rogerson on 0207 282 1057.

ISDN dial-in number: 020 7389 0601

**Notes to editors:**

Copies of the UK Congestion Report are available online: ([http://www.trafficmaster.co.uk/about\\_trafficmaster/reports\\_and\\_research.php](http://www.trafficmaster.co.uk/about_trafficmaster/reports_and_research.php)) or on request from Trafficmaster or the RAC Foundation.

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**About Trafficmaster Plc**

Trafficmaster is an expert in intelligent driving. The Group comprises US-based Teletrac Inc. and Trafficmaster Plc in the UK. Both organisations focus on intelligent vehicle services which enhance the driving experience and improve business performance by saving companies and drivers time and money and reducing their environmental impact.

Teletrac Inc offers fleet tracking, management and navigation solutions under the Fleet Director brand across the US, serving 4,000 fleets and a total of 72,000 commercial vehicles, using wireless and GPS technology.

The group has also developed a suite of Trafficmaster services in the UK. Trafficmaster's key product is the award-winning Smartnav, an intelligent satellite navigation and traffic information service.

The use of Trafficmaster's historic measured road speeds data and live incident information allows Smartnav to calculate the optimum routes and avoid traffic congestion on every journey, improving on-road efficiency and reducing congestion overall.

Trafficmaster's comprehensive traffic data means Smartnav is continually updated with traffic information, road closures and speed camera locations, without the need for CDs or internet-sourced updates.

Trafficmaster also offers Trackstar stolen vehicle tracking, monitored 24 hours a day in the Trafficmaster Control Centre. Stolen vehicles can automatically inform Trafficmaster and are then monitored remotely and police informed of their whereabouts for fast and efficient recovery.

The company provides live traffic information direct via mobile phone services and Radio Data System -Traffic Message Channel (RDS TMC) to other aftermarket and factory-fit satellite navigation systems.

Trafficmaster also maintains a unique traffic monitoring network of 7,500 sensors, covering 8,000 miles of UK motorways and trunk roads.

Trafficmaster was founded in 1988 and floated on the London Stock Exchange in 1994. Teletrac Inc is a wholly owned US subsidiary company.

[www.teletrac.net](http://www.teletrac.net)  
[www.trafficmaster.co.uk](http://www.trafficmaster.co.uk)

**About RAC Foundation**

The RAC Foundation for Motoring is an independent charity established to promote the environmental, economic, mobility and safety issues relating to use of motor vehicles. Our vision: Advocating innovative transport solutions for safer roads, safer drivers, greener cars, improved mobility and a fair deal for motorists.

[www.racfoundation.org](http://www.racfoundation.org)