



**EMBARGOED UNTIL: 00.01am Monday 16 November 2009**

## **CONGESTION STARTS TO INCREASE BUT IS IT THE END OF THE RECESSION?**

***Interim Congestion Update from Trafficmaster and the AA shows congestion increasing but not everywhere ...***

After tracking consistent falls in congestion throughout 2009 as recorded in their recent Commuting - Congestion Report, Trafficmaster has now recorded an 11% increase in congestion levels since the end of September, compared to the same period in 2008, but it has been very uneven across the country.

The most significant increases in congestion levels have been recorded on the Western Sector of the M25 at +50%; the A14 between Huntingdon and Cambridge which has seen a 45% increase and the M6 in Staffordshire with a 32% increase.

Other regions have seen little change or a further drop in congestion with the M62/M621 in West Yorkshire dropping by 18%.

“There are several factors to bear in mind, when looking at these figures,” said Georgina Read of Trafficmaster. “The period we are comparing this with of October 2008 was at the height of the recession with the biggest recorded drops in congestion we saw that year, so to see an increase is good news but it still doesn’t put us anywhere near pre-recession levels.

“Also the changes have been inconsistent across the country, although roadworks and some major incidents have influenced figures as well. Overall, our conclusions are that there is an upward trend in congestion levels but this is prevalent on Mondays and Fridays so there is an element of “leisure” traffic in this, particularly with the unseasonably warm, dry Autumn weather.

“Routes which are known to carry a lot of HGV and commuter traffic, such as the M62 and M621 in West Yorkshire; the southern stretch of the M1 and the Northern

Sector of the M25 are all still showing drops in congestion of -18%, -19% and -2% respectively. So while increased congestion levels maybe indicative of the start of economic recovery in parts of the country, others are still seeing less traffic – commuter, HGV and leisure - on the roads, indicating that we are not out of the recession yet. We will continue to monitor congestion levels and be issuing regular updates to see how it changes in line with the overall health of the UK economy.”

Edmund King, AA president, said: “Although we don’t welcome an increase in congestion, we do welcome the fact that it indicates that the economy is picking up. Our nation is dependent on road travel and congestion acts as a barometer of economic activity. The message to Government and highway authorities is that we need to continue investing in our road infrastructure as a means of boosting economic activity. Our earlier report indicated big drops in congestion but despite increasing fuel prices congestion seems to be on the increase since September. ”

Trafficmaster’s key interim congestion level findings are as follows:

Road section	% change
M25 Western sector	+50% - partly affected by roadworks
A14 Huntingdon-Cambridge	+45% - affected by major closure due to fire damage after incident
M6 Staffs, Cheshire and Lancs	+32%
A34 Oxford-Newbury	+16%
M1 East Midlands	+14%
M6 West Midlands	+6%
M4 London-Severn Bridge	+3%
A3 through Hindhead	+1%
M25 Northern sector	-2%
M62/M621 West Yorkshire	-18%
M1 Southern sector	-19%

The next Congestion Update from Trafficmaster and the AA will be issued in the first Quarter 2010. For more information about Trafficmaster and its traffic services, go to [www.trafficmaster.co.uk](http://www.trafficmaster.co.uk)

**Georgina Read from Trafficmaster and Edmund King, President of the AA are available for interview. Please contact:**

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**ENDS**

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**Technology Solution**

Trafficmaster is able to provide drivers with smarter route planning and more accurate estimated arrival times than ever before because of the latest IBM data collation technology. This is able to retrieve and process huge volumes of vehicle location data and collates this with historic data and real road speeds to identify congestion hotspots and give accurate journey times on any given day.

**About Trafficmaster**

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 6,000 fleets and a total of 90,000 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 system, which uses live traffic information and real-time road speeds to calculate optimum routes and avoid traffic congestion on the way. 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 its own unique traffic monitoring network of road-side sensors, covering 8,000 miles of UK motorways and trunk roads.

In 2007 the company launched its fleet management solution, Fleet Director, in the UK. Combining all of Trafficmaster's intelligent technology businesses can save time and money, whilst reducing the environmental impact of driving.

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)

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## **About the AA**

The AA is the UK's leading breakdown service with more dedicated patrols than any other UK roadside assistance provider. The professionalism and high standards valued by its 15 million members in the event of a roadside breakdown are also the hallmark of many more AA products and services.

The AA offers personal financial services including motor and home insurance, loans, and breakdown repair cover. There are AA products and services to help both private and fleet motorists to choose and run vehicles. The AA's website is a motoring, travel and leisure portal and its popular route planner calculates more than three million routes per week. The AA is the largest independent travel publisher in the UK and one of the top 10 worldwide. Its many publications include maps, travel and lifestyle guides.

AA Public Affairs helps guide and shape motoring policy by analysing and researching issues, and campaigning on behalf of members and motorists.

For more information, visit [www.theAA.com](http://www.theAA.com)