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WET WEATHER ADDS TO CHRISTMAS TRAFFIC CHAOS

With December weather expected to stay unsettled and wet, the Christmas getaway on Friday 18 December will be slow and very busy on major routes, says Trafficmaster

Forecasts of wet, cold weather will add to the woes of drivers on Friday 18 December, as schools break up, people head out for the last few shopping days before Christmas and the general holiday getaway begins.

“December is a very busy time on the roads because of poor weather and shorter daylight hours,” said Graham Smith, Data Manager at Trafficmaster, who monitor traffic congestion across the country. “But the Christmas rush is always unpredictable as it depends which day of the week the holiday falls. This year we expect the worst traffic day to be Friday 18 December, when commercial, commuter and leisure traffic will reach its peak and could double journey times across main routes in the UK.

Trafficmaster also predicts the afternoon rush on 23rd December will be very busy with congestion caused by a mix of HGVs making last minute deliveries, commuters leaving work early for holidays, last-minute Christmas shoppers and families travelling to their Christmas destinations.

“The great unknown factor affecting congestion at this time of year is of course, the weather, which could make journeys much more difficult,” Graham Smith continued. “We'd encourage anyone travelling in the run-up to Christmas to plan their journey in advance, get the latest traffic information from our 1740 mobile phone service or the AA's 84322 phone service and alter your journey time to miss these peak periods if you can.”

Christmas Day is generally quiet on the roads, although this year the scheduled closure of the M5 for bridge demolition may cause delays in the area. The M5 will be closed between junctions 17-18a and diversions will begin from junction 15.

Unfortunately, that's not the end of the story, as Trafficmaster expects congestion levels to build again between the Bank Holiday Monday (28th December) and the New Year. While commuter traffic will be quiet, many people will be heading to shopping centres as most retail sales are starting then; HGVs will be on the roads to re-stock supermarket shelves and traditional winter sports fixtures such as horse racing and football will be drawing the crowds.

Trafficmaster's top ten congestion hotspots for the Christmas holidays are:

Road	Section of road
M25	Eastern sector
M25	Western sector
M6	Through the West Midlands and up to the North West
M1 J10-J14	Around Luton and Milton Keynes
M1 J23-J32	Through the East Midlands
M60	Around Manchester
M1 & M621	Around Sheffield and Leeds
A1M	Out of Gateshead and Newcastle
M32	From Bristol
M4	Between London and Bristol and between the Severn Bridge and Cardiff

For information about traffic conditions in your region, please contact Georgina Read or Gill Houghton on 01234 759 315 or Graham Smith 01234 759 118.

For more information about Trafficmaster go to www.trafficmaster.co.uk

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

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