



**Embargo: Not before 00.01 am Monday 14 May 2007**

## **UK'S CONGESTION HOTSPOTS REVEALED**

- **Trafficmaster and RAC Foundation launch UK Congestion Report**
- **UK congestion hotspots identified**
- **Study shows time possible time savings from smart driving**

The nation's worst congestion hotspot is the southern end of the M1, according to a new report launched this week by Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation.

The first UK Congestion Report takes the theme of commuting and shows the extent of Britain's congestion by identifying the UK's top five congestion hotspots and assessing average journey times on the country's major routes.

**The top five UK congestion hotspots (May 2006- April 2007) were:**

<b>Road</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Trafficmaster congestion alerts*</b>
1. M1	Home counties J6a-J11	145,641
2. M25	Western sector J9-J20	140,822
3. M25	Northern sector J21-J28	110,521
4. M6	West Midlands J3a-J11a	98,671
5. M6	North Mids/N. West J11-J21a	78,453

The M25 and M6 both have two top five entries but were well beaten by the M1. Junction 6a to junction 11 on the M1 near Luton was worst of all over the past 12 months. Regular congestion in this area has been exacerbated by long-term road works due to widening. Trafficmaster data shows that in the year to April 2007, congestion on this particular stretch of the M1 was almost twice as bad as the M6 through Birmingham, making it the nation's current traffic hotspot by some distance. The M1 is closely followed by the western sector of the M25, near Heathrow Airport.

Overall, Trafficmaster reports the UK has seen a 0.8% increase in congestion in the first quarter of 2007, compared to 2006. According to the CBI, congestion is estimated to cost the UK economy as much as £20 billion per year in resources and lost time, meaning an additional £160 million has already been added to this figure in the first three months of 2007 – around £74,000 every hour.

The report also highlights how using less obvious routes to get from A to B can save you hours simply by avoiding congestion. Trafficmaster conducted a 'virtual study' of some of the nation's most popular journeys over a seven day period, comparing the typical route used by most drivers with another

parallel, less obvious option. The study shows many of the supposed 'faster' routes actually meant arriving later, often because they are indirect, or run through congestion hotspots.

**The top five smart routes for weekly time-savings were:**

1. Manchester to Leeds (M62 vs. A628/M1)	Winner M62	weekly saving 2 hours, 25 minutes
2. London to Norwich (A12/A14/A140 vs. M11/A11)	Winner M11	weekly saving 1 hour, 50 minutes
3. London to Exeter (M3/A303 vs. M4/M5)	Winner A303	weekly saving 1 hour, 10 minutes
4. Edinburgh to Glasgow (M8/A8 vs. M9/M876)	Winner M8	weekly saving 1 hour
5. York to Newcastle (A64/A1M vs. A19)	Winner A19	weekly saving 20 minutes

Philip Hale, spokesman for Trafficmaster, said: "We all know where our local congestion black spots are – and many people have heard of some of the nation's worst roads. The problem is we all continue to use these roads when they're most congested, despite knowing we're likely to hit a traffic jam.

"Our Congestion Report shows that congestion is a nationwide problem and is still on the increase. The first step in reducing the problem is identifying and avoiding it. In our experience, you can use alternative routes to literally save hours – and we've proved it in our virtual driver test."

Further insight from the UK Congestion Report shows that while the majority of rush hour commuting happens between 7:30am and 8:30am, peak commuter hours get earlier as the week progresses – we get up earlier but also leave work earlier with the weekend on the horizon. On Fridays in the North East, for example, commuters leave for home as early as 2:40pm whereas in the North West workers are still driving home as late as 6pm. London has the longest spread of peak traffic and the concern is that other conurbations will soon be catching up as traffic grows.

Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation believe the ability to navigate by real road speeds and around jams could help reduce congestion for all drivers. Trafficmaster's Smartnav customers already save an average of four hours a month on the road\*\*, by avoiding jams and taking the best routes, equivalent to 300,000 working days each year.

RAC Foundation research for the Report found 20 per cent of company car drivers spend more than five hours a week in congestion, but half find their employers 'not at all' supportive over flexible work practices to avoid commuting.

Edmund King, Executive Director of the RAC Foundation, said: "We must get smarter by using traffic information and in-car technology to avoid the worst congestion. We must also change the way we work and time when we commute to reduce congestion and pollution. Travelling out of the peak or working from home one day a week can have great benefits for the economy and environment."

The full details of the UK Congestion Report will be launched at the Work Wise UK Summit on Wednesday (16) in a presentation by Edmund King.

Trafficmaster and the RAC Foundation will also be monitoring traffic levels on National Work from Home day on Friday 18 May to ascertain whether traffic levels fall.

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

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

\*\* Trafficmaster questioned over 2000 Smartnav customers between 26th Feb to 12th March in a Time Saving Survey.

### **For further information**

Philip Hale, Trafficmaster Plc, 01234 759336, [phil.hale@trafficmaster.co.uk](mailto:phil.hale@trafficmaster.co.uk)

Edmund King, RAC Foundation, 020 7747 3485 or 07850 786 960

Billy Partridge, Citigate Dewe Rogerson, 0207 282 2863, [billy.partridge@citigatedr.co.uk](mailto:billy.partridge@citigatedr.co.uk)

Full copies of the Congestion Report available on request.

### **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 65,000 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 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)

### **About Work Wise Week**

Work Wise UK is a not-for-profit initiative which aims to make the UK the most progressive economy in the world and encourage smarter working practices to the benefit of business, employees and the country as a whole.

The Work Wise UK Summit 2007 will be held at the QEII Conference Centre, Westminster, London, on Wednesday May 16. It marks the start of the second Work Wise Week, which will also include National Work From Home Day on Friday May 18.

Speakers include:

- Rt Hon Ruth Kelly MP, Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government, and Minister for Women
- Brendan Barber, secretary general, TUC
- Sir Digby Jones, UK skills envoy and former director general of the CBI
- Edmund King, executive director, RAC Foundation

Work Wise Week is organised by Work Wise UK, a not-for-profit initiative to promote smarter working practices such as flexible working, including condensed hours and nine-day fortnights, remote and mobile working, and working from home. It is supported by a number of leading organisations including the CBI, TUC, British Chambers of Commerce, BT and the RAC Foundation..

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