

M25 Junctions 27 to 30 Widening

Explanation of the Scheme and Non-Technical Summary of the Environmental Statement

EXPLANATION OF THE M25 WIDENING SCHEMES

The Highways Agency is to widen approximately 102 kilometres (63 miles) of the M25 by adding a lane in each direction to make generally a 4-lane motorway. The widening is to be undertaken around the north side of London between Junctions 16 (M40) and 30 (A13 Interchange) and between Junctions 5 (M26) and 7 (M23) around south-east London. The works will take place over approximately 7 years starting in 2009. Currently the Highways Agency is widening the M25 between Junctions 1b (Dartford Crossing) and 3 (A20/M20) south of the Thames. These works began in Spring 2007 and will be completed in 2008.

The Highways Agency's proposals for the M25 are developed from the London Orbital Multi-Modal Study (ORBIT) published in 2002. This study looked at the most appropriate transport strategy for the M25 corridor. The Secretary of State for Transport accepted the ORBIT study recommendation to widen most of the remaining 3-lane sections of the motorway and to manage traffic demand to ensure that the benefits of the additional capacity are retained.

Why is improvement needed?

High levels of traffic flow have led to increased congestion and unpredictability of travel times. Congestion on the M25 is caused by a number of factors including:

- journeys to and from work which account for approximately 50% of traffic in the peak periods;
- the M25 is used for a small part of many longer journeys;
- average occupancies of vehicles are low;
- traffic consists of a high proportion of heavy goods vehicles.



Existing congestion at Nags Head Lane on M25 Junction 28



Improved Motorway at M25 Junctions 12 to 15

Nearly 20% of UK road freight either starts or ends its journey in the South East of England. Thus, improvement of the M25 through widening of the road is essential to secure the long-term economic prosperity of SE England and the country as a whole.

What are the benefits?

The Scheme provides the following benefits:

- improved reliability of the time it takes to make a journey
- improved safety on the motorway
- reduced congestion
- improved driver information

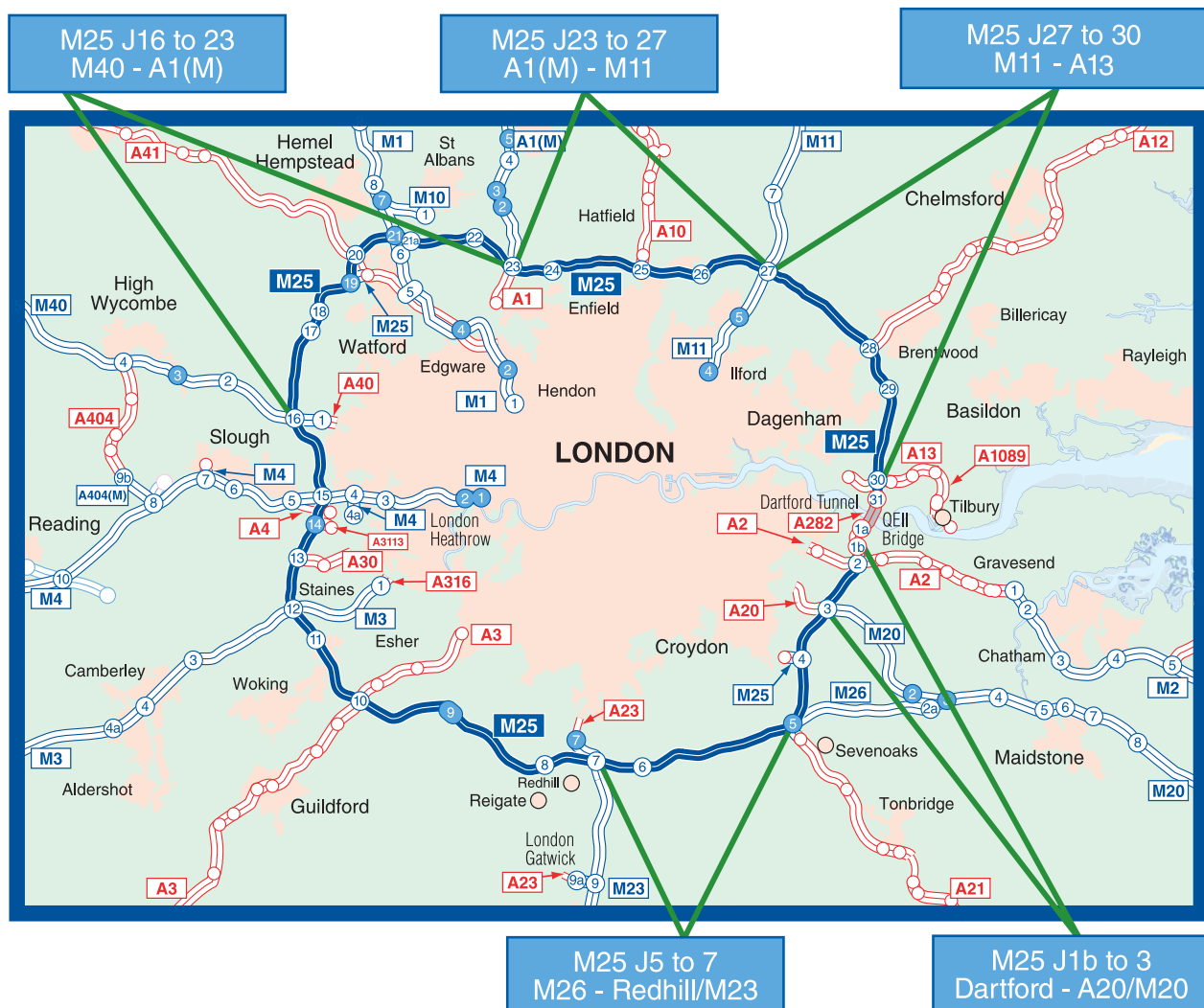
How is the Highways Agency going to build these improvements?

For construction purposes, the widening works are divided into four sections.

These are:

- Section 1: From Junctions 16 (M40) to 23 (A1(M))
- Section 2: From Junctions 5 (M26) to 7 (M23)
- Section 4: From Junctions 27 (M11) to 30 (A13)
- Section 5: From Junctions 23 (A1(M)) to 27 (M11)

Section 1 is the first to be widened and is followed by Section 4.



NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

This Non-Technical Summary details the widening of Section 4 between Junctions 27 and 30, which has an overall length of 25.5km (16 miles). The Non-Technical Summary acts as a summary of the Environmental Statement, which is published in accordance with European Directive 85/337/EEC amended by Directive 97/11/EC and Directive 2003/35/EC as applied by Section 105A of the Highways Act 1980, as amended.

The Environmental Statement presents in detail the findings of the Environmental Impact Assessment. There is a legal requirement to provide a Non-Technical Summary to ensure that the non-technical reader can fully appreciate the likely environmental effects of the new development before a decision is made by the Secretary of State.

Description of the Junctions 27 to 30 Widening Scheme

One of the key objectives is to avoid, reduce or mitigate significant environmental impacts where necessary. The Scheme is constructed within the Secretary of State's land by making the existing side slopes steeper or by constructing new retaining structures. It is necessary to remove some of the existing vegetation, but this is replaced and improved in the finished works.

Upgraded road lighting is provided along the whole length of the Scheme together with new traffic sign gantries and better vehicle and incident detection, to ensure that breakdowns and congestion on the motorway can be more effectively managed. The new gantries and signals allow a variable speed limit system to be introduced, similar to that which currently exists on the M25 between Junctions 10 and 16. These measures help to manage the flow of traffic and ease any congestion that might occur.

Landscape Effects

The existing motorway is visible in many views from the surrounding landscape. The area around the Scheme contains the Curtismill Green Site of Special Scientific Interest, Thames Chase Community Forest, County Wildlife Sites, Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation, Areas of Local Nature Conservation Significance, Ancient Woodlands, Green Belt and numerous towns, villages and scattered houses.

The impact of the Scheme on the landscape and views results from loss of vegetation within the motorway fence line and because of new gantries and signs.

Impacts will be reduced in the long term by new planting and enhancement of the existing vegetation. This helps to screen the Scheme from sensitive viewpoints and assist with its wider visual integration into the landscape.

Ecology and Nature Conservation

Disturbance from the motorway already impacts on the existing habitats and species. The Scheme will have a slight adverse impact upon habitats and certain species, such as bats and birds, as a result of the increase in habitat edge effects and upgraded lighting; however, the Scheme includes new planting and habitat reinstatement in line with the Highways Agency Biodiversity Action Plan. The use of low noise surfacing and improved drainage ensures that the environmental effects of the Scheme are mitigated wherever possible.

No Statutorily Designated Ecological Sites are affected by the Scheme.

The Construction Environmental Management Plan controls construction impacts and ensures improvements are implemented. Advance mitigation work, prior to construction, minimises impacts on protected species during the construction phase.

Road Drainage and Water Environment

The Scheme crosses a number of defined floodplains and water courses, including those of the River Roding, the Weald Brook and the Mardyke. No Public Water Supply groundwater or surface water abstraction locations exist within the study area and the existing M25 footprint does not overlap any designated Source Protection Zones (SPZs).

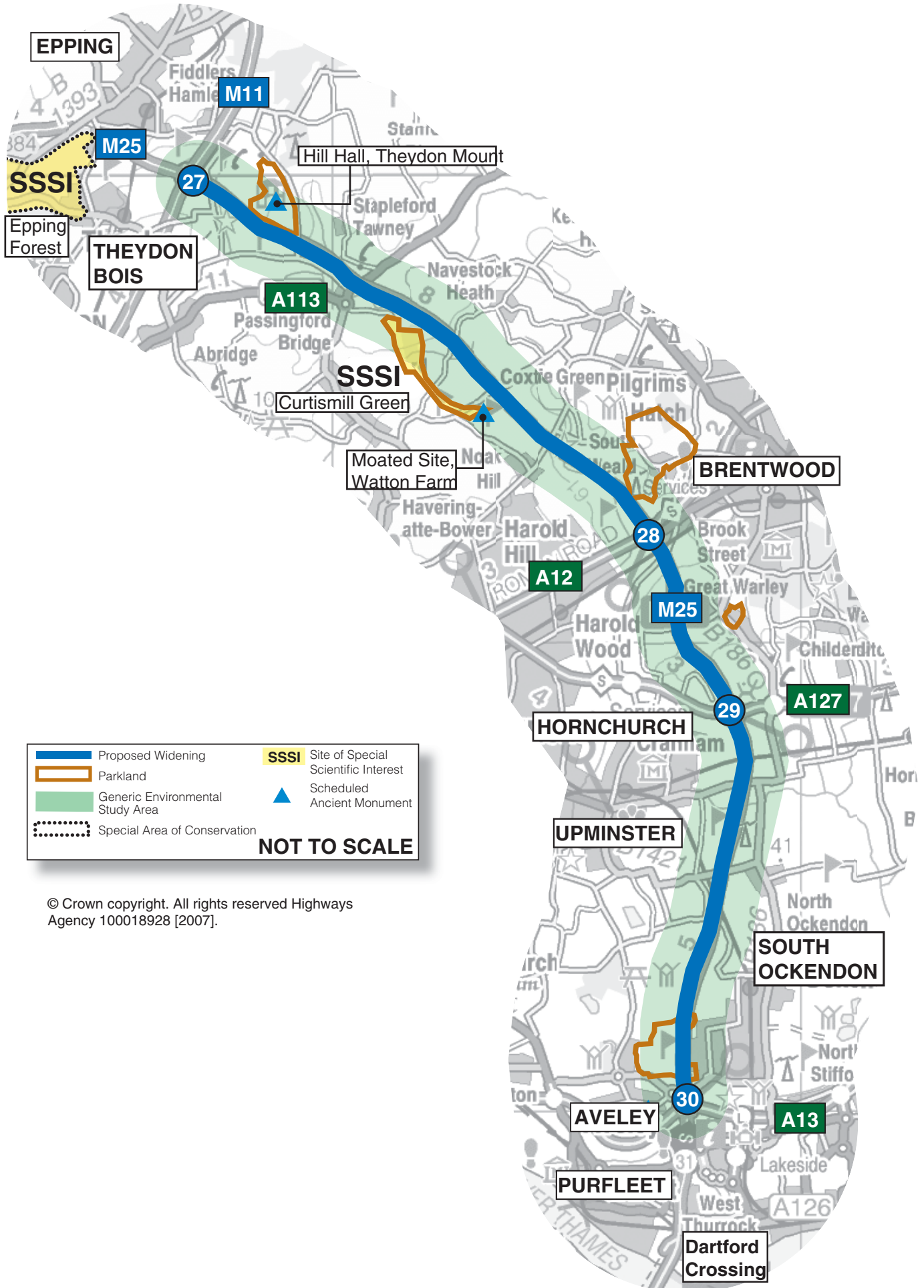
The new drainage system collects rainfall from the motorway, treats the quality of the water and manages its flow by the use of a number of drainage features, such as filter drains, reed beds, ponds and grassed infiltration basins. These measures minimise the adverse effects from the Scheme so that water quality and discharge are no worse than in the existing situation and provide an improvement where possible.

Traffic Noise and Vibration

The Scheme includes the installation of low noise surfacing on the new and existing carriageway where it currently does not exist. When the Scheme opens, 164 properties would have a decrease of 1-3 dB(A) and 6 properties would have a decrease of 3-5 dB(A), 1 property would have an increase of 1-3 dB(A) and 42 properties would experience no significant change. One residential property may qualify for noise insulation.

During the construction phase, noise control measures will be in place and the contractor will agree permissible noise levels with the local authority Environmental Health Officers.

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT



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Air Quality

Currently there are a total of nine Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) listed within the study area. Changes in traffic flows and speeds do not result in any of the relevant air quality standards being exceeded.

During construction, temporary air quality effects caused by dust are controlled to ensure that there is no nuisance to neighbouring properties.

Geology and Soils

Where the motorway crosses contaminated land, the contractor will employ best practice procedures to minimise the risk of any harmful effects.

New retaining walls minimise the exposure of contaminated landfill material, minimise the quantity of soil excavated and act as a barrier to the migration of any contaminants.

Cultural Heritage

The Scheme could result in slight adverse impacts to known archaeological sites and areas of general archaeological potential and slight adverse impacts to listed buildings due to the increased visibility of the motorway and its associated furniture. There will be neutral impacts to other heritage sites.

The majority of the construction land was disturbed when the existing motorway was built. However, a number of locations have been identified where archaeological remains could be largely undisturbed and where further archaeological investigation will be undertaken during construction. This includes areas within the Belhus Cut where there is the potential for impact on regionally/nationally important remains from the Palaeolithic period.

Vehicle Travellers

Views of the road will worsen slightly due to the increase in signs, lighting and gantries, although the Scheme is being constructed entirely within existing Secretary of State owned land. Rising traffic levels will increase driver stress, whether the Scheme is built or not. With the Scheme in place this stress will be lower due to improved driver information, smoother traffic flow and reduced congestion.

Policies and Plans

The Scheme is in compliance with various national, regional and local Government transport and planning policies that promote improvements to the existing trunk road network/freight corridors. The Scheme has no effect on planning and other policies relating to waste and contaminated land, archaeology and built heritage, provisions for pedestrians and cyclists and public rights of way.

In the short term, the removal of habitat and vegetation for the Scheme does not promote planning policies on biodiversity and landscape protection. However, the Scheme's proposed long-term enhancement measures encourage biodiversity and landscape improvements. The Scheme does not promote various national, regional and local Government transport and planning policies that aim for reductions in car usage. The Scheme is constructed within land owned and controlled by the Secretary of State and non-vehicular modes of transport are not affected.

Pedestrians, Cyclists, Equestrians and Community Effects

The network of Public Rights of Way within the study area includes several which cross or run immediately adjacent to the M25. During construction, there will be temporary closures of some crossing points and adjacent routes, which will result in temporary severance of these routes.

Following completion of the Scheme, impacts to pedestrians and others are not significant enough to deter any journeys and there is no overall change in community severance.

Disruption Due to Construction

A Construction Environmental Management Plan will be in place before the start of construction. The Plan comprises detailed methods and controls to safeguard the environment, ensure best practice and mitigate the adverse effects of the Scheme during construction.

The Plan details measures to reduce the effects of excavated materials, noise, dust, waste, temporary lighting and traffic management on the community, including watercourses, habitats and protected species.



Example of drainage treatment measures at Ockendon

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. When will construction commence and how long will it last?

A. Construction is planned to start in 2010, subject to the Secretary of State deciding to proceed with the Scheme. The construction is planned to be completed by 2012.

Q. Will traffic divert off the M25 onto the local roads?

A. The works are planned so as to maintain the existing number of traffic lanes during the day time and thus minimise any potential for traffic diversion.

Q. Will noise levels increase?

A. Low noise surfacing ensures that surrounding properties do not experience noticeable increases in noise levels.

Q. What are the benefits to road users?

A. The main benefit is that journey times for the road user are more reliable, safer and less stressful. Road users will be better informed of road conditions by means of new message signs.

Following the publication of the Environmental Statement on 15 November 2007 there is a 12 week comment period ending 7 February 2008 where the Environmental Statement can be viewed at Deposit Locations and Public Exhibitions will take place.

Deposit Locations are:

Epping Library

The Parish Office, Theydon Bois

Chipping Ongar Library

Harold Hill Library

Brentwood Library

Upminster Library

Belhus Branch Library

Chafford Hundred Library

Grays Library

Thurrock Borough Council

Highways Agency, Federated House, London Road, Dorking, RH4 1SZ

Highways Agency, Woodlands, Manton Lane, Manton Industrial Estate, Bedford MK41 7LW

Highways Agency, 5 Broadway, Broad Street, Birmingham, B15 1BL



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Following the publication of the Environmental Statement on 15 November 2007 there is a 12 week

Public Exhibition Locations are:

Quality Hotel Epping, High Road, Bell Common, Epping, CM16 4DG on

Friday 23rd November 2007 (2pm-9pm) & Saturday 24th November 2007 (10am-5pm)

Holiday Inn Brentwood M25 Jct 28,

Brook Street, Brentwood, CM14 5NF on

Thursday 29th November 2007 (2pm-9pm)

Thurrock Hotel, Ship Lane, Aveley, Purfleet, Essex RM19 1YN on

Friday 30th November 2007 (2pm-9pm)

Park Inn Thurrock, High Road, North Stifford, Essex RM16 5UE on

Saturday 1st December 2007 (10am-5pm)

Central Park Leisure Centre, Gooshays Drive, Harold Hill, Romford, RM3 9LB on

Friday 7th December 2007 (2pm-9pm) &

Saturday 8th December 2007 (10am-5pm)

Publication of Environmental Statement

12 Week Comment period

Respond to Comments

Report to Secretary of State

Secretary of State Announces Decision

Construction Begins

Additional Scheme Specific Information

Web site: www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/5739.aspx

Email: m25widening@highways.gsi.gov.uk

Postal address: Major Projects
Highways Agency
5 Broadway
Broad Street
Birmingham B15 1BL

For real time traffic information:

08700 660 115

www.highways.gov.uk/trafficinfo

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0870 numbers will cost no more than 8p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

For general Highways Agency information:

08457 50 40 30

email: ha_info@highways.gsi.gov.uk

24 hours a day, 365 days a year

(Calls from BT landlines to 0845 numbers will cost no more than 4p per minute; mobile calls usually cost more)

Safe driving at roadworks

Remember that tiredness can kill. Take regular breaks from driving.



During 2006 two workers were killed and 19 seriously injured in the course of their work on Highways Agency roads.

For the safety of all road users and roadworkers, when you are approaching roadworks: ● Keep within the speed limit – it is there for your safety. ● Get into the correct lane in good time – don't keep switching. ● Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks. ● Be alert for works' traffic leaving or entering roadworks. ● Keep a safe distance – there could be queues in front. ● Observe all signs – they are there to help you.