TyreSafe

SAFE TYRES SAVE LIVES

POSITION PAPER

tyresafe.org

Vehicle defects as a roads policing priority

Goal 4

POSITION AS AT	VERSION	NEXT REVIEW
November 2026	1.0	When the next NPCC national roads policing strategy is published, or November 2027

Our position

Vehicle defects, above all defective tyres, should be recognised as a priority in national roads policing, alongside the offences already prioritised under Operation Spotlight. TyreSafe is not asking for new offences or powers. We are asking for defects to be part of national roads policing priorities, operations and recording, with enforcement paired with education. Officers can check a tyre at the roadside in seconds, so that is where we focus.

The problem

- **Dangerous defects are common.** About 1.55 million MOT tests a year find a dangerous tyre defect, and tyres make up 61% of dangerous defects on cars and light vans. (DVSA)
- **Tyre-related casualties are rising fastest.** 201 people were killed or seriously injured where defective tyres were a factor in 2025, 21% above the Strategy's baseline, against 3% for all casualties. On motorways, tyre defects were recorded in as many collisions as all other mechanical defects combined. (DfT)
- **Collisions caused by defects are probably undercounted.** Contributory factors are an officer's judgement at the scene, usually without specialist tyre examination. Around 450 collisions a year are recorded with a tyre factor, against over 2 million MOT tyre failures. Independent analysis of fatal collisions on motorways and major A-roads found 71% of tyre defects were due to a lack of maintenance. (DfT; DVSA; TRL, 2023)
- **Recorded offences are rising, court outcomes are falling.** Defect offences recorded by police rose from 5,920 in 2017 to 16,170 in 2024. Convictions for defective tyres fell to 5,662 in 2025, the lowest in nine years, and licence endorsements for defective tyres fell from 8,945 in 2024 to 6,670 in 2025. (Home Office; Ministry of Justice; DVLA)
- **Fewer officers are looking.** England and Wales had 4,149 roads policing officers in 2025, 21% fewer than in 2015. (Home Office)
- **Defects are missing from national priorities.** The NPCC's 2022–25 strategy focused on the "fatal four" offences, and Operation Spotlight now targets the "fatal five". Vehicle condition is in neither.

What we are asking for, and from whom

The NPCC Roads Policing portfolio:

- include vehicle condition, particularly tyres, in the next national roads policing strategy;
- add a vehicle-defect element to Operation Spotlight or the NPCC operations calendar, for example alongside Tyre Safety Month each October;
- make a quick visual tyre check a routine part of roadside stops;
- issue guidance on identifying and recording vehicle defects at serious and fatal collisions, including when to call for specialist examination.

The Department for Transport and the Home Office:

- include vehicle defects in the Roads Policing Innovation Programme. One option is to extend the MOT data checks already used in Tutelage+ to vehicles that failed their MOT with a dangerous defect and have no record of a repair or pass. A vehicle with a dangerous defect must not be driven, even if its previous MOT certificate has not yet expired;
- carry vehicle defects into the national roads policing functions of the new National Police Service as it is set up.

What TyreSafe offers: officer briefing and training materials on tyre checks, the Operation ACT model of joint police and TyreSafe checks, our data and analysis, and the proposed NDORS defect course as an education route.

Why we believe it would work

- **When officers look, they find defects.** In Operation ACT in Bolton in October 2025, 19 of 137 vehicles checked (14%) faced formal tyre enforcement.
- **The Strategy already points this way.** It names drivers with no MOT as an enforcement priority because their vehicles may be unroadworthy (p. 40). The danger to other road users is the defect, not the missing certificate. It also commits to a Roads Policing Innovation Programme focused on national coordination, technology and targeted enforcement (p. 41).
- **It costs little.** A visual tyre check takes seconds during a stop already being made, and a defect element can sit within operations that already run.
- **Enforcement and education work together.** A defect retraining course (Goal 5) gives forces a proportionate response that fixes the car and the habit.

How confident we are

HIGH That vehicle defects are common, under-enforced relative to how often they occur, and probably under-recorded in collisions.

MODERATE That giving defects more priority will reduce casualties. There is little direct evaluation of defect enforcement. Our Goal 6 indicator and better collision recording would show whether it is working.

Concerns and our response

Concern	Our response
Tyres are a small share of casualties: about 200 of 30,000	They are rising far faster than casualties overall, are probably undercounted, and on motorways match all other mechanical defects combined. The ask is low-cost and fits alongside existing priorities.
Roads policing is already stretched	We are not asking for separate operations or more officers, but for defects to be checked during stops and operations that already happen.
Enforcement is not the answer to poor maintenance	Agreed that it is not the only answer. That is why we pair it with education (Goal 5), reminders and campaigns. Without enforcement, those have no backstop.
The idea comes from a charity supported by the tyre industry	We ask for checks officers can make at the roadside, and for all vehicle defects to be recorded properly. Nothing in this paper benefits any company or brand.

What we are not asking for

- No new offences, penalties or police powers.
- No reduction in the priority given to the fatal five.
- No dependence on any one document or structure: the ask applies to whatever national roads policing strategy and structure are in place.

How this fits with our other goals

This is the enforcement part of the package. The defect retraining course (Goal 5) gives officers an education route, advisory reminders (Goal 3) and THINK! campaigns (Goal 2) reach drivers before they are stopped, and the MOT-based indicator (Goal 6) would show whether the fleet is getting safer.

Review and changes

TyreSafe reviews this position every year, when the next national roads policing strategy is published, and as police reform takes shape. If the evidence or the structure of policing changes, so will our position, and we will record what changed and why.

Version	Date	Change
1.0	November 2026	First published

Sources

- DfT, Road Safety Strategy (7 January 2026), pp. 40–41
- DfT, Reported road casualties Great Britain 2025, table RAS0701 (tyre figures as extracted by TyreSafe)
- DVSA, MOT testing data 2025–26
- Home Office, Police powers and procedures: Roads policing, to December 2024 (England and Wales, excluding the Metropolitan Police)
- Ministry of Justice, convictions for defective tyres, 2017–2025
- RAC Freedom of Information request to DVLA on licence endorsements (June 2026)
- RAC/Home Office, roads policing officer numbers (October 2025)
- TRL, analysis of tyre defects in fatal collisions on motorways and major A-roads, 2014–2022 (October 2023)

- NPCC, National Roads Policing Strategy 2022–2025
- Home Office, From local to national: a new model for policing (January 2026)