
Preparing for heatwaves

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Preparing your customers for a potential heatwave can help minimise damage, reduce costs, and alleviate stress.



Simple steps to make sure your customers are prepared:

Essential contacts & planning

- Create a list of important contacts, including family or friends, local emergency helplines, your insurance details, and sign up for the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) alerts.
- Check on vulnerable family members or friends during extreme heat periods.
- Consider a heatwave action plan outlining what needs to be done during a heatwave. Know where to cool down (home, vehicle and public spaces) and make sure that both your home and vehicle are set up to protect you.
- Check the different UKHSA alerts to know what needs to be done for each category if it's announced.

Protection

- Make sure you understand what you are (and aren't) covered for, and check your policy to see if anything needs changing or updating.
- Consider preparing an emergency heatwave kit (one for the home and one for the car). It can be stocked with essential items such as water, first aid supplies, medications, long-life snacks/ energy bars, etc.
- To keep rooms cooler, close windows, blinds and curtains during the hottest hours and only ventilate when outdoor temperatures are cooler than indoors.
- If you need to make a trip in the car, try to park in a shaded area to help keep the inside temperature cooler. Use a reflective sunshade on your windscreen to help keep things cool while you're away from your car.

Customer quick tips

For homes

- Use appliances during cooler parts of the day where possible and switch off appliances that are not in use.
- Move valuable or heat-sensitive items away from windows and direct sunlight, before the temperature climbs.
- Know where your gas, electricity, and water shut offs are. In an emergency, this knowledge could save you money and stress.
- If you have an air-con unit, get it serviced before summer arrives. It's cheaper than an emergency repair during a heatwave.

For vehicles

- Service your car before summer; check air-con, battery, coolant levels, and tyre pressure. Heat affects all of these.
- Never leave valuables, pets, or people in a parked car during hot weather. It's dangerous and could affect your insurance claim if something goes wrong.
- Check your battery health now. Heat accelerates battery wear, and you don't want to be stranded in extreme temperatures.
- Keep your fuel tank at least half full during summer. Fuel evaporates faster in heat, and a low tank can cause fuel pump issues.
- Check if your breakdown cover includes roadside assistance, as heatwaves can cause more breakdowns.

Did you know?

Electronics and appliances can overheat and catch fire in extreme temperatures. Dishwashers, washing machines, and refrigerators are particularly at risk. If you can, keep appliances away from direct sunlight. If you can't, check them regularly during a heatwave. The London Fire Brigade has a free home safety check tool.

Attic temperatures can reach 50°C+ during a heatwave, even when outside temperatures are lower. This puts more strain on roof structures and insulation. Consider installing an attic fan to bring the temperature down or upgrading your insulation.

Hybrid and electric vehicle batteries are particularly vulnerable to extreme heat. Battery efficiency can drop by 20-30%, reducing range significantly. Park in the shade where you can and limit the number of fast charges you do.

Engine oil thickens in heat and loses its protective properties. Oil changes are critical in summer to prevent engine damage. Make sure to check your oil levels more regularly during hot weather.