

The latest news, views, and announcements

Better Roads, Better Business

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The UK Government's recent announcement of a major road repair initiative is welcome news for the coach industry. With an additional seven million potholes set to be repaired in 2025, the plan promises safer, smoother journeys for passengers and reduced wear and tear on vehicles.

Potholes have long been a source of frustration for coach operators, leading to increased maintenance costs, delays, and potential safety hazards. The Government's pledge to invest in road maintenance addresses a critical concern for our sector. By prioritising repairs, operators can expect fewer disruptions and a more reliable infrastructure to support their services.

The initiative also invites the public to play a key role in identifying roads in need of repair through online reporting. This participatory approach ensures that the areas most in need of attention are addressed, benefiting both urban and rural routes frequently used by coaches.

www.gov.uk/report-pothole

For coach operators, this investment in infrastructure is more than a convenience; it's a competitive advantage. Smoother roads enhance fuel efficiency and reduce vehicle wear, contributing to lower operating costs and higher customer satisfaction. Additionally, safer road conditions improve the overall travel experience for passengers, helping to boost confidence in coach travel as a reliable and comfortable mode of transportation.

We encourage our members to take advantage of the reporting system to highlight problem areas on their routes. Together, we can help ensure that the Government's commitment translates into tangible improvements for our industry.

Dates for Your Diary



25th January

Annual Winter Ball
Royal Garden Hotel, London

28th January

Members Meeting
(Amended from 21st)

1st February

'Return to Driving'
DCPC Module Launches

9th March

Members Dinner
Location, TBC

10th March

AGM & Conference
Volvo Group, Warwick

12th & 13th April

UK Coach Rally, Blackpool

Park Lane Coach Parking

Transport for London (TfL) has issued a reminder to coach operators regarding the use of the northbound coach parking area on Park Lane. To ensure the safety of all road users, including cyclists, and to maintain smooth traffic flow, specific rules apply to this area. Here's what you need to know:

Northbound Coach Parking

- **No Boarding or Alighting:** Coaches are not permitted to load or unload passengers in the northbound coach parking bays, except in the two designated bays located to the rear of Apsley House.
- **Bus Stop Restrictions:** All northbound stops along Park Lane are restricted for use by local buses only. Coaches should avoid using these stops entirely.

Southbound Carriageway

- **Set Down and Pick Up Only:** Coaches may set down or pick up passengers on the southbound carriageway, but parking or waiting is not permitted.
- **Dedicated Facility:** A specific facility for coach set down and pick up is available next to The Dorchester hotel, providing a safe and convenient option for passenger transfers.

These restrictions are in place to enhance road safety, particularly given the proximity of the northbound coach parking to a cycle lane. Operators are encouraged to plan routes and schedules accordingly to avoid disruptions and ensure compliance with TfL's guidance.



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Our Growing Community

As we reflect on 2024, we are thrilled to celebrate the growth of the UKCOA community. Last year, we welcomed many new members and industry partners who bring fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and valuable expertise to our collective mission of advancing the coach industry.

The diverse range of operators joining us underscores the strength and resilience of our sector. From family-run businesses to larger operators, each member contributes uniquely to shaping our shared future. Our industry partners have also enriched our association by fostering collaboration and supporting initiatives that benefit the entire coach community.

Looking ahead to 2025, expanding our membership remains a top priority, as we aim to represent an even broader cross-section of the coach industry. By growing our network, we can amplify our collective voice, tackle emerging challenges, and seize new opportunities together.

We encourage current members to help spread the word about the benefits of joining UKCOA. With your support, we can strengthen our association and ensure it continues to be a vital resource for operators and partners alike.

A New Route Across The Thames

TfL have announced that the Silvertown Tunnel, the first road tunnel project in London in over 30 years, is set to open on 7th April, marking a significant infrastructure development for the capital. Designed to ease congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel, this new Thames crossing between the Greenwich Peninsula and Silvertown in east London is expected to shave up to 20 minutes off commutes.

The Blackwall Tunnel has long been a bottleneck, with frequent closures and delays causing disruption for operators. The addition of the Silvertown Tunnel, equipped with a modern design and two lanes in each direction, offers an alternative route that promises smoother traffic flow and enhanced resilience against disruptions.

Cyclists will be able to take advantage of a dedicated shuttle service through the tunnel and up to 21 zero-emission buses an hour will operate in each direction.

While tolls will apply to both the new tunnel and the existing Blackwall Tunnel, vehicles with 9 or more seats are exempt, although they must first be registered with TfL. This exemption underscores the importance of coaches as a sustainable and efficient mode of transport, particularly in urban environments.