



# Five forces join biggest one-day crackdown on uninsured drivers

- 'Op M4' proof of concept to be rolled out across UK
- 51 vehicle seizures, 5 arrests and 7 prosecutions for other offences
- 4 drink and/or drug arrests

Earlier this month five police forces worked in collaboration on a 'first of its kind' operation, tackling uninsured driving along the length of the M4 from London to Swansea.

The MIB (Motor Insurers' Bureau) initiative working alongside officers from South Wales, Gwent, Avon and Somerset, Wiltshire, and Thames Valley Police saw uninsured vehicles seized along the 170 mile stretch of M4 carriageways.

More than a quarter of the stops uncovered secondary offences, including stolen vehicles and drug offences. This was the first of a series of multi-force one-day operations across UK motorways. MIB supported the forces to

enable the dedicated resourcing of additional officers, marked vehicles, ANPR cameras, control room operatives and intelligence staff.

Across the day, officers utilised a number of methods to identify uninsured drivers. These included:

- Operation Tutelage markers, where cars passing ANPR cameras on previous occasions have been compared to data on the Motor Insurance Database (MID), a record of all active motor insurance policies run by MIB. Uninsured vehicles with an Operation Tutelage marker are then flagged to police and dealt with roadside.

- Using police intelligence

and analysis to establish the whereabouts of uninsured vehicles.

To support each of the forces, who are the first to run an MIB-supported multi-force operation focusing on uninsured driving, MIB law enforcement liaison officers joined officers at the roadside. This provided a direct link to the Motor Insurers Database and to the MIB Police Helpline, speeding up the process of confirming a vehicle's insurance status.

Taking dangerous uninsured vehicles off the road doesn't just make them safer, it can help identify individuals of interest, stolen vehicles, and wider crime networks.



**Paul Farley**  
National Law Enforcement Manager, MIB

### *How did you support forces for this operation, Paul?*

We helped resource the operation and we also have four law enforcement liaison officers out with officers. What this brings is that we have direct access to the MIB database so we can check policies when people are pulled onto sites. Also, we hold some reasonable knowledge about law, policies and procedure as to when vehicles can be seized.

### *Are you seeing any trends emerging?*

We know that the cost of living is a problem, and that premiums have gone up in the past few months. There is a general creep at the moment towards people driving without insurance because they can't afford it. It may even be that they missed a payment one month because they couldn't make it and the insurance company ended up cancelling the policy. It's not translating into increased claims for us just yet but we're watching that with significant caution.

### *Now take the other end which is the criminal option and how an operation like this can help?*

We know that lots of criminals use the roads to get about – vehicles are used for transporting stolen goods and committing offences. Many of those individuals don't have insurance either, and we are aware of the significant relationship between those who choose to drive without insurance and wider criminality – that

can be anything from low level offences such as no MOT through drink and drug driving and up to serious crimes where there is a significant risk of harm to members of the public, such as child sexual exploitation, county lines, drug gangs and fraudulent matters as well. So when we take an uninsured vehicle off the road we are also most likely taking an individual who is responsible for aspects of road danger and road crime as well.

### *Give us a few examples of what officers have brought in?*

The first four vehicles brought into Magor Services, on the Gwent stretch of the M4, proved quite a mixed bag. There was one individual who was brought in at 9.30 in the morning. He had no insurance on his BMW, he was also over the drink drive limit.

We had another person of no fixed abode who had no tax, no insurance and no MOT on the vehicle. The other two had no insurance policy in place, due to affordability.

### *How excited are you about the potential of large-scale, multi-partner operations like this being rolled out successfully in other areas?*

We are very excited. This is a first for MIB where we've worked with more than one force to put on an operation. We're pleased and proud of this collaboration, we're doing two more - one in the north and another in Scotland later in the year.

I think when we look at the profile of this operation today, with plenty of interest from the media, it sends the clear message that the offence of uninsured driving simply won't be tolerated.



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**Tackling the fatal 4 offences remains a daily priority for all police forces, but when initiatives such as 'Operation M4' are deployed onto our roads we can really see how working together saves lives. The M4 is an important strategic road and this operation will make a significant contribution to the National Police Chiefs Council's 'Fatal 4' operation running throughout April. Thank you to the Motor Insurance Bureau and to all of those taking part across South Wales, Gwent, Avon & Somerset, Wiltshire and Thames Valley Police Forces for helping to take risk off our roads.**

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Chief Constable Jo Shiner  
NPCC Lead for Roads Policing