national highways

INFORMATION

Safety Alert

Vehicle Fire

29 October 2025

The following page of this safety alert was issued by National Highways' supply chain partner:

Balfour Beatty

If you have any queries about this safety alert information announcement or any other safety announcement then please contact HealthSafety&Wellbeingteam@nationalhighways.co.uk

home safe and well

SAFETY ALERT

UK/SA/2025/004
28 October 2025

Vehicle Fire

A Balfour Beatty Ford Transit Crew cab tipper recently experienced a cab fire that required Fire Services intervention. Two colleagues received minor burns. The vehicle sustained damage beyond repair. The investigation into this incident is ongoing.

The engine batteries of Ford Transits are in a compartment underneath the front passenger's seat(s). This is commonplace across vehicle manufacturers. The batteries are typically located in this area to optimise weight distribution and reduce fire risk should a vehicle sustain a front-end collision. Another reason is to remove heat transfer from the engine to the battery.

Post-incident checks on similar vehicles have identified foreign objects such as cutting discs, road marking aerosol cans, PPE and other items under the seats, between the base of the seat and the battery compartment. This introduces the risk of poor air circulation around the batteries, but more importantly, metallic objects connecting with the battery terminals could cause heat and flames.

In this situation, the introduction of accelerants, such as the aerosol can discovered jammed between the battery box and the seat (pictured on the left), could hugely increase the risk of a short circuit and lead to a fire incident.

Action required

All drivers are required to:

- avoid stowing any items under the cab seats unless these are in a designated manufacturer storage box.
- use toolchests, lockers on the sides of vehicles, racking, draws or shelving or draws in the load area of the vehicle.

Lee Hewitt

UK Health, Safety & Wellbeing Director