

Rating the roadside recovery firms

BIGGER and better for 2009, Driver Power has put the UK's breakdown services under the spotlight with its most stringent assessment yet.

We asked you to rate your chosen mechanical breakdown and recovery service provider in four key categories: value for money, friendliness and helpfulness, general presentation and overall service.

With a number of companies that are household names operating in this field, the results promised to be fascinating. And now that we've done the number crunching, here are your top 15 providers, with a surprise new entry at number one...

HOW THE RATINGS WORK

A THIS is the overall ranking out of 15 for each insurance cover provider.

B THIS scale represents every firm in the chart – one indicates the best of the bunch, while 15 is the lowest possible rating.

C THIS bar reveals performance in each category. A longer bar means a better score. The numbers are the firm's position out of 15.

D THE percentage score is an average of each category and is used for the final ranking.

2 **GEM Motoring Assist** **85.81%**
Contact: 0845 3700 940, www.motoringassist.com

LAST year's winner has to settle for second place. Still, there's plenty to celebrate with a consistently excellent score across the board. There are three levels of cover and the firm is clearly focused on its customers, with the website providing road safety information. There's little more you could want, and you gave it an average score of 85.81 per cent.

RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	2	2	PRESENTATION	2	2
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	2	2	SERVICE	2	2

11 **National Breakdown** **77.70%**

THERE are five levels of cover, plus policies for classics, motorhomes and fleet users. More helpful staff could have pushed the firm into the top 10, although you tell us there are more polished performers further up the chart.



Contact: 0800 138 2468, www.internationalbreakdown.com

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	10	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	12	
PRESENTATION	10	
OVERALL SERVICE	10	

15 **Tesco** **74.77%**

IN last place, the supermarket giant's breakdown cover starts at a very tempting price, but it's hit rock bottom in the other categories as far as our readers' experiences are concerned. Three levels of service are offered, plus there's a European option.



Contact: 0845 246 3258, www.tescofinance.com

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	9	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	15	
PRESENTATION	15	
OVERALL SERVICE	15	

13 **Direct Line** **76.45%**

COVER from as little as £23 and a policy that covers anyone driving your car – the Direct Line website offers plenty. In your experience, all areas of the service were below par. Value for money fared worst, with the company in 14th place.



Contact: 0845 246 8702, www.directline.com

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	14	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	10	
PRESENTATION	11	
OVERALL SERVICE	12	

10 **Aviva** **78.17%**

YOU want your money to go further here, but are impressed with the presentation of those who come to your aid at the roadside. While it's the RAC which provides the service, those who used it as their breakdown operator gave it higher ratings.



Contact: 0800 096 4704, www.aviva.co.uk

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	11	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	9	
PRESENTATION	7	
OVERALL SERVICE	9	

14 **Churchill** **75.82%**

FIVE levels of cover and a claimed 40-minute average response time should have pushed Churchill up the chart. But you're not impressed. The firm, which says it fixes eight out of 10 cars at the roadside, will need to raise its game to improve customer satisfaction in 2010.



Contact: 0800 200 326, www.churchill.com

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	13	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	14	
PRESENTATION	13	
OVERALL SERVICE	14	

12 **More Than** **77.48%**

HERE'S proof there's a difference between good value and cheap prices. Cover starts at £41 per year – nearly double what some Direct Line buyers pay – yet the pricier firm is placed seventh for value. Other ratings are less impressive, though.



Contact: 0800 300 988, www.morethan.com

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	7	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	13	
PRESENTATION	12	
OVERALL SERVICE	13	

9 **Green Flag** **78.37%**

ONLINE, Green Flag quotes 40-minute average callout times for the AA and RAC, claiming that its own is less than half an hour in comparison. Prices start at £20, but the overall service is judged to be below par.



Contact: 0845 246 2766, www.greenflag.com

RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	8	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	8	
PRESENTATION	9	
OVERALL SERVICE	11	

8 **AA** **78.69%**
Contact: 0800 085 2721, www.theaa.com

ONE of the best-known organisations sits mid-table, and that's down to one thing – value. Sixth position for both presentation and helpfulness show that the service is considered acceptable – but the prices aren't. The AA's basic cover starts from £28 for online buyers, yet you have told us you feel short-changed.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	15		PRESENTATION	6	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	6		SERVICE	7	

6 **RAC** **80.60%**
Contact: 0800 096 0745, www.rac.co.uk

THE RAC claims that the combined experience of its workforce is 9,622,850 days! That's helped it to better its arch rival the AA (above), but it still hasn't managed to make it into the top five. The familiar branding of the firm's fleet, however, has earned it a lofty third place for general presentation, although 12th out of 15 for value is disappointing.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	12		PRESENTATION	3	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	4		SERVICE	6	

4 **AutoAid** **83.27%**
Contact: 01277 235820, www.autoaidbreakdown.co.uk

WITHOUT the glitzy marketing of some competitors, AutoAid is proving a hit with its customers. Fourth place overall is a great finish for a company that describes itself as "the economical way to get breakdown cover". You tell us no other recovery organisation makes your cash go further, rating the firm number one in the value for money chart.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	1		PRESENTATION	8	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	7		SERVICE	4	

2 **GEM Motoring Assist** **85.81%**
Contact: 0845 3700 940, www.motoringassist.com

LAST year's winner has to settle for second place. Still, there's plenty to celebrate with a consistently excellent score across the board. There are three levels of cover and the firm is clearly focused on its customers, with the website providing road safety information. There's little more you could want, and you gave it an average score of 85.81 per cent.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	2		PRESENTATION	2	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	2		SERVICE	2	

7 **RescuemyCar.com** **79.77%**
Contact: 0800 0199519, www.rescuemycar.com

USING over 4,000 independent recovery experts across the country, RescuemyCar.com takes the unusual approach of not offering flat rate packages, tailoring a service to meet your requirements instead. You have told us you are delighted with the value, but less impressed with the appearance and helpfulness of those independent mechanics.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	4		PRESENTATION	14	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	11		SERVICE	8	

5 **Mondial Assistance** **81.48%**
Contact: 0871 200 2403, www.mondial-assistance.co.uk

OFFERING recovery services in the UK only to corporate and fleet drivers, Mondial Assistance isn't open to everyone. And that's a pity, as it received some good scores across the board. You were most impressed with the company's general presentation, while the service score taking it to fifth place reflects Mondial Assistance's overall position.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	6		PRESENTATION	4	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	5		SERVICE	5	

3 **Autonational Rescue** **83.89%**
Contact: 0845 910 0345, www.autonational.co.uk

INSPIRED by insurance sales, Autonational Rescue provides a protected no-claims discount – and says it's the first recovery firm to have offered such a scheme. If you don't call on its services in your first year, you receive a 25 per cent discount on your renewal. Having given it glowing ratings across the board, you tell us the firm is tough to beat.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	3		PRESENTATION	5	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	3		SERVICE	3	

1 **Britannia Rescue** **86.15%**
Contact: 0800 591563, www.britanniarescue.com

BLASTING straight into first place, this first-timer has a tremendous overall score of 86.15 per cent, having earned first place in three of our four categories. Even if the pricing could be improved, you can't fault Britannia Rescue's performance. The company says it's been providing the best breakdown cover and service for over 25 years. On this evidence, it's right.



RATINGS	15	1	RATINGS	15	1
VALUE FOR MONEY	5		PRESENTATION	1	
FRIENDLY/HELPFUL	1		SERVICE	1	