



## Toyota Patrol Vehicles Join Highways Agency Motorway Force

23 November 2005

Thirty-two Toyota Land Cruisers are joining what is set to become one of Britain's most visible 4x4 fleets, with more to follow next year. They are part of the biggest shake-up in motorway emergency management since the network began and will have to live up to their reputation for reliability.

Under the new arrangements, 1200 Highways Agency traffic officers are being deployed to free up police by managing all but the biggest traffic incidents, and keeping traffic moving. The officers have been operating on West Midlands motorways since last spring, the south-east since August and begin operations in the north-west and north-east in September. By mid-2006 they will be patrolling all of England's motorways around the clock. The HA teams have no enforcement powers although, working through seven Regional Control Centres, they co-operate closely with the police.

Using four makes of 4x4 spread between the regions, including the five-door Toyota Land Cruiser LC3 3-litre diesel automatics, the officers carry out high-visibility patrols, attend accident scenes, remove damaged and abandoned vehicles and clear debris. They also supervise road or lane closures, direct traffic, place and operate signs and manage traffic surveys.

Contract hire company Lloyds TSB Autolease was asked to produce a shortlist from 12 possible vehicle manufacturers to fulfil what Highways Agency Project Sponsor Graham Pittaway describes as a "long, detailed specification". Among other factors, the agency required vehicles that could carry a potential 625kg payload, including emergency gear and up to four people, and diesel automatics for economy and reliability. "All those selected are prestige 4x4 vehicles," said Mr Pittaway. "Four-wheel drive was specified to offset risks in wintertime, to maintain tractability and for the safety of the crew."

The vehicles have a crew of two, and carry traffic cones, first-aid kits, warning lights, water containers, road-clearance implements and other accessories, contained in a bolted-in purpose-built rack system. They also have roof warning lights and variable message signs at the rear.

The Land Cruisers are being delivered to Qi Van Systems of Telford to carry out the conversions. They are also applying the HA livery of yellow/black chequerwork, with red and orange bands on the boot, the logo in black on a blue bonnet and a black HA with vehicle number on the roof.

"We're proud that our vehicles are assisting in this significant development in motorway management," said Toyota Fleet General Manager Jon Pollock. "These Land Cruisers will be among the hardest-working vehicles on the road and we're confident that they will meet expectations."

**ENDS**