

38. Driving on the motorway

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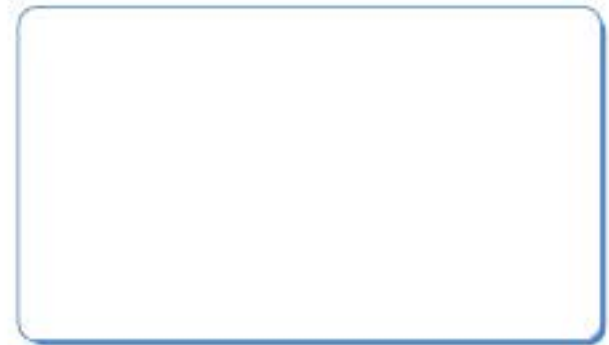
On the whole, motorways are safer than other roads. They don't have many of the hazards found on other roads: things like, cyclists, pedestrians, crossroads, traffic lights, parked cars, etc. However motorways do have their own 'hazards'. In the same way as dual-carriageways, the higher speeds on motorways can cause things to happen very quickly. In order to cope with varying traffic conditions or emergencies you must stay alert and look well ahead (at times you might spot brake-lights as far as a mile or more ahead!).

The normal rule is to use the left-hand lane unless you are overtaking, however, keep a look out for road signs and markings: sometimes (especially in places where motorways merge) the left-hand lane might lead away from your intended destination.

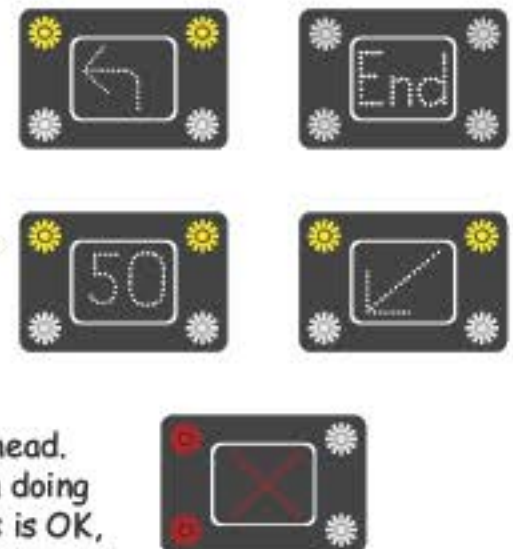
Allow plenty of time for your actions on the motorway. Consider every move carefully making full use of your mirrors and giving other drivers plenty of time to see your signals before starting any manoeuvre. Generally, your signals should flash four or five times before you start to move. It is also important to check your mirrors again after signalling to ensure that other drivers are reacting.

One of the most common motorway problems is driving too close to the cars ahead. Always use the 'two-second rule': double this in poor weather conditions. When doing this you might find that other drivers pull into your safety space ahead ... This is OK, just drop back ... You will still be travelling at high speed (allowing for the conditions) and it won't affect your journey time.

If you are unlucky enough to break down, move to the hard-shoulder. Marker posts on the side of the road will direct you to the nearest phone (**never** cross to a telephone on the opposite carriageway!); the phones are numbered and connect directly to the police control centre. When you return to your car (or while using a mobile phone) stay on the grass verge, or behind a crash barrier well away from the traffic whenever possible - statistics about collisions on the hard-shoulder suggest that you will be safer out there than sitting in your car.



Matrix signs



Marker posts



Follow the arrows for the nearest emergency telephone



Phones are numbered to help the emergency services to find you



Use hazard lights on the hard-shoulder and when slowing down rapidly

Lesson Notes:

