

19. Overtaking

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Overtaking is potentially one of the most dangerous driving manoeuvres; this is because it puts you in the direct path of other traffic. However, overtaking need not be dangerous if you take care and follow some simple rules.

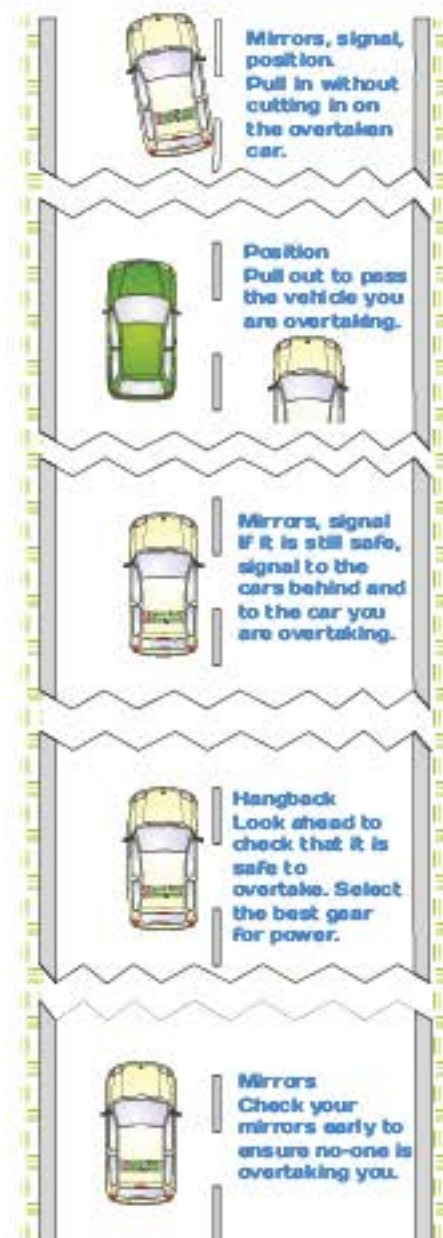
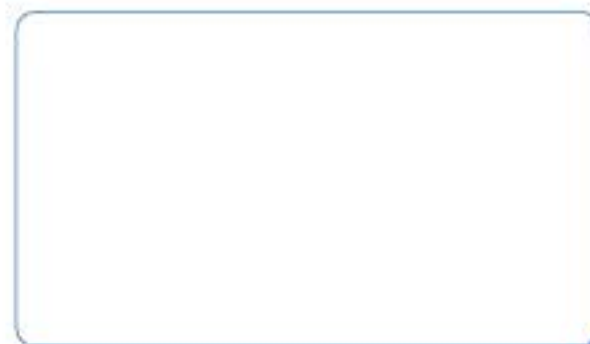
The question to ask yourself is "Will I gain anything by overtaking?". Many people have been killed or injured because their decision to overtake was driven by frustration with a slow-moving vehicle ahead.

Your decision should be based on the effects that overtaking will have on your overall journey time. There is not much point overtaking if you can only pass one or two vehicles in a long slow queue or if you are about to enter a low speed limit area. If there are only one or two slow vehicles it might be worth overtaking, but in today's busy traffic it is often a waste of time - and not worth the risk.

If you have decided that it would be worthwhile to overtake, make sure that the road ahead is clear, be especially careful to check side roads or gateways from which vehicles might emerge, and that there is no dead-ground. (Ask your instructor to explain the term 'dead-ground')

You will often need to change to a lower gear in order to accelerate briskly past the vehicle you are overtaking. Leave plenty of space, especially when moving back in to the left - make sure that you can see the vehicle that you have overtaken in your centre mirror.

Allow others to overtake you... This doesn't mean that you must crawl around at a snail's pace letting everyone pass; it simply means that it is often safer to have someone in front, where you can see them, rather than behind. There are no gold stars for being stubborn and blocking the path of other drivers. In the worst imaginable situation you could end up involved in someone else's accident. Again, concentrate on your journey time - having one or two, or ten, more vehicles ahead is unlikely to make any difference. If you have a sat-nav, get into the habit of checking the estimated arrival time - this will stay much the same regardless of whether you overtake or not.



Lesson Notes:

