

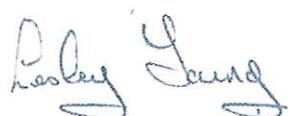
→ A message from the Chief Driving Examiner

The UK has some of the safest roads in the world and we have a reputation for being well-mannered and considerate drivers. However, while things have steadily been getting better, too many people are still being killed and seriously injured on our roads every year. So, there's still work to do.

Safe and responsible driving is all about recognising that we'll generally get where we want to go more quickly, and in one piece, if we cooperate with other road users. It's about understanding that others may not be as able or as experienced as we are – and that however skilled we think we are, or however long we've been driving, we can all make mistakes.

This book is designed to guide you through everything you need to know to drive safely. If you follow this guidance – ideally with the help of an approved driving instructor – you'll be well prepared to drive for yourself and enjoy the experience. You'll also be prepared for the responsibility that comes with carrying passengers, such as friends and family, and driving for work. You'll be much more likely to avoid incidents, and as an added benefit you'll keep your insurance premiums down.

Driving is both an enjoyable activity and a very valuable contribution to our social and working lives. I want all drivers to gain the maximum benefit from their driving and to avoid the heartbreak that comes when things go wrong. I strongly encourage you to read this book carefully and to take on board the lessons it provides.



Lesley Young
Chief Driving Examiner



Section one → The driver

This section covers

- Attitude
- Good practice
- Health
- Learner drivers
- New drivers
- Older drivers
- Disabled drivers
- Reviewing your driving

→ Attitude

No matter how fast, expensive or efficient your vehicle is, it's you, the driver, who determines whether it's a safe means of transport.

Being a good driver doesn't mean being a perfect driver – in fact, it's very doubtful whether a perfect driver exists. A good driver is somebody who knows that they can always get better and is willing to make the effort.

With experience your practical skill will improve, but that alone won't make you a good driver. To achieve that goal, you'll also need to take responsibility for the way you approach driving. You need to develop your ability to

- concentrate and not allow yourself to be distracted
- scan the road ahead of you and learn to anticipate risky situations
- be patient with other road users
- understand your own state of mind and health, and how they may affect your driving
- have confidence in your abilities.

Together, these qualities make up what's generally known as the driver's attitude. It's your attitude, together with personal characteristics such as mood, emotional state, and levels of fatigue and stress, that will affect how you behave on the road.

There's a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction to be gained from showing not only your skill and ability but also courtesy and consideration to those around you.

REMEMBER, nearly all road traffic incidents are caused, to some degree, by the driver. Doing all you can to prevent incidents is the responsibility of every driver.

Developing a safe and responsible attitude and adopting 'good' behaviour will come more easily to some drivers than to others. But these qualities are no important to safe driving that it's vital for every driver to make the effort to keep working on them. The best drivers are always trying to improve their skills. Even when they've been driving for years, they know that there's always something new to learn.



Responsibility

As a responsible driver, you must always be concerned for the safety of

- yourself
- your passengers
- all other road users.

Youself

See the information on health later in this section for more about your own safety.

Your passengers

Be aware of your passengers' needs. For example, they may have mobility problems or be suffering from an illness that might need additional attention. Also, make sure you understand your responsibilities regarding your passengers' use of seat belts.

Other road users

Be tolerant; remember that everyone is entitled to use the road. This may mean making allowances for other road users, particularly the most vulnerable, such as

- children and older people
- people with disabilities
- cyclists and motorcyclists
- people in charge of animals.

Look around you and plan your actions well ahead to avoid causing danger or inconvenience. That way, you can avoid the need to act hastily.

Recognise your own limitations and those of other people.



REMEMBER, the responsibility for safe driving rests with you.

Concentration

To be able to drive safely in today's traffic conditions, you must concentrate fully at all times.

If you let your mind wander, even for a moment, the risk of making a mistake increases – and mistakes can lead to incidents.

Avoid driving if you're

- feeling tired or unwell
- distracted in any way
- upset or annoyed
- under a lot of mental or emotional pressure.

FACTS A contributing factor in around 42% of collisions attended by a police officer between 2009 and 2012 was that the driver/rider failed to look properly.



Concentration is the key to anticipation and is helped by having

- good vision
- good hearing
- good health
- self-awareness.



If you have any in-vehicle technology such as a satellite navigation (sat-nav) system, don't let it distract you from driving. Keep any visual or manual interaction with the system to an absolute minimum. You should find an appropriate, safe and legal place to stop before making any adjustments.

Before you set out

- turn your phone off, put it in silent mode or put it out of reach. That way, you won't be tempted to make or answer phone calls, read or reply to texts, play games or use social media
- if you're using a sat-nav, set your destination and make sure the device doesn't block your view.

While on the move don't

- use your phone for calls, texting or social media
- look at road maps, and only look at your sat-nav very briefly
- get distracted by tuning the radio, changing CDs or using MP3 players

- let conversation take your attention away from the road (an argument with your passengers can be particularly distracting)
- listen to loud music or use headphones of any kind, as these can mask other sounds
- be distracted by eating, drinking or smoking.

In addition, don't

- stick non-essential stickers on the windows of your vehicle, as they can restrict your view
- hang objects (eg dolls, dice) where they might distract you and restrict your view.

Passengers

Passengers can be a major source of distraction if they're

- talking to you
- using a mobile phone
- behaving irresponsibly.

Those who drive with young children in the vehicle may face increased distractions while driving. Preparation and planning are especially important. It's sensible to come up with ways to cope with situations that may occur. For example, make sure that small children have enough to occupy them during a journey, so they're less likely to get bored and cry.

Mobile phones

Driving requires all of your attention, all of the time.

You **MUST NOT** use a hand-held mobile phone or similar device when driving, except to call 999 or 112 in a genuine emergency when it's unsafe or impractical to stop.

Using any phone or microphone, even if it's hands-free, can take your attention off the road. It's far safer not to use any phone while driving.



Let your incoming calls go to voicemail and stop before checking your messages. Likewise, if you need to make a call, find a safe place to stop first. These rules apply even if you're not driving, but are supervising a learner driver.

FACTS You're four times as likely to crash if you use a mobile phone while driving.



Anticipation

Anticipation in driving means planning well ahead and being prepared to take early action. With experience it should become an instinctive part of your driving.

You need to continually question the actions of other road users.

If you plan ahead and try to anticipate the actions of others, you can

- avoid the need for a sudden reaction
- maintain a comfortable safety margin
- prevent some hazards from developing
- save fuel by anticipating situations early. Braking late and heavily, then accelerating as the situation improves, increases fuel consumption.

Take early action in response to those hazards that do develop.

Anticipation and good planning are essential to developing defensive driving techniques (see section 10).



Patience

If you're upset by the bad behaviour of another driver, try not to react. If necessary, slow down to calm yourself, even if you feel like making a more aggressive response. Consider stopping to take a break. While your brain is processing strong emotions, such as anger, your attention can be taken away from driving tasks. As a result, your powers of concentration, anticipation and observation are likely to be much reduced. This will make a road traffic incident much more likely.

We all make mistakes from time to time, so be prepared to make allowances for someone else's mistakes.

REMEMBER, your actions can affect the behaviour of other drivers. Setting a good example can have a positive effect on their driving.



Do

- keep calm
- show restraint
- use sound judgement.

Don't

- drive in an aggressive or competitive way
- use aggressive language or gestures
- try to teach another road user a lesson, even if they've caused you inconvenience.

Learner drivers

Be patient if the vehicle ahead of you is being driven by a learner. They may not be as skilful at anticipating and responding to events as a more experienced driver.

REMEMBER, not every vehicle showing L plates (D plates in Wales) is fitted with dual controls, and the person accompanying the driver might not be a professional instructor.



Don't

- drive up close behind a learner, as this is intimidating and could cause them to panic
- show your impatience, for example by revving your engine, if the learner is slow to move off
- cut in sharply after overtaking.

Expect a learner to make mistakes. Allow for their mistakes and don't give them a hard time. Learners may not take the action you expect. Remember that it may take them longer to do things. Don't forget we were all learners once.

Drivers who have recently passed their test may be displaying a green P plate or other warning sign to alert others that they're new drivers. Be patient and make allowances for their lack of experience.

Read more about learner drivers later in this section.

Older drivers

Although they have more driving experience, older drivers may have slower reactions than younger drivers. Make allowances for this.

Confidence

Confidence is part of a driver's attitude and is closely related to

- skill
- judgement
- experience.

Confidence levels are likely to change throughout a driver's life. Many drivers begin with a relatively high level of confidence in their ability, but after six months their confidence is often much lower. Experiences such as being involved in an incident can have a negative impact on a driver's confidence.

Overconfidence can occur when a driver overestimates their abilities and can lead to

- unsafe driving behaviour
- risk taking
- traffic and speed violations.

It's important to assess your driving ability regularly. Many people think they're better drivers than they really are, so it's important to be honest with yourself and work on any areas you think could be improved. Many driving instructors offer refresher lessons for nervous drivers who would like to build their confidence.

The National Standard for Driving sets out the skills, knowledge and understanding that are required to be a safe and responsible driver. If you meet the standard, then you'll be in a great position to pass your test and well on your way to becoming a safe driver for life.

You can view the National Standard for Driving at www.gov.uk



Good practice

Planning your journey

- Make sure your vehicle is roadworthy. For example, tyre pressures may need adjusting if your route includes motorway travel, if you're carrying a load or if you're towing a trailer.
- Plan refuelling stops.
- Check the weather to see how it may affect your route or journey.
- If it's a long journey, plan enough time for breaks and refreshment.
- If you have a sat-nav, program it before you start your journey. Select the route you prefer and think about traffic congestion and times of day, as this can help you to avoid delays and save fuel.
- Don't rely on your sat-nav alone, as it may have out-of-date or incomplete information at any given time. Use road and street maps as well, or check your route on the internet.
- Give yourself plenty of time for your journey. Hurrying leads to mistakes, and mistakes can lead to incidents.



Before you set out, plan your journey by visiting www.gov.uk or check the smartphone apps from Highways England (formerly the Highways Agency) for live traffic updates. You could also listen to local and national radio for news of roadworks and traffic congestion (see section 18).

FACTS Figures from the Highways Agency (now Highways England) show that more than 11 000 people ran out of fuel on the English motorway network between April 2010 and September 2011.

Always make sure that you have enough fuel for your journey and don't leave it until the tank is running low before you fill up.



Clothing and shoes

Make sure you're comfortable. Wear appropriate clothing, especially on a long journey.

High heels and slippery soles can be dangerous as they can cause your feet to slip off the pedals. Shoes that are too wide, or that easily fall off, can be just as dangerous.

It's a good idea to keep a suitable pair of shoes in your vehicle, just to wear while you're driving.

The weather

The weather is another factor to consider when you're planning a journey. If it's really bad, it might be best to postpone your trip or use public transport. Always try to avoid driving in thick fog or icy conditions, as the risk of a road traffic incident is far higher.

Many drivers run into difficulties in very bad weather. Follow the weather forecasts and general advice to drivers through local and national media.

Animals

If you're taking animals with you on a journey

- keep them under control
- don't allow them to be loose in the vehicle
- don't leave them in the vehicle for any length of time, especially in hot weather
- never let animals loose on the public road – they can cause incidents.

Driving close to home

Many incidents happen close to home on regular daily or routine journeys. If you drive to work every day, don't leave yourself the bare minimum of time to get there.

Don't let familiarity with your surroundings lead you to start taking risks simply because you feel you know every detail.

Remember that other road users won't necessarily have the benefit of local knowledge, so they might drive more cautiously than you feel they should.



Your eyesight

All drivers must be able to read, in good daylight, a current-style number plate (on vehicles registered since 2001) from 20 metres. Glasses or corrective lenses may be worn if necessary. If you do need to wear glasses or corrective lenses to read the number plate, then you must also use them while driving.

For more information on drivers' eyesight requirements, see www.gov.uk

Fitness to drive

You must

- be medically fit to drive
- understand that some medicines shouldn't be taken if you intend to drive. Check with your doctor that it's safe to drive on prescription medicine
- notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in Swansea (Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) in Northern Ireland) if your health is likely to affect your ability to drive either now or, because of a worsening condition, in the future.



Don't drive if you're feeling tired or unwell. Even a cold can make it unsafe for you to drive. If you find you're losing concentration or not feeling well, keep your speed to a safe minimum and give yourself more time to react. Take a break when possible and consider handing over the driving to someone else.

It's also important to be physically fit to drive. You must have full control of your vehicle at all times.

Remember that, for example

- a twisted ankle can reduce pedal control
- a stiff neck can make it difficult to look behind when reversing or checking blind spots.

Alcohol

Alcohol will seriously reduce your judgement and ability to drive safely. You must be aware that

- driving with alcohol in your blood is potentially very dangerous. There are severe penalties if you drive or attempt to drive while over the legal limit
- if you drink in the evening, you might still be over the legal limit and unfit to drive the following morning.

Alcohol is removed from the blood at the rate of about one unit an hour, but this varies from person to person. If you know how many units you've had, you can work out roughly how many hours it will take for your body to be alcohol-free. To be on the safe side you should start counting from when you had your last drink.

To be absolutely sure there's no alcohol left in your body the morning after drinking, you can check yourself with a home breath-testing kit. The only safe limit, ever, is a zero limit.

You **MUST NOT** drive if your breath alcohol level is higher than the legally permitted level – see www.gov.uk

REMEMBER, if you drink, don't drive – and if you drive, don't drink.



Drugs

Driving when you're under the influence of drugs is an offence. This includes some prescription medications that can affect your ability to drive safely.

The effects of drugs can be unpredictable and you may not be aware of them. The direct effects of some drugs can last up to 72 hours.

A new offence of driving with certain illegal drugs in your body came into force in March 2015. The new rules mean that it's an offence to be over the specified limits for certain drugs, such as cannabis, cocaine and ecstasy. Even using a small amount of illegal drugs could result in a positive test and a conviction.

The penalties are a 12-month driving ban, a criminal record and a possible prison sentence.

Visit www.gov.uk for more information.

FACTS During 2012, 55 300 people in England and Wales were convicted of driving after consuming alcohol or taking drugs.



Fatigue

Fatigue can mean feeling tired, sleepy or lacking energy. Symptoms can include

- slower reflexes
- poor decision making
- headaches
- lack of concentration
- muscle weakness
- irritability.

Driving while you're tired increases your risk of being involved in a collision.

Don't begin a journey if you feel tired – make sure you get a good night's sleep before starting a long journey.

Try to avoid driving between 2.00 am and 7.00 am, because this is when the 'body clock' is in a daily dip.

If you begin to feel sleepy, stop in a safe place before you get to the stage of 'fighting sleep'. Sleep can come upon you more quickly than you would imagine. Also, when you're very tired, you can experience micro-sleeps, which means that you could lose consciousness for up to 30 seconds.

If it's not possible to stop immediately, open a window for fresh air. Stop as soon as it's safe and legal to do so. On a motorway, pull in at the nearest service area or leave the motorway. The only time you may stop on the hard shoulder of the motorway is in an emergency, so you **MUST NOT** stop there to rest.



The most effective ways to counter sleepiness are caffeine and a short nap. The combination of a caffeinated drink (for example, caffeinated coffee), followed by a short nap of up to 15 minutes, is particularly effective. Caffeine takes 20–30 minutes to be absorbed and act on the brain, which will give you the opportunity for a nap. However, this shouldn't be used as a long-term solution to your sleepiness.

Don't drive for too long without taking a break. Your concentration will be much better if you plan regular stops for rest and refreshments. It's recommended that you take a break of at least 15 minutes after every two hours of driving. This is especially important at night.

Learner drivers

Attitude

Your attitude to driving and to other road users can affect the way you drive and how enjoyable you find driving. It's easy to become anxious or frustrated, especially if there's a lot of traffic or you're on unfamiliar roads. When you're learning to drive it can feel like the whole world is in a rush and you might be holding them up.

If you're a learner, try to remember that experienced drivers were once learners too. Although you're bound to see some poor behaviour on the road, most people want to get to their destination with the minimum of fuss. Most drivers are courteous to other drivers and road users, and forgive their mistakes. And everyone makes mistakes – even experienced drivers.

Learner drivers have the opportunity to begin their driving careers with a safe and responsible attitude. It's important at this very early stage to start developing the behaviours that will keep everyone safe on the road and make driving an enjoyable experience.

If you're a novice, you need to be responsible and show patience and courtesy to become a good driver. And, hopefully, more experienced drivers will show you the same respect.

Planned lessons

A planned approach to learning is advisable, particularly in the early stages. Everyone learns differently, so it's important that, together with whoever teaches you to drive, you develop a learning plan that suits your needs.

Who should teach you?

The best way to learn is by having

- regular planned lessons with a professional instructor
- each lesson matched to your needs and abilities
- as much practice as possible.

Once you understand the basics, it's a good idea to combine professional instruction with as much practice as you can get with relatives or friends. This helps you to gain experience by driving in a wide variety of situations.

If you pay someone for driving lessons, they must be an approved driving instructor (ADI) or a potential driving instructor (PDI) with a trainee licence.

Approved driving instructor (car)

An ADI must

- pass a three-part examination to qualify
- have their name entered on the register held by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
- display a green ADI identification certificate on the windscreen of the vehicle being used for a driving lesson
- reach and maintain the standards required by DVSA.



Some trainee instructors who haven't yet completed the qualifying examination may hold a trainee licence to help them gain instructional experience.

Trainee instructors must display a pink identification certificate on the windscreen of the vehicle being used for a driving lesson.

How to choose an ADI

You should choose an instructor who can provide exactly what you need as a learner. Some ADIs will also be able to help you develop your skills after passing the test – for example, by teaching you how to drive on motorways.

Choose an instructor

- who has a good reputation
- who's reliable and punctual
- whose vehicle suits you (eg engine size, has dual controls, etc)
- who you think you'll get on well with.

You should ask if the instructor is an ADI or a trainee. ADIs are graded on their performance and you can ask what grade they are. Visit www.gov.uk for more information on ADI grading.

You can find your nearest ADIs by using the 'Find driving schools and lessons' tool on www.gov.uk. Put in your postcode and it'll come up with a list of ADIs in your area. You can also find out which ADIs are voluntarily developing their own skills (continuing professional development – CPD) or observing the voluntary ADI code of practice.

Trainee instructors aren't listed on this website.

You could also ask friends and relatives to recommend an ADI.

Take advice from your ADI on

- all aspects of driving
- what learning materials are available; for example, books, DVDs, downloads, CD-ROMs, eBooks and apps
- how to practise
- when you'll be ready for the driving test.

The official syllabus

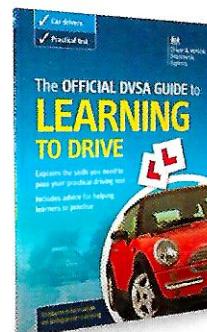
If you learn with an ADI, make sure they cover the official syllabus fully. See **The Official DVSA Guide to Learning to Drive** for more details. The syllabus is also shown in the Driver's Record. The Driver's Record will help you to monitor your progress and is available from your ADI or can be downloaded from www.gov.uk

All practical driving tests include a period of independent driving. This assesses your ability to drive on your own while making decisions for yourself without instruction. The examiner will be looking for evidence that you have the required skills, knowledge and attitude to be a safe driver.

This is important because you'll be able to drive unaccompanied as soon as you've passed your driving test. During the independent drive you'll be asked to

- drive following traffic signs to a destination, or
- drive following a series of verbal directions

or a combination of both.



Accompanying a learner

If you're accompanying a learner, you should try to encourage confidence. It's also important not to put them in a situation that requires more skill than they can be expected to show.

Don't let them try to run before they can walk. Overestimating a learner's skill can set back their progress and could lead to incidents for both the learner and other road users.

Anyone supervising a learner must

- be at least 21 years old
- have held for at least three years (and still hold) a full EC/EEA licence for the category of vehicle being driven.

The Official DVSA Guide to Learning to Drive includes a section that will help you to understand what a learner driver needs to practise. It also points out the hazards you may encounter when accompanying a learner driver.

Learning by example

People often learn by example. You, as the accompanying driver, should therefore

- show a learner how to drive with quiet confidence
- point out when other drivers make a mistake and discuss with the learner how they could approach the situation better
- discourage them from developing bad habits and using excuses such as 'Everyone else does it, so why shouldn't I?'

Taking on too much

The enthusiastic learner should be careful not to take on too much. Overconfidence can lead to carelessness, risk-taking and incidents. Also, as the accompanying driver, you should understand the learner's level of experience and skill as a driver. You can take advice from the learner's ADI about the level they've reached and the skills they should be practising.

The training vehicle

A vehicle being driven by a learner must display L plates (or D plates in Wales), which should be removed or covered at all other times.

If you own a car or intend to buy one, it might be best to find a driving school that uses a similar model.

At a later stage, it might also be possible to have lessons in your own car.

Avoid fixing L plates (D plates) to the windscreen or back window, as they can restrict your view.



→ New drivers

New drivers are vulnerable because they lack experience on the roads. They can be involved in incidents early in their driving careers. Young drivers may be especially vulnerable.

Incidents involving new drivers are usually caused by

- lack of experience and judgement, especially when driving 'high-performance' cars
- competitive behaviour, racing and lack of consideration for others
- being overconfident in their own ability.
- the natural spirit of youth and tendency to push boundaries
- showing off to friends; being 'egged on' by passengers looking for excitement.

Profiles of incidents involving new drivers tell us that these incidents are most likely to occur

- at night
- at weekends
- on rural roads
- when driving with friends
- when alcohol and drugs are involved.

If you're a new driver, avoid

- driving too fast; speed reduces the time you have to react, and increases the force of the impact if you're involved in a collision
- reckless driving; drive with consideration and care
- showing off; if you want to impress your friends, show them how smooth and safe a driver you are
- being 'wound up'; keep calm
- an aggressive attitude and behaviour; stay calm and safe
- loud music; this could interfere with your concentration or with your hearing at a critical moment
- driving beyond your capabilities; always leave yourself a safety margin
- being distracted by passengers.

Above all, be responsible and show courtesy and consideration to other road users.



False perceptions

Many younger drivers wrongly believe that fast reactions and the ability to handle their vehicle will make them a good and safe driver. They fail to recognise that vehicle handling skills alone won't prevent road traffic incidents.

Having the right attitude and a sound knowledge of defensive driving techniques is essential.

Pass Plus

New drivers can take further training after they've passed their test. Pass Plus was created by DVSA for new drivers who would like to improve their basic skills and safely widen their driving experience, such as driving on the motorway. If you take the Pass Plus course, you may also receive reduced insurance premiums.

Ask your ADI for details of the scheme or visit www.gov.uk for more information.

➡ Older drivers

Although they're experienced, older drivers can also be vulnerable, but for different reasons. The natural and gradual deterioration in physical fitness and ability that comes with age can affect judgement and concentration. Physical frailty can mean that those involved in incidents are more likely to be injured.

Generally, older drivers are as safe as any other driver. They're involved in far fewer drink-drive or single-vehicle incidents than younger people.

However, older drivers can struggle with high-speed junctions and slip roads where they're required to look around quickly and make quick decisions.

If you're an older driver, be responsible and

- have your eyesight checked regularly, including your night vision. It's common for eyesight to deteriorate with age. If you find you need glasses for driving, you **MUST** wear them whenever you drive
- avoid driving at night if you find the glare from headlights dazzles you
- be aware that you may find driving more tiring as you get older
- be honest with yourself about your driving. If you believe that you're no longer safe on the road, it may be time to stop driving.

You might choose to restrict your time behind the wheel by avoiding driving

- long distances
- at rush hour
- in bad weather.

REMEMBER, recognise your own limitations and don't take risks.



➡ Disabled drivers

Advances in technology offer many more disabled people the chance to drive. All standard vehicles can now be modified for a physically disabled driver.

Modifications

These can include

- hand controls for braking and acceleration
- steering and secondary control aids
- left-foot accelerator conversions
- clutch conversions
- parking-brake devices
- additional car mirrors
- seat-belt modifications
- harnesses
- special seating
- wheelchair stowage equipment
- joystick and foot steering; a four-way joystick can now be used to steer, accelerate and brake



- infra-red remote control systems that enable a wheelchair user to get into or out of a vehicle with complete independence.

Assessment

Mobility centres for disabled people are available to

- test driving ability
- give advice on the sort of controls and adaptations needed to drive safely and in comfort.

For a complete list of mobility centres, visit

mobility-centres.org.uk/services/drivingassessment.htm



For information about paying for modifications and adaptations, visit

motability.co.uk

The major motoring organisations and some motor manufacturers offer special services for disabled drivers.

→ Reviewing your driving

To be a safe and responsible driver it's essential to review and adjust your behaviour over your lifetime. Keeping up to date with changes in the law and driving technology, as well as regularly and honestly reviewing your performance as a driver, will make all the difference to your own safety and other people's safety. As you progress through a lifetime of driving, there'll be changes in circumstances. The context in which you drive will change and you'll also probably change as an individual.

For example, there are likely to be changes

- to the law and to the rules of the road
- to vehicle and related technologies
- in your personal circumstances

- in the reasons why you drive
- in your health and physical condition
- in your attitudes and behaviours.

Safe and responsible drivers make sure they maintain their skills by reviewing their driving and continuously seeking to improve.

As a continuously improving driver you should

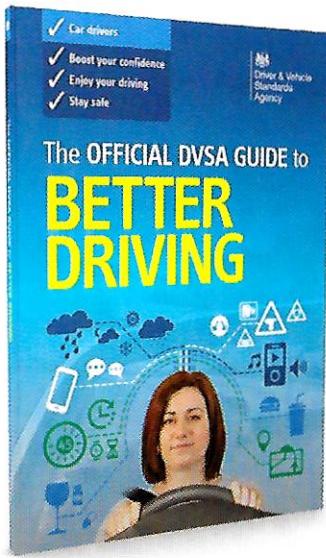
- learn from experience
- avoid becoming self-satisfied and thinking you know everything
- watch out for the development of bad habits. Try to keep your driving up to the standard you were taught and, if you think it's slipping, do something about it
- develop and maintain considerate and responsible driver behaviours.

The competent driver needs

- a sense of responsibility
- to concentrate on the task of driving
- good anticipation
- patience
- confidence
- courtesy and consideration.

There's a wide range of opportunities for drivers who want to review and assess their driving, develop their competence and respond to changing circumstances. For example

- read **The Official DVSA Guide to Better Driving**, which explores how emotions, attitude and behaviour can affect your driving. It will also teach you – through real-life scenarios and test-yourself questionnaires – how to manage stress and anxiety behind the wheel
- newly qualified drivers can take a Pass Plus course
- you can practise your driving with an experienced accompanying driver, who can give you feedback on how you've driven
- if you already have a licence, but feel that you could do with improving your skills or you've lost your confidence, you can book some lessons with an ADI
- advanced driving courses are available if you want to improve your driving further.



If you find the context of your driving has changed, it's important to review and assess your skills and knowledge in the new environment. For example, you may have to drive for work or as a new parent, or you may move from the city to the countryside. As the context changes you may find that you need additional training, knowledge or support.

Driving for work

Driving for work is one of the most high-risk contexts in driving, because of the amount of time you'll spend behind the wheel and the pressure you may be under. If you drive for work – perhaps a van or a company car – you'll probably face lots of different driving conditions and you may be expected to reach your destination quickly. In this situation, you and your employer should think about how to balance your work commitments with driving within the law. Your stress and fatigue levels should also be taken into account.

All drivers

All drivers need to be alert to changes in their physical or mental condition. Ill-health or relevant age-related changes can have a significant impact on driving and should be considered and addressed.

Constantly and honestly reviewing how well you're driving should help you have a long and safe driving career.



Section two

→ The driver and the law

This section covers

- Licence requirements
- Insurance
- Vehicle registration certificate (V5C)
- Vehicle excise duty
- The MOT test
- Roadworthiness
- The Highway Code
- Seat belts
- Loading your vehicle