

23. Dual-carriageways

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To accommodate this faster-moving traffic, dual-carriageways have two lanes or more in each direction and often have higher speed limits than single-carriageway roads.

Traffic moving in opposite directions is separated by a central reservation; this sometimes has a crash barrier to further protect the streams of traffic from one another.

Although the average speed on dual-carriageways is higher than on many other roads, you might still encounter pedestrians, cyclists, parked vehicles, entrances to houses and other premises - in fact, anything that you would expect to find on a single carriageway road. The higher speeds on a dual-carriageway mean that you will often have less time to respond to these hazards. To compensate you will probably need to plan your driving 'further ahead' than you may have been in the habit of doing so far.

Look out for brake-lights well ahead and ease off the gas when you see them. As a driver, you should be aware of your speed at all times - this becomes especially important when approaching a queue of stationary traffic, or when you are planning to leave a fast dual-carriageway. Getting into the habit of checking your speedometer regularly will help to ensure your continued safety.

Although there are many conventional T-junctions and crossroads on dual carriageways, motorway-type slip roads are becoming more common. Slip roads have acceleration and deceleration lanes. The acceleration lane is an extra lane on the left for use when building up your speed before merging with traffic on the main carriageway so that you can join the flow safely. Deceleration lanes are found on exit slip roads; they allow you to slow down without holding up following traffic on the main carriageway. Usually, you shouldn't need to start braking until you enter the deceleration lane.

If you join a fast dual carriageway from a T-junction take extra care when judging the speed of traffic already on the main road. If you are turning right, wait until both sides are clear unless there is a large gap in the central reservation

Most dual-carriageways are clearways (but not all clearways are dual carriageways). Clearways are roads on which you are not allowed to stop; this is because stationary vehicles would pose extreme danger to fast-moving traffic.

One of the most important signs that you will see on a dual-carriageway is the one shown on the right - when you see this dual-carriageway ends sign ease off and keep to the left lane.



National Speed Limit



Clearway



Lesson Notes:

