

Review

106

In this chapter we have looked at:

- the place of signals in the system of car control
- why it is important to give signals clearly
- the different signals available to you, and how and when to use them
- how courtesy signals can help road safety.

Check your understanding

List the full range of signals that you can use to give information to other road users.

When should you consider signalling?

What should you do before you signal or manoeuvre?

Why must you take care in interpreting the signals of other road users?

Why should you only signal when someone else could benefit?

Why do left-hand junctions pose problems for interpreting indicator signals?

In what circumstances should hazard warning lights be used?

When and for what purpose should you flash your headlights?

When should you use the horn?

How do courtesy signals contribute to road safety and positive driving attitudes?

If you have difficulty in answering any of these questions, look back over the relevant part of this chapter to refresh your memory.



Chapter 7

Positioning

Use this chapter to find out about:

- how to position your vehicle on the road for safety
- which hazards to look for on the nearside of the road
- how to improve your nearside view
- what is the best position for following another vehicle
- how to position your vehicle for bends and corners.

Developing skill at positioning your vehicle

For advice on positioning on the motorway, see Chapter 10, *Driving on motorways and multi-lane carriageways*.

Positioning is a crucial element in the system of car control.

See Chapter 3, *The system of car control*, page 51.

The ideal road position depends on many things: safety, observation, traffic conditions, road layout, cornering, manoeuvrability, assisting traffic flow and making your intentions clear. Always consider safety before anything else, and never sacrifice safety for any other advantage.

Put the car in the best position for you to see, with due regard to safety.



Safety position on the approach to hazards

By carefully choosing your position you can reduce the risk of having a collision. Be aware of hazards on both sides of your vehicle. To the nearside there is a risk of coming into conflict with cyclists and pedestrians (especially children), and parked vehicles and their occupants. You also need to be aware of other vehicles pulling out from junctions. To the offside, there is a risk of coming into conflict with oncoming vehicles in the centre of the road.

Roadside hazards

Common roadside hazards to look out for are:

- pedestrians, especially children, stepping off the footpath
- parked vehicles and their occupants
- cyclists, especially children
- horses
- joggers – where there is no footpath
- concealed junctions
- spray from kerbside puddles.

If you identify hazards on the nearside, take a position closer to the crown of the road. This has two benefits:

- it gives you a better view
- it provides more space in which to take avoiding action if you need to.

The less space you have the slower you should go



If traffic conditions allow, take a position closer to the crown of the road.

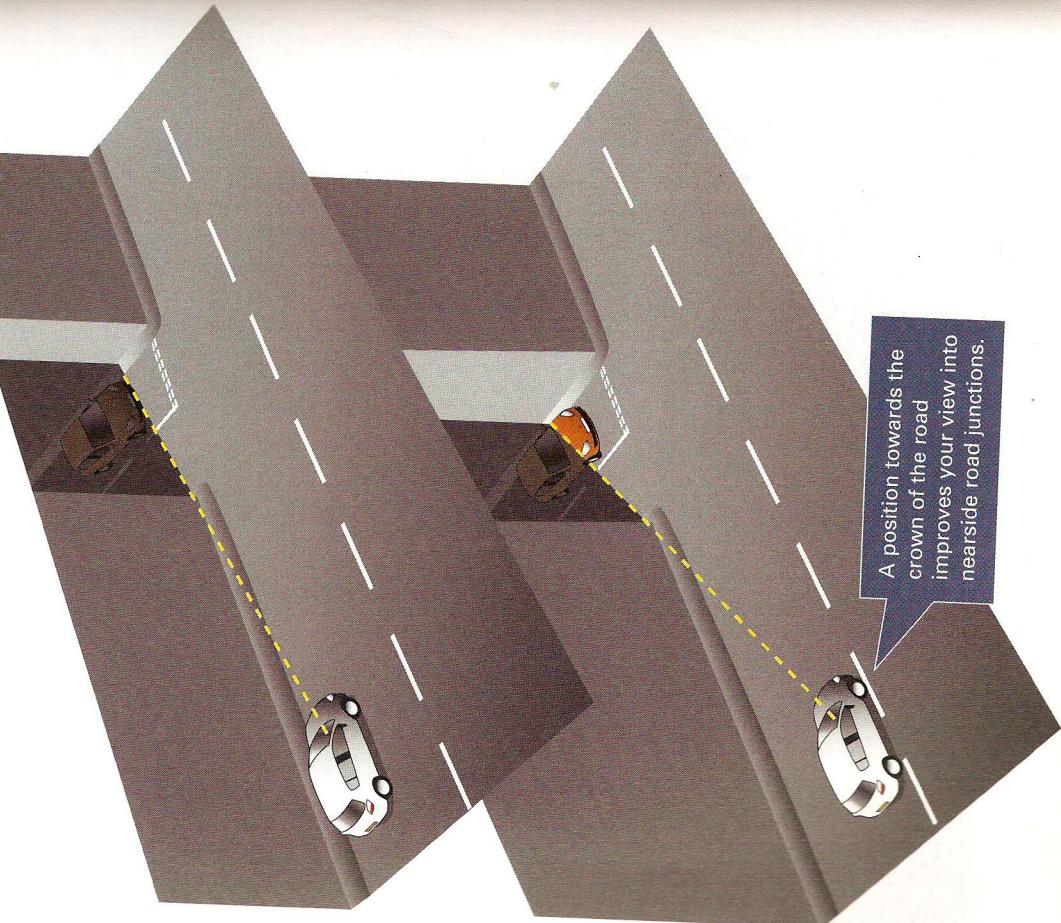
If oncoming traffic makes it unsafe to take this position, or if the road is too narrow, reduce your speed. There is an important trade-off between your speed and the clearance around your vehicle. The less space you have, the slower you should go. Be prepared to stop if necessary.

Keep as far from rows of parked vehicles as circumstances allow. A good rule of thumb is to leave at least enough space for an opening door to the side of any parked vehicles. If you can't move out, slow down. Get into the habit of asking yourself 'Could I stop in time if a child ran out?' One in three children hit by cars does not look first.

Improving the view into nearside road junctions

Position yourself so that you can see as much of the road ahead as possible and so that other road users can see you. You can improve your view into nearside roads by positioning your

vehicle towards the crown of the road. This also makes you more visible to vehicles pulling out from nearside junctions. But you must take into account any vehicles on the other side of the road. Take a position that minimises the overall danger from both sides of the road.



Following position

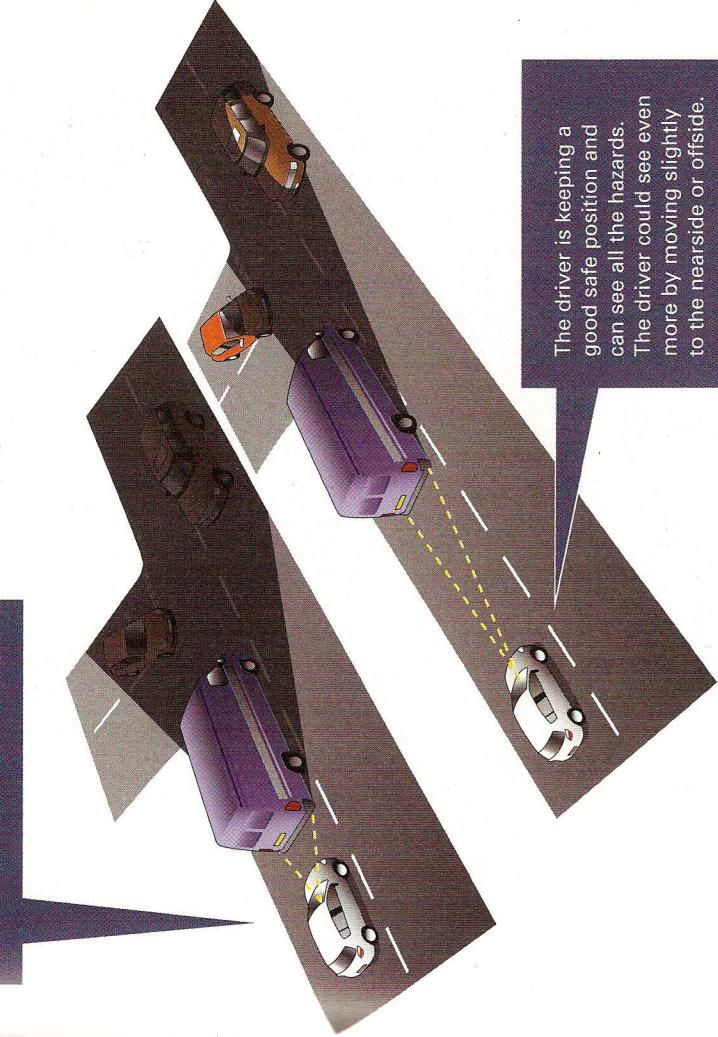
In a stream of traffic, always keep a safe distance behind the vehicle in front. Follow the two-second rule. Leave a gap of *at least* two seconds between you and the vehicle front, depending on conditions.

See Chapter 4, Acceleration, using gears, braking and steering, page 75, The two-second rule.

Keeping your distance increases your safety because:

- you have a good view, and can increase it along both sides by slight changes of position – this enables you to be fully aware of what is happening on the road ahead
- you can stop your vehicle safely if the driver in front brakes firmly without warning
- you can extend your braking distance so that the driver behind has more time to react
- you can see when it is safe to move into the overtaking position
- you suffer less from the effects of spray from the vehicle in front.

The driver is too close to the vehicle in front and cannot see the hazards in the shaded area.



The driver is keeping a good safe position and can see all the hazards. The driver could see even more by moving slightly to the nearside or offside.

Overtaking position

See Chapter 9, *Overtaking*, page 135.

If you intend to overtake, position your vehicle to get the best possible view and opportunity by moving into the overtaking position. This is generally closer to the vehicle in front than the following position and you should only use it in readiness for overtaking. If a hazard (e.g. an oncoming vehicle, a road junction) comes into view, move back to an appropriate following distance from the vehicle in front.

As you move closer to the vehicle in front the driver is likely to realise that you want to overtake. Be careful not to intimidate the other driver or to appear aggressive by following too closely. This is dangerous and counter-productive. Following too closely can cause the other driver to speed up, making it more difficult to overtake.

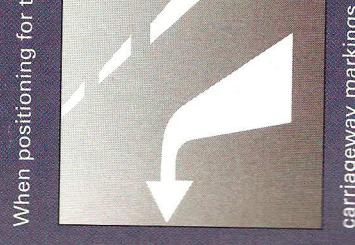
Position for turning

Your position for turning depends on the other traffic, the road width and layout, the position of any obstacles and the effect of these obstacles on traffic behaviour. Generally the best

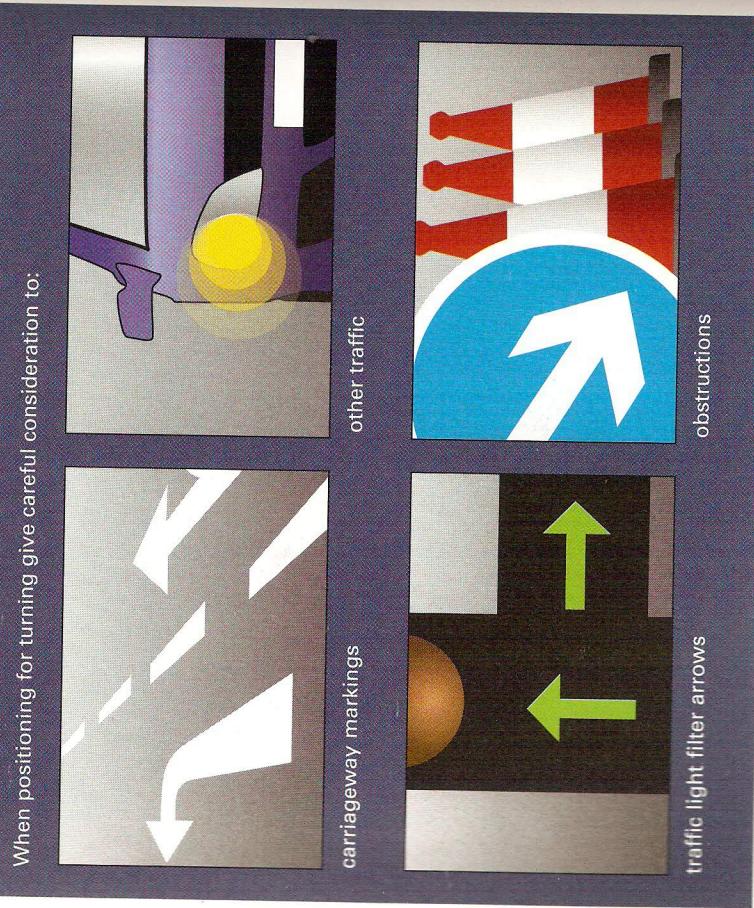
position on the approach to a junction is on the nearside of the road for a left turn and towards the centre line for a right turn.

If you intend to turn right and oncoming traffic is encroaching on your side of the road, move back in from the centre line.

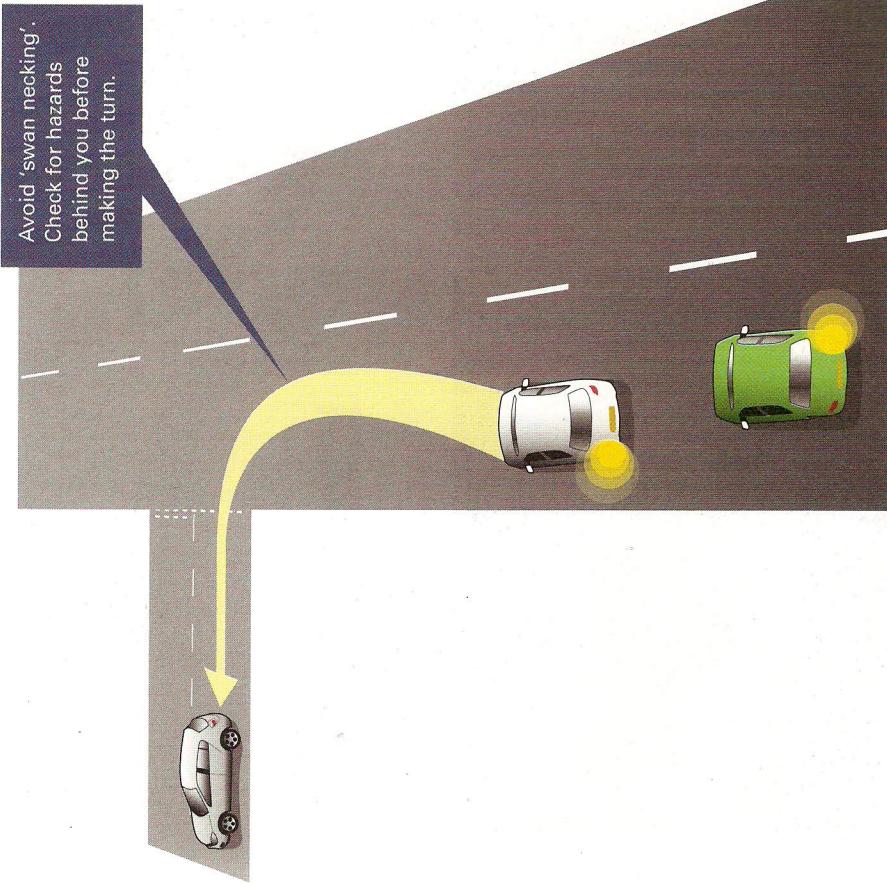
If you intend to turn left and the corner has a sharp angle, is obscured, or pedestrians are present, approach the corner from further out than normal. Move further out in good time. Avoid 'swan necking' – approaching close to the nearside and then swinging out to the right just before turning into the junction.



carriageway markings

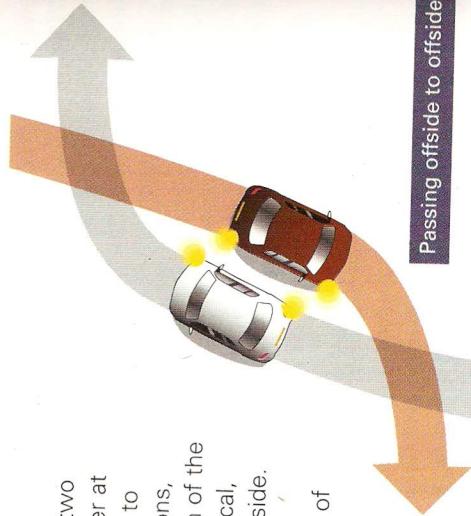


When positioning for turning give careful consideration to:

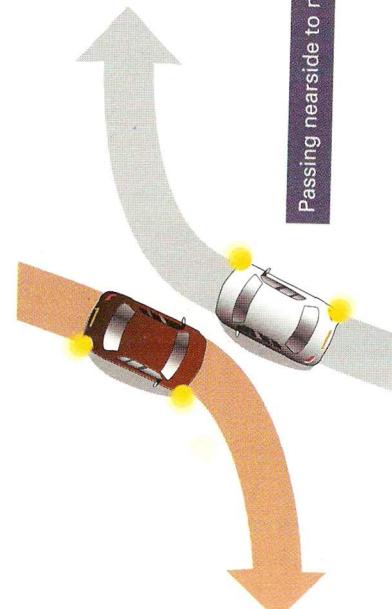


Positioning at crossroads

The Highway Code advises that two vehicles turning across each other at a crossroads should pass offside to offside, but where traffic conditions, the junction layout or the position of the other vehicle makes this impractical, you should pass nearside to nearside. Take extra care on a nearside to nearside pass because your view of the road is blocked by the other vehicle. Look carefully for oncoming traffic.



Passing offside to offside



Passing nearside to nearside

Position for stopping behind other vehicles

Before you come to a stop think about your next move. Position your vehicle so that you can continue with minimum inconvenience to yourself and other road users.

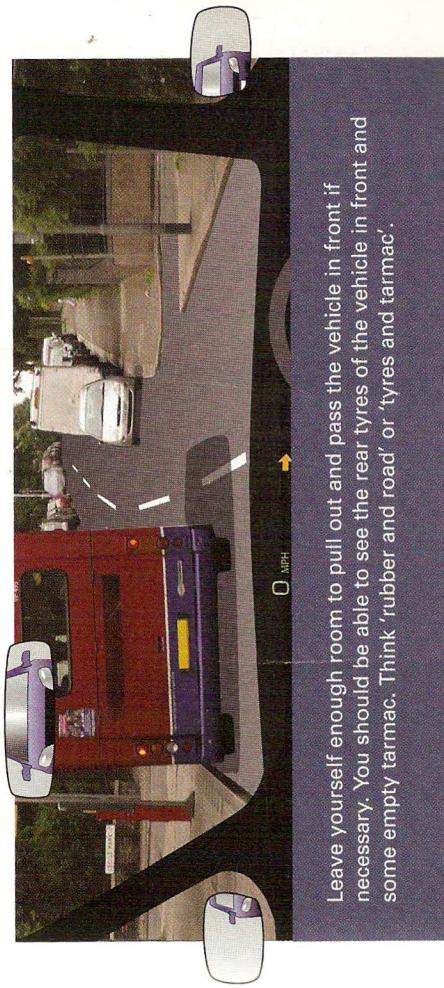
Stopping well short of the vehicle in front gives you several advantages:

- you maintain a good view of the road
- you are able to move around the vehicle ahead if it stalls or suffers a breakdown
- if you are hit from behind, the vehicle ahead is less likely to be affected
- the space in front of you is a safe haven for a bike or motorcycle
- if you become aware that a vehicle approaching behind has left braking too late, you can move forward to allow it extra space to stop in
- facing uphill, if the vehicle ahead starts to roll back towards you, you have time to warn the driver.

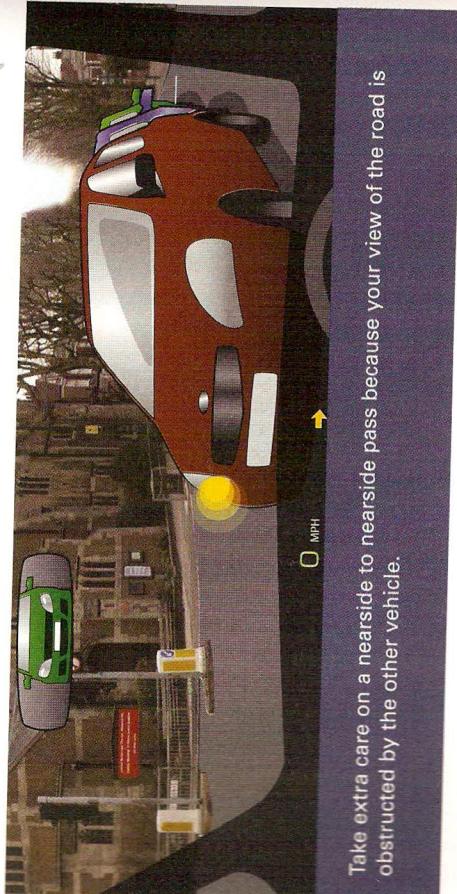
An example of using your stopping position to increase safety is where there are traffic lights at roadworks close to a bend. Consider stopping before or on the approach to the bend so that drivers who come up behind can see you.

Parking

Park your vehicle safely: do not leave it where it can cause inconvenience or danger to others. If you park on a hill, put the vehicle in a low gear and consider turning your wheels into the kerb.



Leave yourself enough room to pull out and pass the vehicle in front if necessary. You should be able to see the rear tyres of the vehicle in front and some empty tarmac. Think 'rubber and road' or 'tyres and tarmac'.



Take extra care on a nearside to nearside pass because your view of the road is obstructed by the other vehicle.

Review

In this chapter we have looked at:

- the factors to consider when choosing a road position
- why a position towards the centre of the road is *relatively* risk free
- some common roadside hazards
- where to position your vehicle if nearside hazards are present
- where to position your vehicle for following and overtaking a vehicle in front
- how to position your vehicle for turning and stopping
- how to turn past another vehicle at a crossroads.

Check your understanding

What is the most important factor in choosing your road position?

List some common nearside hazards that you should take into account when deciding on your position. What hazards should you look out for on the offside of the road?

If you drive down a road where the space to the sides is restricted, what should you do?

How much clearance should you generally give parked vehicles?

How can you improve your view into nearside junctions?

What are the advantages of keeping your distance from the vehicle in front?

How should you approach a left-hand junction when pedestrians are present?

Why do you need to be careful if you pass nearside to nearside at a junction?

If you have difficulty in answering any of these questions, look back over the relevant part of this chapter to refresh your memory.

Chapter 8 Cornering

Use this chapter to find out about:

- the principles of cornering
- the forces involved in cornering
- the factors which affect your vehicle's ability to corner
- how to use the limit point to judge your speed for a corner
- how to use the system of car control for cornering
- the best position to adopt as you drive round a bend.