

If you feel sleepy, stop and rest where it's safe. Never stop on the hard shoulder of a motorway when you feel tired. Use the service areas or get off the motorway.

Listen to travel information and try to avoid known traffic hold-ups.

Overheated engines in long traffic queues are the most frequent causes of breakdowns in these conditions.

If you're travelling with pets, make sure that your vehicle is sufficiently ventilated to keep them cool. Dogs are particularly vulnerable in hot weather, so it's advisable to take some water that's specifically for them and make scheduled stops to ensure their comfort. Never leave your pet in a hot, unventilated car.

Road surfaces

Soft tarmac

During long periods of hot weather, many tarmac road surfaces become extremely soft. Take care when braking and cornering.

Oil

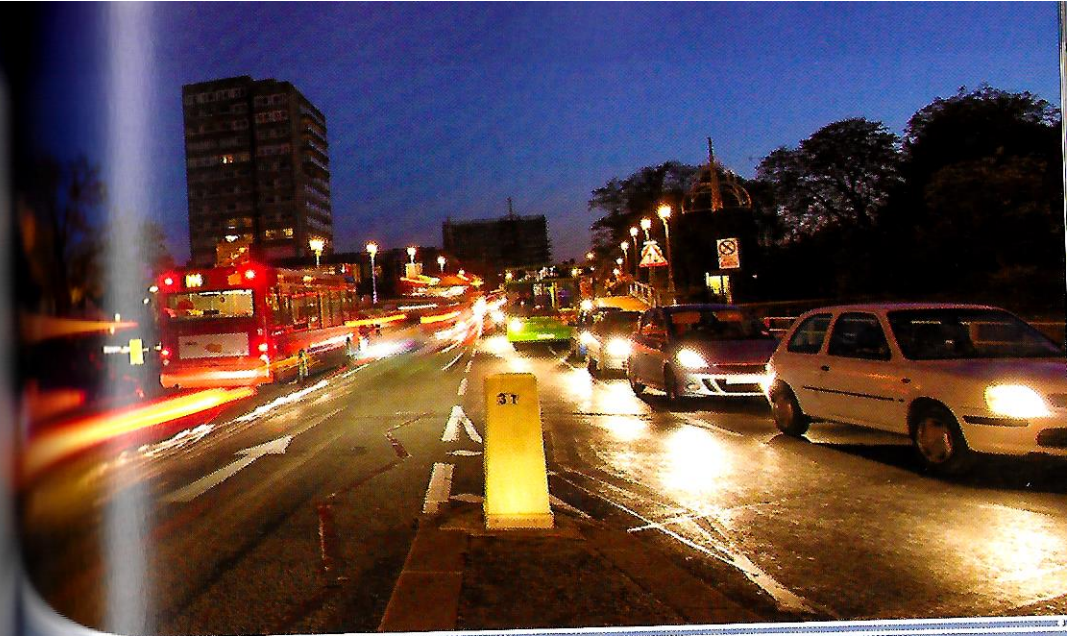
Oil, water and rubber dust from tyres can make the hot surface of the road slippery and dangerous, particularly if there's a sudden rain shower after a long dry spell.

Take extra care; watch your speed and keep your distance.

Loose chippings

Many highway authorities replace the granite-chipping road surfaces during the summer. Always observe the special warning speed limits and keep well back from the vehicle in front.

Flying stone chips can cause not only expensive damage to your vehicle, but also serious injury to pedestrians and other road users.



Section thirteen

➡ Driving at night

This section covers

- Your vehicle lights
- Driving in the dark
- Built-up areas
- Overtaking at night
- Following at night
- Parking at night
- Meeting other vehicles

➡ Your vehicle lights

In the dark, your vehicle lights are the most important source of information both for you and for other road users. Use them with care and consideration.

Always

- keep your headlights clean
- use your headlights at night, dipped or full beam, as appropriate
- use dipped headlights at any time when the light is poor, even during the day, as this will make you more visible to others.

You should

- check all your lights before and during a long journey
- fix any lighting fault immediately, for your own safety and the safety of others. Carry spare bulbs where applicable
- remember that extra weight at the rear of your vehicle could cause your headlights to 'aim high' and dazzle other road users. Some models have headlight adjusters to deal with this.



Auxiliary driving lights

Auxiliary driving lights may be used to improve the view of the road ahead. However, they must only be used in conjunction with the obligatory main-beam headlights and they must switch off at the same time as the main beams.

Only one pair of dipped-beam headlights may be fitted to a vehicle. Front fog lights **MUST NOT** be used to improve the view of the road ahead, except in seriously reduced visibility such as thick fog.

Junctions at night

Brake lights can dazzle. Unless it's foggy, don't keep your foot on the brake pedal while you're waiting at a junction or queuing in traffic. Use your parking brake instead.

➡ Driving in the dark

You can't see as far ahead when driving at night. With less information available to you, hazards can be more difficult to make out, and vulnerable road users – such as cyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists – may not be as easy to spot as they are in daylight. The potential problems can vary with the type of road and the amount of traffic.

Speed at night

You need to be aware that driving quickly at night (and at dawn and dusk) will limit your ability to drive safely. It's more difficult to judge distance and hazards can appear to be further away than they actually are. The faster you drive, the more difficult it becomes.

Never drive so fast that you can't stop well within the distance you can see to be clear. That is, within the range of your lights.

To enable you to see the greatest distance, you should normally use main-beam headlights on unlit roads unless

- you're following another vehicle
- you're meeting oncoming traffic.

On lit roads you should normally use dipped headlights.

If you can't stop safely within the range of your lights, you're going too fast.

Note

Fluorescent material shows up well in daylight or at dusk, but is of little use in the dark. Only reflective material shows up well in headlights.

Avoid dazzling others

If you meet any other road user, including cyclists and pedestrians, dip your headlights in good time to avoid dazzling them.

At dusk

You may find it best to put your headlights on at dusk, just before lighting-up time. At this time in the evening many shades of vehicle paintwork, such as black, blues and greys, and surprisingly white and silver as well, seem to blend in with the falling light.

Colours, particularly the more neutral ones, become less easy to distinguish than you would expect in the half-light of dusk. The situation is often made worse by the fact that some vehicles will already be using lights and some won't.

Ultimately, it can mean that some unlit vehicles can be almost invisible until you're very close to them. Don't be afraid to be the first driver to switch on – it's better to see and be seen.



At dawn

The opposite applies. Don't switch off your headlights until you're sure it's safe. Make sure you can see and be seen.

When you drive with your headlights on, other drivers can

- see you earlier
- tell which way you're heading. This is often difficult in the half-light without lights.

Your eyes in the dark

If you find that you can't see so well in the dark, it might be that you need to book an appointment with an optician for an eye test.

How far can you see?

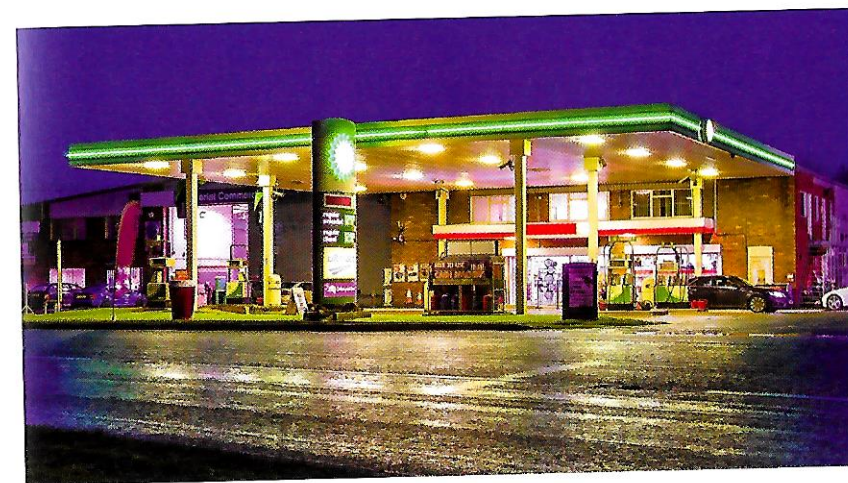
Test yourself in a suitable place.

Pick an object within the range of your lights and see if you can stop by the time you reach it. You'll be surprised how difficult this is with dipped lights on an unlit road. It shows that you should take a good look before you dip your lights.

Lighter-coloured objects are easier to see at night.

Adjusting to darkness

Give your eyes a minute or two to adjust to the darkness, particularly when you're coming out of a brightly lit area or building.



You can always use the time to clean your lights, mirrors, windscreen, etc. Remember this when you leave a motorway service area after a rest or refuelling stop.

A dirty windscreen increases glare and dazzle, so keep it clean.

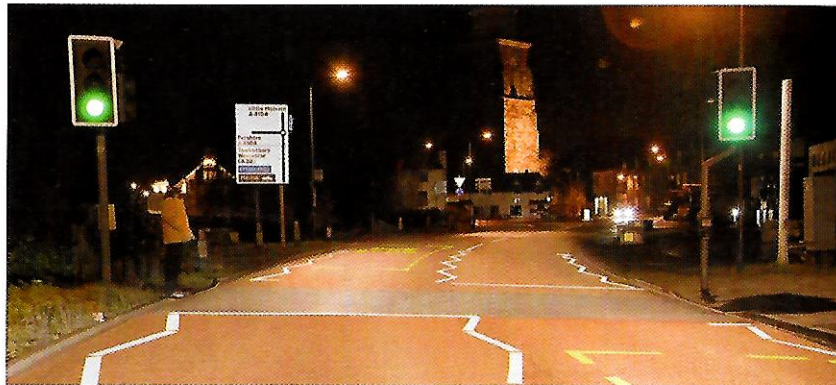
Don't

- wear tinted glasses or sunglasses while driving at night
- spray the windscreen or windows with tints.

➡ Built-up areas

The phrase 'built-up area' refers to areas such as town centres and residential streets. These areas also have regularly spaced street lighting. Unless signs show otherwise, this would normally mean that there's a 30 mph (48 km/h) speed limit (see rules 113 and 124, as well as the speed limits table in the 'General rules, techniques and advice for all drivers and riders' section of The Highway Code).

Always use dipped headlights, or dim-dip if fitted, in built-up areas at night. It helps others to see you. In areas where street lights cause patches of shadow, watch out for pedestrians, especially those in dark clothes, who can be difficult to see.



Remember to

- be on the alert for pedestrians
- approach pedestrian crossings at a speed at which you can stop safely if necessary
- watch out for cyclists and joggers.

Noise at night

Keep all noise to a minimum.

- Don't rev your engine.
- Close your car doors quietly.

Remember that neighbours and children may be asleep. Take extra care getting and disarming the anti-theft alarm on your vehicle.

Using the horn at night

You **MUST NOT** use your horn between 11.30 pm and 7.00 am in a built-up area (except to avoid danger from a moving vehicle).

If you need to warn other road users of your presence at night, flash your headlights.

➡ Overtaking at night

You'll need to take extra care before attempting to overtake at night. It's more difficult because you can see less. Only overtake if you can see that the road ahead will remain clear until after you've finished the manoeuvre. Don't overtake if there's a chance you're approaching

- a road junction
- a bend or hidden dip in the road
- the brow of a bridge or hill, except on a dual carriageway
- a pedestrian crossing
- road markings indicating double white lines ahead

or if there's likely to be

- a vehicle overtaking or turning right
- any other potential hazard.

If you're being overtaken

Dip your lights as soon as the vehicle starts to pass you, to avoid causing glare in the mirrors of the overtaking vehicle.

➡ Following at night

Stay clear and dip

Make sure you don't get too close to the vehicle ahead, and always dip your lights so you don't dazzle the driver. Your light beam should fall short of the rear of the vehicle in front. Remember your separation distance.



On a dual carriageway or motorway where it's possible to overtake, don't use full beam in the face of oncoming drivers.

➡ Parking at night

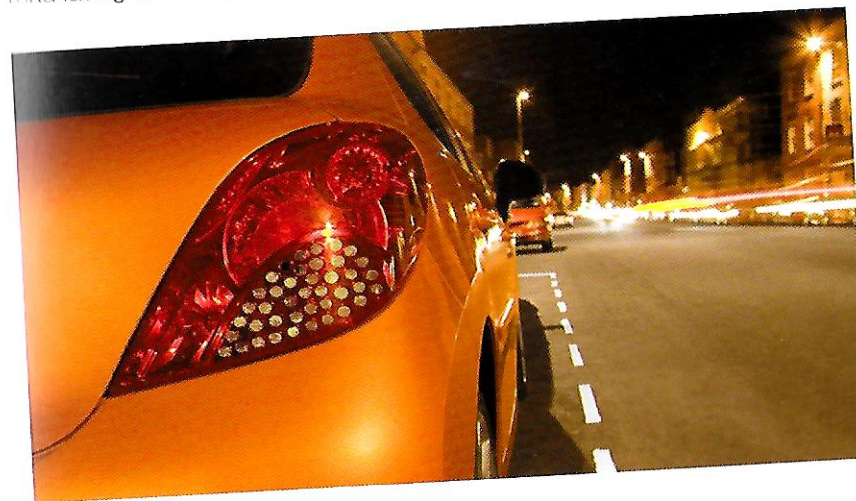
FACTS Cars and light goods vehicles (1525 kg or less, unladen), invalid carriages and motorcycles can park without lights on roads with a speed limit of 30 mph (48 km/h) or less. They must comply with any parking restrictions, and not park within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction.

They must also be parked parallel to, and close to, the side of the road or in a designated parking place and facing in the direction of the traffic flow.

If you have to park on any other road, you should never

- leave your vehicle without side or parking lights unless a sign indicates that lights aren't required. It would be better to get it off the road altogether
- leave your vehicle standing on the right-hand side of the road, except in a one-way street.

Always switch your headlights off when you stop, even for a short while. It's an offence to leave them on when the vehicle is parked. The fixed glare can be very dazzling – especially if, for any reason, the vehicle is on the offside of the road facing oncoming traffic. Leaving lights on can also drain the battery.



➡ Meeting other vehicles

Another vehicle's lights can tell you in which direction they're heading and can give you an idea of their speed. Oncoming lights should raise a number of questions in your mind, such as

- How far away is the vehicle and how fast is it moving?
- Should I slow down while we pass each other?
- How soon should I dip my lights?
- How far ahead can I see before I dip?

- Before I dip, is there anything on my side of the road
 - that I might endanger?
 - that might endanger me?

Examples include a stationary vehicle, a cyclist, a pedestrian, or an unlit skip.

When your headlights are on full beam

- dip early enough to avoid dazzling oncoming drivers, but not too early
- check the left-hand verge before you dip.



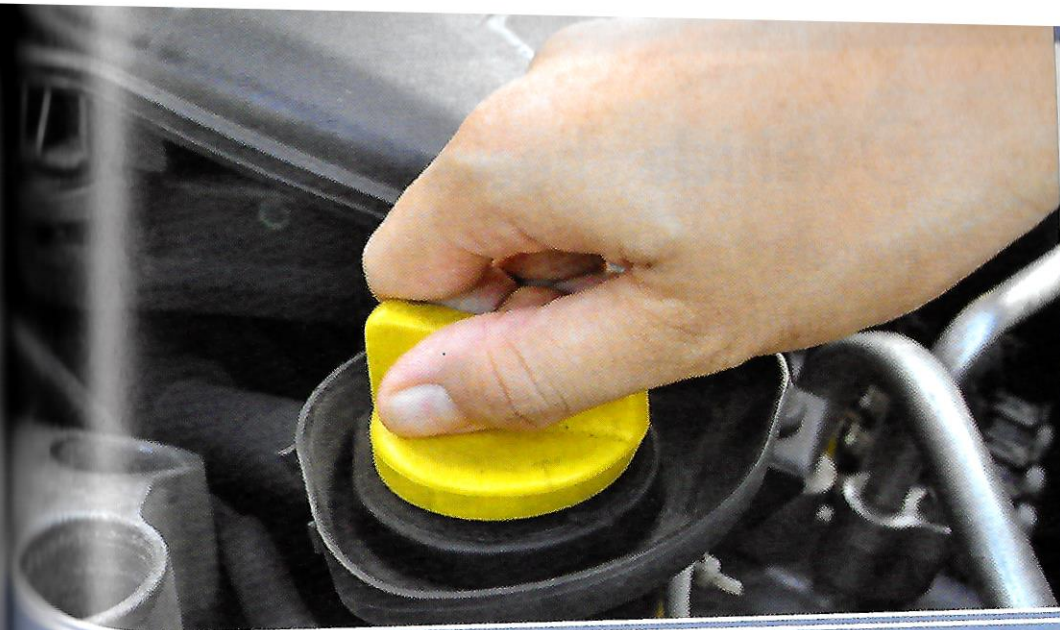
If you're dazzled

If the headlights of oncoming vehicles dazzle you, slow down and, if necessary, stop. Don't look directly at oncoming headlights.

Don't retaliate by leaving your lights on full beam and dazzling the oncoming driver.

On a left-hand bend

Dip earlier. Your headlights will cut straight across the eyes of anyone coming towards you. On a right-hand bend this might not happen, or it won't happen so soon.



Section fourteen

➞ Basic maintenance

This section covers

- Vehicle checks
- Fuel
- Oils and coolant
- Steering and suspension
- Brakes
- Tyres
- Electrical systems
- Basic fault-finding