



Section sixteen

➞ Incidents, accidents and emergencies

This section covers

- The scene of an incident
- First aid on the road
- Fire and electric shock
- Tunnels

➡ The scene of an incident

Arriving at the scene of an incident

You can reduce the chances of being involved in an incident by driving defensively. Unfortunately, road traffic incidents are always possible, even with the greatest care.

You might also come upon the scene of an incident. It could be that you're the first to arrive and the safety of existing casualties and other road users might be in your hands.

Knowledge and preparation can save lives. If you're involved in an incident, you **MUST** stop.

If you're the first or among the first to arrive at the scene of an incident, avoid becoming a casualty yourself. Remember that

- further collisions can, and do, happen
- fire is a major hazard.

Take extra care when visibility is very poor.

What to do at the scene of an incident

Warn other traffic

Do this by

- switching on hazard warning lights or other lights
- displaying an advance warning triangle (unless you're on a motorway)
- using any other means to warn other drivers.

Put out cigarettes or other fire hazards. Switch off your engine and warn others to do the same.

Call the emergency services if necessary.

Calling emergency services

Give full details of the location and casualties. On a motorway, this could mean going to the nearest emergency telephone.

Mobile phones

It can be very tempting to reach immediately for your mobile phone to call the emergency services.

Before you do, make sure you'll be able to tell them exactly where you are. This is particularly important on a motorway, where imprecise details can cause great problems for the emergency services. Location details are given on marker posts located on the hard shoulder. Always check these before you make your call.

Dealing with those involved

Move uninjured people away from the vehicles involved to a place of safety. On a motorway this should be away from the carriageway, hard shoulder or central reservation.

Don't move casualties trapped in vehicles unless they're in danger. Be prepared to give first aid as described later in this section.

Don't remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it's essential to do so; for example, if they're having breathing difficulties.

When an ambulance arrives, give the crew as many facts as you can (but not assumptions, diagnoses, etc).

Incidents involving dangerous goods

If the incident involves a vehicle containing dangerous goods

- switch off your engine and don't smoke
- keep well away from the vehicle
- call the emergency services and give the police or fire brigade as much information as possible about the labels and other markings. Don't use a mobile phone close to a vehicle carrying flammable loads



- beware of dangerous liquids, dust or vapours, no matter how small a concentration, or however minor the effects on you may seem.

Full details of hazard warning plates, such as the one shown above, are given in The Highway Code.

Passing the scene of an incident



If you're not one of the first to arrive at the scene of an incident and enough people have already stopped to give assistance, you should drive past carefully and not be distracted by the incident.

If the incident is on the other side of a dual carriageway or motorway, don't slow down to look. You may cause another collision on your side of the road or, at the very least, additional and unnecessary traffic congestion.

Always give way to emergency and incident support vehicles. Watch out for their flashing lights and listen for their warning sirens. Depending on the type of vehicle, the flashing lights used could be red, blue, amber or green (see rules 106, 107, 219 and 281 in The Highway Code).

Police cones or vehicles

If these are obstructing the road, don't drive round them; you should stop. They mean that the road ahead is closed or blocked for an unspecified time.

If you're involved in a road traffic incident

You **MUST** stop. If there are injuries, either call an ambulance and the police yourself or ask someone else to do it. Ask them to return to you when they've made the call to confirm that they've made it. You should

- give whatever help you can. People who seem to be unhurt may be suffering from shock and may, in fact, be unaware of their injuries
- ask yourself whether you're hurt too. If in doubt, get a check-up at the hospital.

If you hit a domestic or farm animal, try to find the owner to report any injuries.

For any incident involving

- injury to another person or animal
- damage to another vehicle or property

give your name and address, the name and address of the vehicle's owner and the registration number of the vehicle to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring them. If this isn't possible at the time of the incident, you **MUST** report the incident to the police as soon as possible and in any case within 24 hours. In Northern Ireland you must do this immediately.



If there has been an injury, you must also give insurance details to the police. If you can't produce the insurance documents when you report the incident, you have up to seven days to produce them at a police station of your choice.

Witnesses

Note any witnesses and try to make sure they don't leave before you get their names and addresses.

Make a note of the numbers of any vehicles whose occupants might have witnessed the incident.

You'll need to exchange details and obtain

- the other driver's name, address and phone number
- the make and registration number(s) of the other vehicle(s) involved
- insurance details.

Find out the vehicle owner's details too, if different.

Information

Gather as much information as you can, such as

- vehicle damage and/or injuries you're aware of
- the number of people present in the vehicle(s)
- weather conditions
- road conditions
- details of other vehicles. Record all information: the colour, condition, whether the lights were on, and whether they were showing any indicator signals
- what was said by you and other people
- identification numbers of police involved
- any other possible factor in the incident.

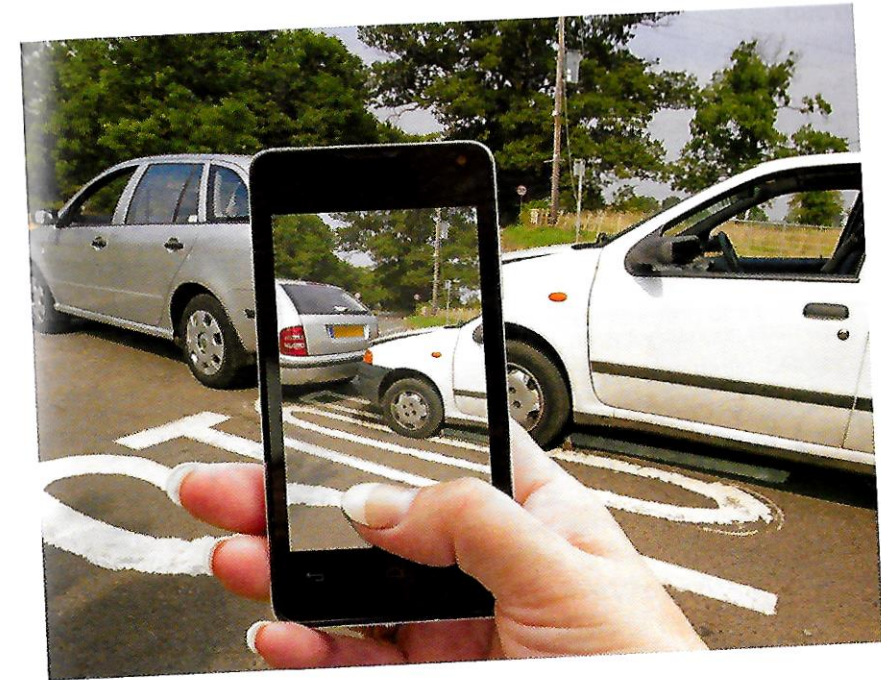
Take photographs

If you have a camera or a mobile phone with a camera

- take pictures at the scene, including the registration plates of the vehicles involved
- try to record the conditions, vehicle damage and number of passengers present.

Some smartphone apps have a checklist feature designed to help you gather all the information you need in the event that you witness – or are involved in – a road traffic incident.

In gathering information, don't place yourself in any danger.



Draw a map

Show the situation before and after the incident, and give approximate distances

- between vehicles
- from road signs or junctions
- away from the kerb.

Note skid marks, where any witnesses were situated, street names, car speeds and directions.

Statements

If the police ask you for a statement, you don't have to make one straight away. It could be better to wait a while, even if you don't appear to be suffering from shock. Write your statement later. Take care with the wording, and keep a copy.

Fraud

The Insurance Fraud Enforcement Department (IFED) is a dedicated police investigation unit based at the City of London Police. They're investigating insurance fraud and arresting suspected insurance fraudsters across the UK. IFED targets all kinds of insurance fraud, from organised gangs operating 'crash for cash' rings, through to individuals making fraudulent claims on personal injury and motor vehicle policies.

Therefore, it's important to record as many details about the incident as you can, in order to prevent fraudulent insurance and personal injury claims.

➡ First aid on the road

The following information may be of general assistance, but there's no substitute for proper training. Any first aid given at the scene of an incident should be looked on only as a temporary measure until the emergency services arrive. If you haven't had any first aid training, the following points could be helpful.

1. Deal with danger

Further collisions and fire are the main dangers following a crash. Approach any vehicle involved with care. Switch off all engines and, if possible, warn other traffic. Stop anyone from smoking.

2. Get help

Try to get the assistance of bystanders. Ask someone to call the appropriate emergency services on 999 or 112 as soon as possible. They'll need to know the exact location of the incident and the number of vehicles involved. Try to give information about the condition of any casualties – for example, if anyone is having difficulty breathing, is bleeding heavily or doesn't respond when spoken to.

3. Help those involved

DO NOT move casualties still in vehicles unless there's the threat of further danger.

DO NOT remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it's essential. Remember the casualty may be suffering from shock.

DO NOT give them anything to eat or drink.

DO try to make them warm and as comfortable as you can. Protect them from rain or snow, but avoid unnecessary movement.

DO give reassurance confidently and try not to leave them alone or let them wander into the path of other traffic.

4. Provide emergency care

If someone is unconscious, follow the DR ABC code.

Danger



Check for danger, such as approaching traffic, before you move towards the casualty.

Response



Ask the casualty questions and gently shake their shoulders to check for a response.

Airway








Check their airway is clear.

Breathing



Check for breathing for up to 10 seconds.

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Compressions |  | If the casualty isn't breathing Place two hands in the centre of the chest and press down hard and fast – around 5–6 centimetres and about twice a second. You may only need to use one hand for a child and shouldn't press down as far. |
| If the casualty isn't breathing, consider giving mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. | | |
| |  | Check and, if necessary, clear their mouth and airway. |
| |  | Gently tilt their head back as far as possible. |
| |  | Pinch their nostrils together. |
| |  | Place your mouth over theirs. Give two breaths, each lasting one second. Continue with cycles of 30 chest compressions and two breaths until medical help arrives. |

Unconscious and breathing

Don't move a casualty unless there's further danger. Movement could add to spinal or neck injury. If breathing stops, treat as recommended under 'DR ABC' above.

Don't attempt to remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it's essential – for example, if the casualty isn't breathing normally – otherwise serious injury could result.

If an adult or child is unconscious and breathing, place them on their side in the recovery position (as shown below).

- Start with the casualty on their back and sit or crouch to one side of them.
- Place the arm nearest you straight out, at a right angle to their body.
- Roll them onto their side towards you.
- Turn the casualty's other arm palm upwards, and place this hand between the ground and the casualty's cheek.
- With your other hand, grasp the casualty's top leg just above the knee and pull it up at a right angle, keeping the foot on the ground. This will prevent them from rolling over any further.
- Make sure that the casualty's airway remains open and that you monitor their condition until medical help arrives.



Bleeding

First, check for anything that may be in the wound, such as glass. Taking care not to press on the object, build up padding on either side of the object. If there's nothing embedded, apply firm pressure over the wound to stem the flow of blood. As soon as practical, fasten a pad to the wound with a bandage or length of cloth. Use the cleanest material available. If a limb is bleeding but not broken, raise it above the level of the heart to reduce the flow of blood. Any restriction of blood circulation for more than a short time could cause long-term injuries. It's vital to obtain skilled medical help as soon as possible. Make sure someone dials 999 or 112.

Dealing with shock

The effects of shock may not be immediately obvious. Warning signs to look for include

- rapid pulse
- pale grey skin
- sweating
- rapid, shallow breathing.

Prompt treatment can help to deal with shock.

- Don't give the casualty anything to eat or drink.
- Reassure the casualty confidently and keep checking on them.
- Keep casualties warm and make them as comfortable as you can.
- Talk firmly and quietly to anyone who's hysterical.
- Don't let anyone suffering from shock wander into the path of other traffic.
- Try not to leave any casualty alone.
- Don't move the casualty unless it's necessary.
- If a casualty does need to be moved for their own safety, take care to avoid making their injuries worse.

Burns

Check the casualty for shock and, if possible, try to cool the burn for at least 10 minutes with plenty of clean, cold water or other non-toxic liquid. Don't try to remove anything that's sticking to the burn.

Be prepared

Always carry a first aid kit – you might never need it, but it could save a life.

Learn first aid – you can get first aid training from a qualified organisation such as St John Ambulance, St Andrew's First Aid, British Red Cross Society or any suitable qualified body.



➡ Fire and electric shock

Fire

Carrying a suitable fire extinguisher in your vehicle may help you to put out a small fire.

If you suspect a fire in the engine compartment

- pull up as safely and as quickly as possible
- get all passengers out safely
- summon assistance or get someone to dial 999 or 112
- **don't** open the bonnet
- you may be able to direct any available fire extinguisher through the small gap available when the release catch is operated.
- if the fire appears to be large, **don't** try to tackle it; get well clear of the vehicle and leave it to the fire service
- **don't** take any risks.

Remember, fire can spread through a vehicle with alarming speed.

If you notice a strong smell of petrol, don't ignore it – alert the emergency services to it when they arrive.

Electric shock

Some incidents involve a vehicle hitting overhead cables or electrical supplies to traffic bollards, traffic lights or street lights. Check before trying to get someone out of a vehicle in such cases.



Don't touch any person who's obviously in contact with live electricity unless you can use some non-conducting item, such as a piece of dry wood, plastic or similar – anything wet shouldn't be used. You mustn't try to give first aid until electrical contact has been broken.

A person can also be electrocuted simply by being too close to a high-voltage overhead cable. Contact the provider (their telephone number may be shown on a nearby pole), then follow their advice.

➡ Tunnels

If you break down or are involved in a road traffic incident in a tunnel

- switch on your hazard warning lights
- switch off the engine
- leave your vehicle
- give first aid to any injured people, if you're able
- call for help from an emergency point.

If your vehicle is on fire and you can drive it out of the tunnel, do so. If not

- pull over to the side and switch off the engine
- leave the vehicle immediately
- put out the fire using the vehicle's extinguisher or the one available in the tunnel
- move without delay to an emergency exit if you can't put out the fire
- call for help from the nearest emergency point.

If the vehicle in front is on fire, switch on your hazard warning lights, then follow the above procedure, giving first aid to the injured if possible.

Some tunnels have signs with specific advice about what to do if you break down or are involved in an incident inside them. Make sure you follow these instructions and inform the tunnel controller of your location as soon as you can.



Section seventeen

➞ Ecosafe driving and the environment

This section covers

- What you can do
- Ecosafe driving
- Choosing a vehicle
- Vehicle maintenance
- Alternatives to driving