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Take great care when reversing out of a parking space. Check for pedestrians and vehicles behind you.



Section ten

→ Defensive driving

This section covers

- Defensive driving
- Observation
- Signalling
- Hazards
- Lighting and weather conditions
- Other road users

→ Defensive driving

The roads today are busier than they've ever been, and they're getting busier all the time.

As well as heavy traffic, the driver often has to cope with unpredictable, irrational, offensive and sometimes dangerous driving behaviour. In such conditions, drivers need to learn and practise a suitable strategy.

That strategy is called 'defensive driving', sometimes known as 'planned driving'.

Defensive driving is based on effective observation, good anticipation and control. It's about always questioning the actions of other road users and being prepared for the unexpected, so as not to be taken by surprise.

Defensive driving involves

- awareness
- planning
- anticipating
- staying in control

and driving with

- responsibility
- care
- consideration and courtesy.



Safety

You should put safety above all else. This means having real concern not only for your own safety but also for that of other road users, including the most vulnerable – those walking or riding.

Expect other people to make mistakes, and be ready to slow down or stop – even if you think you have priority.

Never assume that other road users will follow the rules. They may break them, either deliberately or accidentally. Your safety lies mainly in your own hands. The better your control of your vehicle and road space, the safer you'll be.

A good example

Your driving should always set a good example to other road users, and any passengers you may have.

Your good example could make a deep impression on another driver, especially a learner or inexperienced road user, and perhaps save lives in the future. Good driving practice could also have a positive effect on your passengers – especially children.

Reducing hostility

With defensive driving, you'll show patience and anticipation. This will help to reduce the number of incidents which result in

- open hostility
- abusive language
- threats
- physical violence.

Avoid the kind of driving that

- causes offence to other road users
- provokes reaction
- creates dangerous situations.

Never drive in a spirit of competition on a public road. Competitive or aggressive driving is the opposite of defensive driving. It increases the risks to everyone.

Make allowances

Make allowances if someone pulls out or turns in front of you: hold back and increase the distance between you and them. That way, if they brake suddenly, you've given yourself a greater safety margin.

When you check in the mirrors, look and then act sensibly on what you see.



If someone else is driving recklessly, keep calm and don't be tempted to retaliate.

Observation

Look at other road users and assess their

- speed
- driving behaviour
- possible intentions.

At junctions, there's no point in just looking if your view is obstructed by, for example, parked vehicles. You must move carefully into a position where you can see, without moving into the path of passing traffic. Remember LADA

- Look
- Assess and
- Decide before you
- Act.

That's what effective observation is all about.

Observing what's ahead

As a defensive driver you'll constantly watch and interpret what's happening ahead, to the side and, through frequent use of the mirrors, behind you.

You'll always drive at a speed that allows you to stop safely within the distance you can see to be clear.

Approaching a bend

Ask yourself

- Can I see the full picture?
- How sharp is the bend?
- Am I in the right position?
- Is my speed right?
- What might I meet?
- Could I stop if I had to?



Approaching a junction

Ask yourself

- Have I seen the whole junction?
- Can other drivers see me?
- Am I sure they've seen me?
- Have I got an escape route if they haven't?

Left-hand-drive vehicles

If you're driving a left-hand-drive vehicle, be aware of how this affects your field of view and make full use of your mirrors.

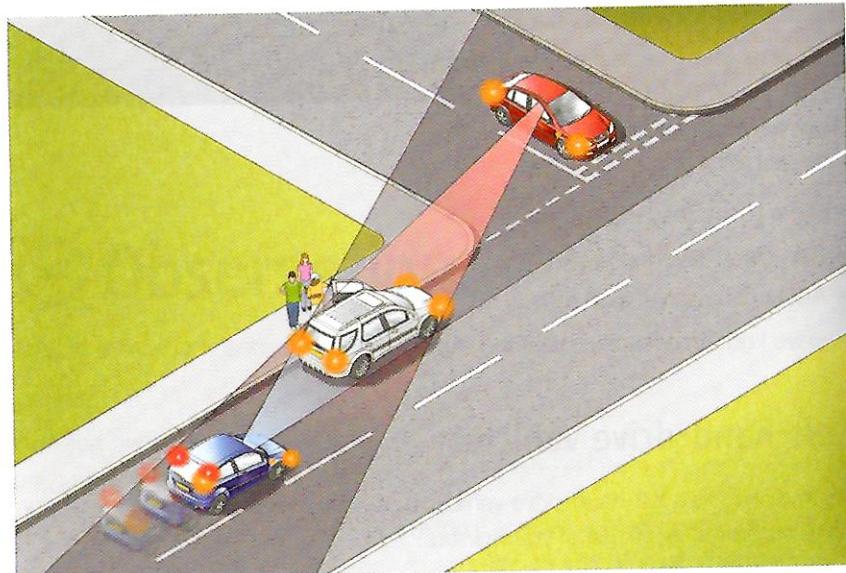
Zone of vision at a junction

Your zone of vision is what you can see as you look forward and to the side from your vehicle. As you approach a junction, your zone of vision onto the other road usually improves.

You may need to get very close before you can look far enough into another road to see whether it's safe to proceed. The last few metres are often crucial.

Sometimes, parked vehicles restrict your view so much that you need to stop and creep forward for a proper view before you emerge.

- Look in every direction before you emerge.
- Keep looking as you join the other road.
- Be ready to stop.
- Use all the information available to you; for example, look through the windows of parked vehicles.
- Where your view is restricted, it can help to use the reflections in shop windows to see approaching traffic.



Screen pillar obstruction

Windscreen pillars can cause obstructions to your view of the road. You should be aware of this effect, particularly when

- approaching junctions and bends
- emerging from junctions.

Road users such as motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians may be completely obscured by the pillar.

You should be aware that some vehicles have larger blind spots than others, and groups of pedestrians, a motorcyclist or even a small car can be hidden from view. You may need to move around in your seat to overcome the effect of these blind spots.



If you can't see the driver's face, they won't be able to see you.

Other road users

It can be difficult to see some other road users, especially when you're emerging from a junction. Those who are particularly at risk are

- pedestrians – they frequently cross at junctions and may find it difficult to judge the speed and course of approaching traffic
- cyclists – they can be difficult to see, as they may be obscured by trees and other objects, especially if they're riding close to the side of the road. They might be approaching faster than you expect
- motorcyclists – like cyclists they're often less easy to see than other traffic, but they're likely to be moving much faster than cyclists.

Always make sure it's safe before emerging from a junction.
 Never rely solely on a quick glance – give yourself time to take in the whole scene.
 If another vehicle or a pedestrian isn't in your zone of vision, you're not usually in theirs.
 Making eye contact with other road users helps you to know whether they've seen you.

Observing traffic behind you

Before you move off, change direction or change speed, you need to know how your action will affect other road users, including those behind you.

You must also be aware of traffic likely to overtake.

Using your mirrors

Using your mirrors regularly enables you to keep up to date with what's happening behind you **without** losing sight of what's going on in front.

Look as far behind in your mirrors as you look ahead through the windscreen. By looking only at the following vehicle you might miss important information that could help you to plan your manoeuvre.

Your mirrors must be clean and properly adjusted to give a clear view.

When should you use your mirrors?

Before you signal or make any manoeuvre. For example, before

- moving off
- changing direction
- turning right or left
- overtaking
- changing lanes
- slowing or stopping
- opening a car door.

Looking around

You should look around to check your blind spot before moving off.

A quick sideways glance

This is helpful, for example, to check your blind spot

- before you change lanes, especially on a motorway or dual carriageway
- where traffic is merging from the left or right.



Take great care in looking around while on the move, particularly when driving at high speeds. In the time you take to look around, you could lose touch with what's happening in front of you.

Just looking isn't enough

You must act sensibly on what you see. Take note of the speed, behaviour and possible intentions of traffic behind you.

Another driver's blind spot

Avoid driving in another driver's blind spot for any longer than necessary. This is a particular problem with left-hand-drive lorries, as the driver may not be able to see you and may think it's safe to change lane or overtake.

Approaching green traffic lights

Ask yourself

- How long have they been on green?
- Are there many vehicles already waiting at either side of the junction?
(If there's a queue, the lights are probably about to change.)
- Do I have time to stop?
- Can the vehicle behind me stop? If it's a large goods vehicle, it might need a greater distance in which to pull up.

Don't

- try to beat the traffic signals by accelerating
- wait until the last moment to brake. Harsh braking can cause skids and loss of control.



Sometimes, drivers anticipate the change of signals and move away while the lights are still showing red and amber. This isn't a safe practice and could result in a collision. Safety cameras are placed at some traffic lights and these record how drivers behave at the lights – including when they move away too soon.

Traffic signals not working

Where traffic signals aren't working, treat the situation as you would an unmarked junction and proceed with great care.

→ Signalling

Signal to warn others of your intention and to help other road users. Remember that people could be using the road in a variety of ways.

Road users include

- drivers of other motor vehicles
- drivers of large or slow-moving vehicles
- motorcyclists
- users of powered mobility vehicles
- cyclists
- pedestrians
- horse riders
- crossing supervisors
- road workers
- persons directing traffic.

Signal clearly and in good time.

Give only the signals shown in The Highway Code.

Direction indicator signals

Help other road users to understand your intention by

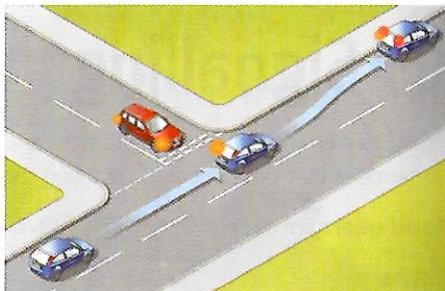
- signalling in good time, so that they have time to see and react to your signal
- positioning yourself correctly and in good time for the manoeuvre you intend to make.

Conflicting signals

A signal with the left indicator means 'I am going to turn left' **or** 'I am going to stop on the left'.

Avoid using your left indicator before a left-hand junction if you intend to stop on the left just after the junction. A driver waiting at that junction might think you're turning left and drive out into your path.

- Wait until you've passed the junction, then indicate that you intend to stop.
- Reduce speed by braking gently, so that your brake lights warn drivers behind you.



If you're waiting to emerge and a vehicle seems to be indicating its intention to turn left, wait until you can see that it's actually going to turn before you pull out. Otherwise, you might drive into its path.

REMEMBER, roundabouts often have several lanes of traffic, with vehicles changing speed and direction. It's important that you give any signals correctly and at the right time.



Warning signals

The horn

There are very few situations in which you'll need to use the horn.

Using the horn doesn't

- give you priority
- mean you don't have to drive safely.

Sound it only if

- you think someone may not have seen you
- you want to warn other road users of your presence; for example, at blind bends or junctions.



Avoid using a long blast on the horn, as this can alarm pedestrians. If a pedestrian doesn't react to a short signal on the horn, it could mean they're deaf. If possible, avoid sounding the horn near animals; it may increase the danger because their reaction will be unpredictable.

Never use your horn to signal your unhappiness at another driver's actions. Don't use it to attract the attention of someone at the side of the road, to signal your arrival to someone, or as a farewell.

Unless a moving vehicle poses a danger, it's illegal to use your horn

- when stationary
- when driving at night (11.30 pm to 7.00 am) in a built-up area.

Flashing your headlights

This is an alternative to the horn and has the same meaning: to warn others that you're there.

Don't flash your headlights at anyone to indicate that they should go ahead or turn.

If someone flashes their headlights at you

Before you act on the signal, make sure

- you understand what they mean
- the signal is meant for you.

Never assume it's a signal to proceed.

Ask yourself

- What's the other driver trying to tell me: 'Stop', 'Go', 'Turn', 'Thank you'?
- If I move, will it be safe?
- Is the signal intended for me or for another road user?
- Am I causing a hold-up by staying where I am?
- Is the other driver really signalling, or were those headlights flashed accidentally?

Take your time and watch for other road users who may think the signal was for them.

On motorways and dual carriageways

If you think a warning is necessary, flashing your headlights is usually better than using your horn. Be alert for such warnings from other drivers.

If a driver behind starts flashing their headlights and driving dangerously close

- stay calm
- don't be intimidated.

Move back to the left as soon as you can do so safely, without cutting in on vehicles that you've overtaken.

REMEMBER, the only official meaning for the flashing of headlights is to let other road users know you're there – the same as using the horn.



→ Hazards

A hazard is any situation that could require you to adjust your speed or change course. Hazards can be either static or moving.

To identify a static hazard, you must look well ahead for clues such as

- road signs
- changes in road conditions
- parked vehicles
- junctions.

Moving hazards include all road users, such as

- other vehicles
- motorcyclists
- users of powered mobility vehicles
- cyclists
- pedestrians
- horses and riders
- road workers
- persons directing traffic
- loose animals.



Remember, as soon as you've recognised a hazard, you must assess

- how to deal with it safely
- how your actions will affect other road users.

Allowing time and space

Always leave yourself enough time and space to cope with what's ahead.

- Scan the road ahead, in the far and near distance – especially in town, where things change quickly.
- Check your mirrors frequently so that you always know what's happening behind you.
- Watch for clues about what's likely to happen next.

For example, a parked car is a potential hazard if the driver is sitting in it, or you see vapour from the exhaust in cold weather. This could indicate that

- a door might open suddenly
- the car might pull out without warning.

If you can see underneath a parked vehicle and notice someone's feet at the other side, remember that the pedestrian might not be able to see you and could step into the road.

Effective observation and anticipation are your main defence.

Always keep a good separation distance between you and the vehicle in front. Leave a gap of at least one metre or yard for each mph of your speed, or use the two-second rule.

In bad conditions, leave at least double the distance or a four-second time gap.

Tailgating

When a vehicle behind is too close to you, ease off the accelerator very gradually and increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front. This will give you a greater safety margin. If another road user pulls into the space in front of you, drop back until you've restored your safety margin.



Large vehicles

Take extra care when following large vehicles, especially at roundabouts, junctions and entrances.

The driver might have to take a course that seems incorrect to you; for example, moving out to the right before turning left.

In wet weather, large vehicles throw up a lot of spray. This can make it difficult for you to see the road ahead, so drop back until your view improves.

Keep well back from any large vehicles that are in the process of manoeuvring to the left or right.

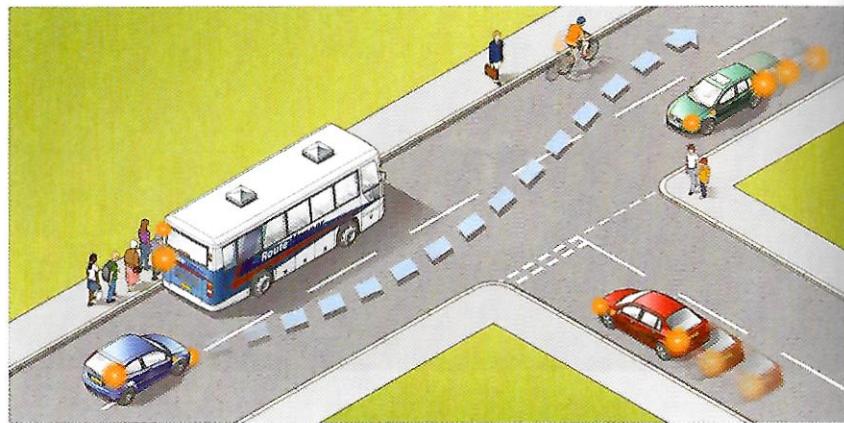
Be patient and don't try to pass while they're manoeuvring.

Large vehicles can also block your view. Your ability to see and plan ahead will be improved if you keep back.

REMEMBER, if you're following a large vehicle too closely, the driver might not be able to see you in their mirrors. If you can't see their mirrors, the driver can't see you.



Recognising hazards



Events can happen at the same time, or in quick succession. In the illustration above, the driver of the blue car must pull out to pass the stationary coach, but

- is the green car really going to turn left? (The driver might have forgotten to cancel the indicator from a previous turn)
- if the green car does turn, will the pedestrian with the briefcase decide to cross?
- when will the driver of the blue car notice the red car, which may want to turn left?

If you're travelling too fast, you're unlikely to be able to cope with all the events at once. This is how other road users, who might not be doing anything wrong, can turn a straightforward piece of driving into a hazardous situation.

REMEMBER, the defensive driver is always



- in the correct position
- travelling at the correct speed for the road, traffic and weather conditions
- in the right gear
- anticipating and prepared for the next change in the traffic situation.

The action you need to take will vary from one hazard to another. Any action that involves a change of speed or course is called a manoeuvre.

A manoeuvre can vary from slowing slightly to turning on a very busy road.

Approaching any hazard

Follow the MSM/PSL routine every time you recognise a hazard.

Mirror(s)

Check the position of traffic following you.

Signal

If necessary, signal your intention to change course or slow down. Signal clearly and in good time.

Manoeuvre

Carry out the manoeuvre if it's still safe to do so. Manoeuvre has three phases
- Position, Speed, Look.

Position

Get into the correct position in good time to negotiate the hazard. This helps other road users to anticipate what you intend to do.

Positioning yourself too late can be dangerous. Ask yourself

- Can I see and be seen?
- What are my options?

Don't do anything that would obstruct another driver or rider.

If lanes are closed or narrow because of roadworks, obey the temporary road signs and move into the correct lane in good time.

- Don't reduce your safety margin by responding at the last moment.
- Don't overtake and squeeze in later on – you'll only increase the frustration of drivers already waiting.

Speed

Ask yourself

- Could I stop in time if the vehicle in front braked suddenly?
- Am I going too fast for the road conditions?
- Am I in the right gear to keep control?

Slow down as you approach a hazard. Always be ready to stop.

Look

Keep looking ahead to assess all possible dangers. This is particularly important at a junction. Look in all directions, even if you're not turning.

If you're joining a road, keep looking as you turn from one road to the other. Watch out for

- traffic turning across your path
- motorcyclists, as they're more difficult to see and can easily be hidden behind other vehicles
- pedestrians.

Country roads

FACTS Deaths are disproportionately likely to occur on rural roads: in 2013, these roads carried 53% of traffic, but accounted for around two-thirds of road deaths.



Take extra care and reduce your speed as you approach bends and junctions.

Bends and junctions

Bends can often be sharper than you think they're going to be. They may also obscure other, more vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists, or larger slow-moving farm vehicles which may take up the whole width of the road.

Junctions, especially minor junctions or entrances to farm premises, aren't always signed and may be partially hidden.

Other road users

Many roads in country areas have no pavements or footpaths. Where this is the case, pedestrians are advised to walk on the right-hand side of the road so they can see oncoming traffic. However, you should always be prepared to find people walking or jogging on your side of the road.

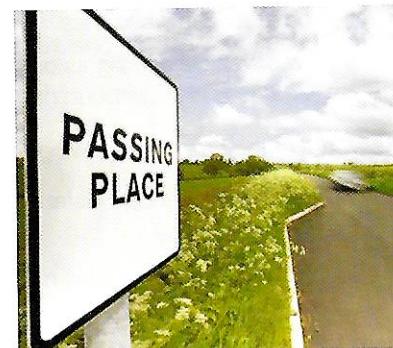
Horse riders and cyclists are also often found on country roads. Give them plenty of space, always be patient and wait until it's safe before overtaking, especially on narrow or winding roads.



Narrow roads with passing places

On single-track roads, look well ahead and be prepared to stop. If you see an oncoming vehicle

- pull into the passing place if it's on the left
- be prepared to reverse into a passing place if necessary
- wait opposite a passing place on the right.



Avoid driving onto the verge; it may be soft, with drainage ditches or gulleys that could damage your vehicle's suspension.

If your view ahead is restricted by hedges or bends, reduce your speed so that you can stop safely if necessary.

If another driver wishes to overtake, pull into or stop opposite a passing place to allow them to do so.

See the Don't Risk It website for advice on driving on country roads.



dontriskit.info/country-roads

→ Lighting and weather conditions

Driving at night

You can't see as far ahead at night, so try to get help from

- illuminated signs
- reflective signs
- reflectors between white lines
- the glow of vehicle headlights on trees and buildings, indicating a corner or junction.

Be aware of the hazards of driving at night. In particular

- it can be difficult to judge distance and speed from the headlights of approaching vehicles
- bright lights on some vehicles make it difficult to see less bright lights, such as those of cyclists or low-powered motorcycles
- keep a good lookout for pedestrian crossings, traffic lights and other road users, and don't let shop and advertising signs distract you.

More information about driving at night can be found in section 13.

Weather conditions

Many different weather conditions can make driving more difficult.

Rain and wet roads can create hazards at any time of year.

Rain

Rain makes headlights less effective at night. On dark and poorly lit roads, slow down and watch for unlit objects such as roadworks, builders' skips or parked cars. Drive more slowly and carefully in rain. Match your speed to the conditions.

Wet roads

Stay alert to the road surface because you might have to brake. Ask yourself

- Is the road slippery?
- Is it a good surface on which to brake?

If the surface is wet, allow more time to stop.

A wet road means

- less efficient braking
- a longer distance needed to stop
- a greater risk of skidding.

On wet roads, take the conditions into account and reduce your speed.

Don't splash pedestrians as you drive through puddles. This is an offence and you could be prosecuted.

At night, wet roads can

- increase distracting reflected light
- make unlit objects very difficult to see.

More information about driving in different weather conditions can be found in section 12.



Other road users

You, as a driver, aren't the only person using the road. Most other types of road user are more vulnerable than you are because they're less well protected in the event of a collision.

Cyclists

Make allowances for cyclists. They have every right to be on the road, but they're vulnerable. The younger the cyclist, the more vulnerable they're likely to be.

Allow cyclists plenty of room; they might

- glance round, showing they could be about to move out or turn
- veer suddenly into your path
- be carrying items that may affect their control and balance
- weave about, slow down, or stop on uphill gradients
- swerve around potholes or drain covers or to avoid being hit by carelessly opened vehicle doors
- have problems in bad weather, particularly when there are strong side winds
- have difficulty on poor road surfaces or where tramlines are set into the road.



Look out for them particularly when you're

- in slow-moving traffic
- emerging from a junction
- negotiating a roundabout.

They could be travelling faster than you first think, so never rely solely on a quick glance.

Don't assume that cyclists will always adopt a position on the left of the road or use cycle lanes; it's sometimes safer for them to adopt a more central position in the road. Don't drive aggressively or try to intimidate them.

When travelling at low speeds, such as at junctions, cyclists are likely to be more unstable and therefore more vulnerable. Give them plenty of room.

FACTS Pedal cyclists accounted for 11% of all road casualties in 2013: 6% of all road accident fatalities, 15% of all serious injuries and 10% of all slight injuries.



Motorcyclists

Make allowances for motorcyclists.

Much of what has been said about cyclists also applies to motorcyclists. They're very vulnerable because, like cyclists, they're much smaller than other vehicles, with a narrow profile that makes them difficult to see. They can also appear to be further away than they actually are, making it difficult to judge when it's safe to emerge in front of them or turn across their path. However, motorcyclists travel much faster than cyclists, so situations can develop much more quickly than those involving cyclists.

Many road traffic incidents happen because drivers fail to notice motorcyclists, so look out for them when

- emerging from junctions. The motorcyclist may be travelling along the major road and may be hidden behind other traffic. They may also be hidden by signs, trees, street furniture, etc
- turning into a road on your right. The motorcyclist may be following, overtaking or approaching you. Oncoming motorcyclists may be particularly difficult to see if they're being followed by a larger vehicle
- changing lanes or moving out to overtake slower-moving or parked vehicles.



REMEMBER, motorcyclists and cyclists are harder to see than other vehicles and are exposed to bad weather, slippery roads and uneven surfaces. Look out for them, especially at junctions.



Think once

Think twice

Think bike!

Pay special attention to motorcycles and scooters displaying L plates. The riders of these machines may be riding on the road with very little experience, so they're particularly vulnerable.

Motorcycles in windy weather

Windy weather has a big effect on motorcyclists; they can be blown into your path, so

- if you're overtaking a motorcyclist, allow extra room
- if a motorcyclist in front of you is overtaking a high-sided vehicle, keep well back, as they could be blown off course
- be particularly aware of motorcyclists where there are side-wind warning signs.

Powered vehicles used by disabled people

These small vehicles (also known as invalid carriages) can be used on the pavement and on the road. They're extremely vulnerable when they're on the road because of

- their small size
- their low speed – they have a maximum speed of 8 mph (12 km/h).

Their small size means they're not easy to see. On a dual carriageway where the speed limit exceeds 50 mph (80 km/h) they should be displaying an amber flashing light, but on other roads you may not have that advance warning.



Buses and coaches

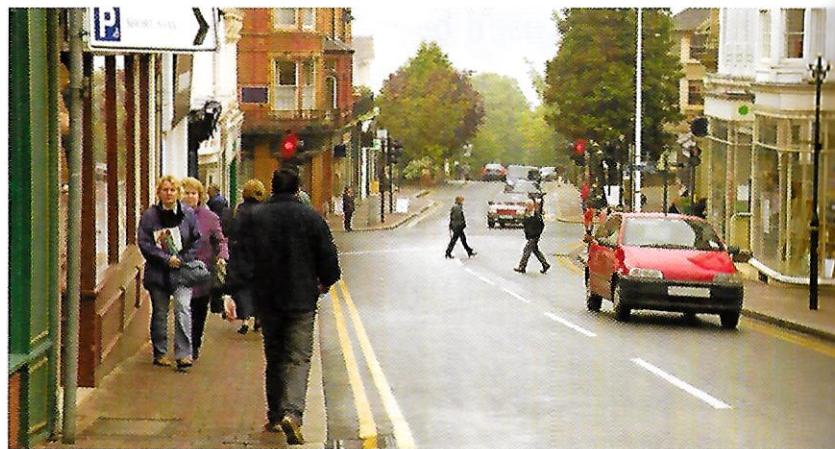
Look well ahead when you see buses and coaches at a bus stop. Be aware of

- people getting off the bus or coach. They may not look properly before they cross the road – and even if they do look, their view is often restricted
- buses and coaches pulling away from the bus stop. If they're signalling to move out, give way to them if you can do so safely.



REMEMBER, always think of the other road user, not just of yourself.





Pedestrians

Always drive carefully and slowly in areas where there are likely to be pedestrians, such as residential areas and town centres.

Be particularly careful in Home Zones and Quiet Lanes, where people could be using the whole of the road for a range of activities.

Always look out for pedestrians when

- turning from one road into another – give way to people who are crossing the road into which you're turning
- approaching pedestrian crossings. Never overtake on the approach to a crossing
- driving past a bus or tram stop, as pedestrians may walk out into the road.

Keep your speed down when driving in an area where there are pedestrians, especially children. If a pedestrian is in collision with a car, the survival rate of the pedestrian reduces drastically the faster the car is travelling.

Older people

Several factors make older people more vulnerable.

If they have poor eyesight or hearing, they might not be aware of approaching traffic. They might not be able to judge the speed of approaching traffic when crossing the road. Even when they do realise the danger, they may be unable to move quickly, or they may become flustered.



They may also take longer to cross the road. Be patient and don't hurry them by revving your engine or edging forwards.



People with disabilities

Take special care around people with disabilities.

Visually impaired people may not be able to see you approaching. They may carry a white cane or use a guide dog. The guide dog has a distinctive loop-type harness. Remember, the dog is trained to wait if there's a vehicle nearby.

A person with hearing difficulties isn't easy to identify, so take extra care if a pedestrian fails to look your way as you approach. Remember they may not be aware of your presence. They may have a guide dog wearing a distinctive yellow or burgundy coat.

Those who are deaf and blind may carry a white cane with a red band or may be using a guide dog with a red and white harness. They may not see or hear instructions or signals.

Children

Take extra care where children might be around, particularly in residential areas and near schools and parks.

Drive carefully and slowly past schools, especially during school start and finish times. Be aware that

- a school-crossing patrol may stop you to escort children across the road
- children may be getting on or off a bus showing a 'school bus' sign.

Children are impulsive and unpredictable. Therefore, drive slowly in narrow roads where parked cars obscure your view.

Look out for parked ice-cream vans. Children are usually more interested in ice cream than they are in traffic and they may forget to look before running across the road.

Animals

Animals are easily frightened by noise and vehicles coming close to them. You should

- drive slowly and quietly; don't sound the horn
- keep your engine speed low; don't rev your engine or accelerate rapidly once you've passed them
- always watch out for animals on unfenced roads, as they may step out in front of you. You should always be able to stop safely within the distance you can see to be clear, especially at night when your lights are dipped.

Give animals as much room as possible.

People in charge of animals

If someone in charge of animals signals to you to stop, do so and switch off your engine.



Horses

Be particularly careful when approaching horses, especially those being ridden by children.

As a driver you should

- look out for horses being led or ridden on the road
- take extra care and keep your speed down at left-hand bends, especially on narrow country roads
- slow down when you see a horse rider on the road.

Be aware that at roundabouts and at junctions where a horse rider is turning right, they may signal right but keep to the left-hand side of the road (and the outside lane round the roundabout) for safety.

As you approach a horse rider from behind

- slow down, give them plenty of room and be prepared to stop
- don't sound your horn or rev your engine. Horses can be easily scared by noise and may panic around fast-moving vehicles
- look out for signals given by the riders and heed a request to slow down or stop.

Always pass horses slowly, giving them plenty of room.

Take special care when meeting what appears to be a riding-school group. Many of the riders might be inexperienced. Horses are potential hazards and you should always take great care when approaching or passing them.

Also look out for horse-drawn vehicles and treat them in a similar way to horses being ridden.

See the Think! road safety advice about horses on the road.



<http://think.direct.gov.uk/horses.html>

Wild animals

Over 2 million deer live wild in Great Britain. Increases in the deer population, combined with a rise in traffic volumes, have resulted in a large number of road traffic incidents involving deer each year.

Incidents happen throughout the year, but they're more likely during May, and from October through to January. The risks increase around dawn and dusk, when deer activity peaks, coinciding with rush hours.

To minimise the risk of collisions with deer

- Pay attention to deer warning signs.
- Keep your speed down.
- Take extra care at dawn and dusk, when deer activity is at its highest.
- Use your headlights on full beam if there's no traffic, so you can see any deer. Dip them if you see a deer, otherwise it may freeze in your path.
- Be aware that many deer could be in the area – not just the ones you spot.

Report any collisions with deer to the police non-emergency number, 101, so that a deer warden can attend. If the animal is dead, then you should report it to the local authority so they can remove it.



Section eleven

→ Motorway driving

This section covers

- Driving on motorways
- Motorway signs and signals
- Joining a motorway
- On the motorway
- Lane discipline
- Smart motorways
- Overtaking
- Leaving a motorway
- Weather conditions
- Stopping on motorways
- Motorways at night
- Roadworks
- Traffic officers
- The novice driver