

Rules H1, H2, and H3 (The Highway Code)

Rule H1 – Shared Responsibility for Road Safety

All road users are expected to understand and follow The Highway Code, act with respect, care, and consideration for others, and take full responsibility for ensuring safety on the road. It is important that everyone recognises their role in preventing collisions and understands that the impact of road accidents affects everyone, whether they are directly injured or not.

Those who operate vehicles that can cause the greatest harm in the event of a collision, such as large goods vehicles, buses, vans, cars, taxis, and motorcycles, have the highest level of responsibility to act with caution and to reduce the risks they pose to others. This principle of responsibility is central to safe road use and requires drivers of heavier and faster vehicles to anticipate danger and take proactive steps to protect more vulnerable road users.

At the same time, cyclists, horse riders, and drivers of horse-drawn vehicles must also ensure that they minimise danger to pedestrians, who are the most vulnerable of all. However, this does not remove the responsibility of all road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and horse riders, to look out for their own safety and the safety of others.

Every road user should remember that the people they encounter may have impaired vision, hearing, or mobility, and that such conditions may not be immediately obvious. Therefore, a constant attitude of patience, awareness, and compassion is required to make roads safer for everyone.

Rule H2 – Priority and Giving Way to Pedestrians

At junctions, drivers, motorcyclists, horse riders, and cyclists should give way to pedestrians who are crossing or waiting to cross the road that they are turning into or from. This ensures that pedestrians are given safe and unhindered passage, especially at busy or complex junctions where visibility and reaction times are crucial.

It is a legal requirement that drivers and riders must give way to pedestrians on zebra crossings, and to both pedestrians and cyclists on parallel crossings. Pedestrians have priority whenever they are already on a zebra crossing, using a parallel crossing, or crossing at a light-controlled crossing when the signal is green.

You should also give way to pedestrians waiting to cross a zebra crossing, and to both pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross a parallel crossing. Horse riders must follow the same rule and give way to pedestrians and cyclists using these crossings.

Cyclists should also be aware of their responsibility to give way to pedestrians on shared-use cycle tracks and to horse riders on bridleways. It is important to note that only pedestrians, including wheelchair users and mobility scooter users, may use pavements. However, pedestrians are permitted to use any part of the road or a cycle track unless specific signage prohibits them from doing so.

When turning right or left at a junction, you must always wait for pedestrians to fully cross the road before proceeding. This requirement is designed to protect pedestrians who may be slower, distracted, or less visible, ensuring their safety and confidence when crossing.

The laws governing this rule are supported by the **Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD)** **Schedule 14**, the **Highways Act 1835**, the **Roads (Scotland) Act 1984**, and the **Countryside Act 1968**, all of which collectively reinforce the importance of giving clear and unqualified priority to pedestrians in these circumstances.

Rule H3 – Respect and Priority for Cyclists, Horse Riders, and Horse-Drawn Vehicles

Drivers and motorcyclists must not cut across the path of cyclists, horse riders, or horse-drawn vehicles when turning into or out of a junction, or when changing direction or lane. This rule ensures that those operating motor vehicles treat cyclists and horse riders **with the same respect and caution as they would any other motor vehicle**.

You should **never turn at a junction if doing so would cause a cyclist, horse rider, or horse-drawn vehicle travelling straight ahead to stop or swerve**. Instead, you must **wait patiently for a safe gap** in their movement before turning. This applies equally whether the cyclist or horse rider is **using a cycle lane, a cycle track, or simply travelling straight on along the road**.

This rule is particularly important when cyclists are:

Approaching or passing through a junction, where visibility and positioning can make them less noticeable to drivers.

Moving past or waiting alongside slow-moving or stationary traffic, where they are often in a vulnerable position close to vehicles.

Travelling around a roundabout, where the driver's focus must remain on maintaining a safe and predictable path to avoid cutting across it.

You must always **wait for cyclists to pass completely before making a turn**, regardless of the direction or the presence of a designated cycle lane or track. This practice prevents collisions and demonstrates respect for the rights and safety of all road users.

Key Focus Points for Students:

Pedestrians always have priority at crossings and junctions.

Drivers of larger or more powerful vehicles bear the greatest responsibility to ensure road safety.

You must give way to pedestrians and cyclists at crossings and junctions; **never assume they will stop for you.**

Do not cut across cyclists, horse riders, or horse-drawn vehicles when turning or changing lanes.

Wait until pedestrians and cyclists have fully cleared the road before proceeding.

Always remember that patience, awareness, and respect are the foundation of safe road behaviour.