



Safer Driving for Work Handbook



Working in
partnership with



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Introduction

Driving (whether for work, commuting, popping to the shops, taking the kids out, etc.) is an essential part of personal, family and work life for millions of us. It can be enjoyable and pleasant, but it can also be stressful and dangerous.

In fact, driving is one of the most dangerous activities that we do. Every year in the UK, almost 3,000 people are killed in road crashes and over 25,000 are seriously injured. In total, there are around a quarter of a million road casualties annually.

Driving for work is riskier than driving for private reasons. At-work drivers have a higher accident rate than the general driving population, even after their higher mileages are taken into account. Drivers of company cars, vans, pickup trucks and lorries are more likely to take risks and to be at fault when they crash.

This is not just due to driving skills and attitudes, but also to the nature of the driving that at-work drivers do (which may, for example, include unsafe schedules and time pressures) and the vehicles they drive (fleet cars tend to be more powerful).

Young at-work drivers in particular may find themselves driving vehicles (such as vans) in which they did not learn to drive and have little experience of driving.

HSE Guidelines, **'Driving at Work'**, state that *"health and safety law applies to on-the-road work activities as to all work activities and the risks should be effectively managed within a health and safety system"*.

By law, your employer needs to know that you are:

- Legally entitled to drive the vehicle you are using
- Using a vehicle that is safe and road legal
- Properly trained, competent and fit to drive it safely
- Using it safely

Your employer may wish to check your driver's licence when you start work for them and at regular intervals afterwards.

This handbook will help you work with your employer to avoid accidents and injuries to yourself, your passengers and other people. It should be used with your employer's driving for work policies and procedures.

Your responsibility

As a driver, you must play your part by ensuring that you are fit to drive, you plan your journeys safely and comply with road traffic laws when driving. You also need to understand, and follow, your employer's driving for work policies and procedures.



Before you get in the vehicle

Safer journey planning

Thousands of crashes are caused by tired drivers. They are usually severe because a sleeping driver cannot brake or swerve and so the impacts occur at high speed.

You are most likely to feel sleepy when driving:

- On long journeys on monotonous roads
- Between 2am and 6am
- Between 2pm and 4pm
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol
- After taking medicines which cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts

Most, if not all, of the risk could be avoided by a little forethought and planning.

Reduce road journeys

Where possible, avoid the drive by using the phone, email or video-conferencing, or the train or plane. Maximise car-sharing to reduce the number of journeys.

Avoid the most dangerous times

Avoid driving at night, especially after a long shift, or after drinking alcohol or taking medicine that makes you drowsy. Check weather forecasts and traffic reports before you set off, and try to avoid driving in poor conditions.



Before you get in the vehicle

Reduce your driving time

Follow any limits set by your employer on maximum driving distances and/or times. If you are subject to drivers' hours and tachograph rules, make sure you comply with them.

Plan where you can to take a break after every two hours of driving, and build in enough time to do so. Take rest breaks as planned – resist the temptation to carry on. If possible, share the driving with a colleague. If necessary, plan an overnight stop.

Make sure you are well rested

Avoid driving when you would normally be asleep, and make sure you get plenty of sleep before a long drive. Don't stay up surfing the internet into the early hours, if you have a long drive the next day. Keep meals light during or immediately before you drive. Heavy meals can make you drowsy.

Stop if you feel tired

If you start to feel tired, find somewhere safe to stop (not the hard shoulder), take two strong caffeine drinks and have a 'catnap' for 15 – 20 minutes. But remember, sleep is the only cure for tiredness. So, if necessary find somewhere safe to sleep overnight.



Discuss concerns with your manager

If you are concerned about your driving hours, journeys or schedules or if you find yourself driving when too tired, discuss this with your line manager.

Remember: Tiredness kills – it could be you!

More advice is available in 'Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planner' at www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers and 'Safer Journey Planner' at www.rosipa.com/roadsafety/info/safer_journey.pdf

Fitness to drive

Your physical health, psychological and emotional state and your general attitude towards driving play a major part in your fitness to drive. You should inform your employer about any health issue or personal circumstances that may affect your driving (your organisation may require this). You are also legally required to inform the DVLA of any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive safely.

The '**At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive**', free from <http://www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/medical/ataglance.aspx>, outlines the conditions that must be reported.

Eyesight

You must be able to read a new-style number plate (e.g. AB23 ABC) at a distance of 20 metres (around 65 feet), or an old-style number plate (e.g. A123 ABC) at a distance of 20.5 metres (67 feet). If you have to use glasses or contact lenses to do this, then they must be worn when driving. Carry a spare pair in your car. Have your eyesight checked regularly (at least every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it).

Alcohol

Alcohol impairs judgement, making drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks. It slows reactions, increases stopping distances, affects judgement of speed and distance, and reduces the field of vision. Even a small amount, well below the legal limit, seriously affects your ability to drive safely.

Every year, over 400 people are killed in drink-drive crashes. Around 90,000 people are convicted of drinking and driving, and lose their driving licence. Some are sent to prison.

The legal drink drive limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.

Drivers with between 50 and 80mg per 100ml of blood are two to two-and-a-half times more likely to crash and six times more likely to be in a fatal crash. The risk increases massively when over the limit. A driver who is double the legal limit is 50 times more likely to be in a fatal crash.



Fitness to drive

It takes about an hour for one unit of alcohol to be removed by a healthy liver. However, it's almost impossible to be sure how many units you've consumed because the alcoholic strength of drinks varies enormously, as does the size of measures.

The number of units of alcohol in a drink depends on its size and alcoholic strength by volume (abv). A 175ml glass of wine of 12% abv would be 2.1 units, but a 250ml glass of the same wine would be three units. In pubs, bars and restaurants a glass of wine could be 175ml or 250ml, bottles and cans are different sizes and spirits could be 25ml or 35ml measures. It is difficult to know the alcoholic strength of a drink without seeing the bottle. Drinks poured at home are usually larger than ones bought in a pub or restaurant.

The only safe option is to avoid drinking alcohol in the hours before you will be driving (for example, at lunchtime). Never rely on trying to calculate accurately how much alcohol is in your body, and whether you are above or below the drink drive limit.

Morning after

Many drink drivers are caught the morning after they have been drinking. As it takes several hours for alcohol to disappear from the body, if you were drinking late the previous night, you could easily still be over the limit on your way to work the next morning. Even if under the limit, you may still be affected by the alcohol in your body.

Further advice is available in **'Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs'** at <http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers/>

Drugs

Do not drive if you have taken any illegal drugs. They can affect your decision-making and driving skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour.



Fitness to drive

Medicines

Check with your GP or pharmacist whether any over-the-counter or prescribed medicines you are taking are likely to affect your driving (for example, by causing drowsiness). If so, ask for an alternative that does not affect driving, or avoid driving altogether.

Always check the label of medicines and the patient information leaflet for any warnings. If the label says that certain side-effects may occur, assume that they will do so.

Illness

Common conditions, such as colds, flu, migraine, stomach upsets, hay fever, etc. can affect your ability to drive safely. For example, the symptoms of a cold (headache, blocked sinuses, sneezing, tiredness) if severe enough can impair your concentration, reactions and judgement. We can often be tempted to 'soldier' on, when in fact it would be safer for everyone concerned, not to drive until we are feeling better.

If you start to feel ill while driving, stop the vehicle somewhere safe. If the condition is not serious, you may feel well enough to continue after a short break, a warm drink or taking some medication. But if you find your concentration is affected, then you should make other arrangements to continue your journey.



If you think that you are over the drink drive limit, or unfit to drive for any reason, do not drive. Contact your line manager to explain and allow alternative arrangements to be made.

Further advice is available in '**Driving for Work: Fitness to Drive**' at <http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers/>

In the vehicle

Pre-drive vehicle checks

If your employer provides the vehicle, they will ensure that it is properly registered, taxed, MOT'd and insured. They will require it to be serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations, although you may be responsible for booking the services.

There should be a clear rule that any vehicle that is, or suspected to be, in an unsafe or illegal condition will not be used until all necessary repairs have been completed.

You are also responsible for ensuring that the vehicle you are driving is safe and legal.

Before driving any vehicle, check:

- Tyres are undamaged (no cuts or bulges), are at the correct pressure and have enough tread depth. The legal minimum is 1.6mm, but above 3mm gives much shorter braking distances in the wet
- There are no signs of vehicle damage
- Oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct (check when cold)
- You know the correct type of fuel for the vehicle
- Brakes are working
- Lights and indicators are working
- Windscreen and windows are not damaged
- Washers and wipers are working
- Mirrors are correctly positioned

If in any doubt how to do these checks, read the vehicle's handbook, and/or ask someone to show you. Ask your manager if the organisation provides a pre-drive checklist.



In the vehicle

Check:

- All occupants are using their seat belts and head restraints are adjusted correctly
- Loads are securely restrained

Seat belts

Make sure that everyone, including rear seat passengers, wears a seat belt on every journey, no matter how short the journey. This applies in vans, as well as cars, and in larger vehicles if they have seat belts fitted.

In a crash at just 30 mph, an unrestrained person is thrown forward with a force 30 to 60 times their body weight. They are thrown about inside the vehicle, injuring themselves and quite possibly seriously injuring (or killing) other occupants. They could also be ejected from the car through one of the windows.

Seat belts save thousands of lives every year. They could save 400 more lives a year if everyone always wore their seat belt.

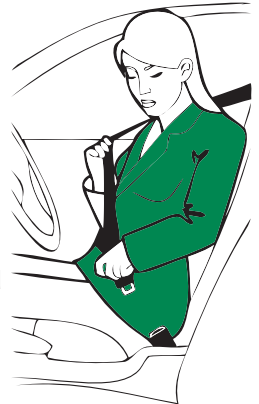
Child seats

Seat belts are designed for adults. In a crash, a child may slip out of their seat belt because it is too big, and an ill-fitting belt could even cause injuries. So, children need to use child car seats.

The law says that children under 12 years old or under 135cm in height must use a child restraint that is suitable for them and correctly fitted in the vehicle. It is your responsibility, as the driver, to ensure that children under 14 years use the correct restraint or a seat belt.

If you are carrying children ask your employer about child seats and about training so you know how to check that the right ones are being used and you are able to fit them correctly.

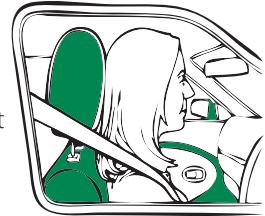
Advice on child seats can be found at www.childcarseats.org.uk



In the vehicle

Head restraints

Adjust your head restraint correctly, and check that every passenger has their head restraint correctly adjusted. The top of the head restraint should be level with the top of your head and it should be as close to the back of your head as possible. This will help to protect against whiplash, and prevent long-term injuries.



Driving position

You should be able to see and reach all of the controls comfortably. Good all-round, unobstructed, visibility is vital. Check that your view is not obstructed by objects such as stickers or devices such as sat navs, and that sat navs are not placed where they might be hit and flung forward by an airbag.

Look at the dashboard when you start the car and check which lights illuminate. If you are not familiar with the vehicle, check the handbook to ensure you know what the different lights mean. Finally, consider whether the vehicle is suitable for the task – for example:

- If carrying passengers, is there a seat belt for each occupant?
- If carrying children, is there an appropriate child seat for each child that needs one?
- If carrying a heavy load or an animal, can you secure it safely?

If you find any problem during the check, report it to your manager immediately.

Remember – the most common cause of vehicle breakdown is simple neglect. Preventative checks are simple and less time-consuming than the breakdown that may follow if you don't do them.

Even if the vehicle you drive for work is your own private vehicle, your employer has the same legal duty to ensure it is safe and legal when it is being used for work, as they have for company vehicles.

It is also essential that if you use your own vehicle for work (excluding commuting), your motor

Using your own vehicle

insurance policy includes cover for business use. Make sure you inform your insurers that you use the vehicle for work, and how you do so.

Some employers set rules (e.g. age limits, safety features) for the type of vehicle that can be used for work purposes.

Your employer may have rules requiring you to:

- Ensure the vehicle is properly taxed, has a valid MOT, valid insurance for business use and is serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations
- Show, on request (and at specified intervals) documentary proof of the above
- Agree to conduct regular vehicle safety checks
- Not carry loads for which the vehicle is unsuited (a car is not a van)
- Not carry hazardous materials
- Only carry the number of passengers for whom there are seat belts
- Not use the vehicle in conditions for which it is not designed (e.g. off-road)



Your employer may ask to see evidence that your vehicle has a valid MOT certificate, is serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations and displays a valid tax disc, and that you are insured to drive the vehicle for business use. Some employers check these documents annually (or more frequently). Others do random spot checks. As an employee, you must co-operate with your employer's health and safety procedures and follow their rules and policies in regard to your own vehicle, when it is used for work.

Further advice is available in RoSPA's free guide **'Driving for Work: Own Vehicles'** from www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/employers/

Secure loads

It is illegal and dangerous to drive a vehicle that is overloaded or has an insecure load. As the driver, you are responsible for ensuring that any load you carry is legal and safe, even if it was loaded by another person.

Make sure the vehicle is not overloaded (check the handbook for the maximum weight). If you are not sure whether your vehicle is overloaded, take it to a public weighbridge.

Remember that a car is not a van, so do not cram as much as can physically fit into it.

Put items in the boot rather than the passenger compartment and distribute the load evenly. Make sure the rear seat backs are secure and, if not carrying passengers, engage the seat belts across the rear seats for extra security.

Avoid putting loose items on the dashboard or rear parcel shelf – they will become missiles if you crash.

Trailers

Only use a trailer if you have the correct licence entitlement, and you have been trained to drive with one. Make sure you know how to connect the trailer, including the electrical connections. Ensure that it is not overloaded and that the weight is evenly distributed and securely covered. Make sure no items are sticking out. Cars towing trailers are subject to lower speed limits and cannot use the outside lane on motorways with three or more lanes.

Roof racks

If you use a roof rack, make sure it is securely fitted, the load is evenly distributed and securely fastened. Think about how, and where, you can safely load and unload things in a roof rack.

When driving, remember to account for how the extra weight affects the vehicle's handling and stopping distances. Check whether tyre pressures should be adjusted when carrying a full load.

While driving

Good driving

Almost all road crashes involve human error, ranging from simple, 'honest' mistakes to deliberate dangerous and illegal behaviour.

Every year:

- Over 400 people are killed in crashes in which someone was 'careless, reckless or in a hurry'
- A third of crashes involve someone who 'failed to look properly'
- Around 700 people die in crashes in which someone was speeding
- Around 500 people are killed in crashes involving alcohol
- One third of fatal crashes occurs due to 'loss of control'
- About 20% of crashes involve someone 'failing to judge other person's path/speed'

Driving is a very personal thing; we all have our own views, attitudes and habits. Our attitude as drivers, how we deal with our own mistakes and our reaction to those made by other people, will influence our own safety and wellbeing and that of other road users around us.

Aggressive, selfish or impatient attitudes when we drive can develop into a tendency to take irresponsible risks, such as tailgating, exceeding speed limits, undertaking, or jumping red lights.

Our emotional mood also influences our behaviour; drivers commonly express how they feel in the way they drive. Traffic delays and congestion can also influence our frame of mind. Life stresses, such as relationship anxieties, financial or employment problems, domestic or workplace arguments, influence our mood and can affect our driving.

While driving

Try to ensure you are in a calm, good mood before driving. Plan time into journeys in case you are delayed by traffic; this can help to relieve the pressure you feel when running late.

Be tolerant towards others – shouting at another driver after their mistake or poor driving will not change anything, but anger will affect your judgement for some time after. Accept that drivers (including you!) make honest mistakes and have lapses in concentration. Be courteous and thank others for their courtesies.

Smile – it does work!

Eco-driving tips

Good, safe driving is also eco driving. It uses less fuel and so saves you money and lowers emissions, helping the environment.

Before you start

- Keep your vehicle well-maintained and serviced and check the tyre pressures regularly
- Avoid carrying unnecessary weight in the vehicle (check what's in the boot) and only use roof racks and boxes if necessary
- Plan your route, so you don't do unnecessary miles, and avoid short journeys when possible (a cold engine uses more fuel)

During the drive

- Drive away immediately when starting from cold – don't leave your car idling
- Drive smoothly
- Read the road ahead so you can keep moving as much as possible, and avoid harsh acceleration and braking

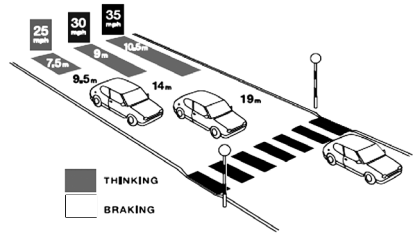
While driving

- Accelerate gently and decelerate smoothly
- Change gear as soon as possible without labouring the engine (around 2000rpm in a diesel car or around 2500rpm in a petrol car)
- Only use the air conditioning if you really need to
- Turn off electrical equipment, such as heated rear windscreen, demister blowers and headlights, when you don't need them
- Stay within speed limits – see page 17. Driving at 70mph uses up to 9% more fuel than 60mph and up to 15% more than 50mph. Cruising at 80mph can use up to 25% more fuel than at 70mph

Safe speed

In 2007, around 350 fatal road accidents were caused by drivers or riders exceeding the speed limit, and more than 400 were caused by driving too fast for the conditions.

When travelling at higher speeds, you have less time to identify and react to what is happening around you. It takes longer to stop. And if there is a crash, it is more severe, causing greater injury to you, your passengers and any pedestrian or rider hit.



Higher speeds also magnify other errors, such as close-following or fatigue or distraction, thus multiplying the chances of causing a crash.

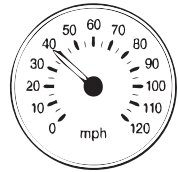
Drivers who 'speed' crash more often than those who don't.

While driving

Speed limits

Always stay within speed limits (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadworks) even if you think the limit is too low. Speed limits set the maximum speed for that road. But there are many circumstances when it is not safe to drive at that speed (for example, around schools at opening and closing times, on busy, narrow roads, and on rural roads which are bendy and hilly and where visibility is restricted).

Make sure you know the speed limit of the roads you are using. Far too many drivers caught speeding complain that they thought the road had a higher speed limit (e.g. 40mph instead of 30mph).



In many cases, the nature of the road does not indicate the speed limit. In urban areas, for example, dual carriageways can have limits of 30mph, 40mph, 50mph, 60mph or 70mph. When driving on street-lit roads, assume the limit is 30mph until you see a sign saying otherwise. But, remember the limit could be lower – 20mph.

Speed limit signs tend to be placed at junctions because this is often the point at which the limit changes. However, junctions are also where you need to absorb a wide range of information and it is easy to miss a speed limit sign when concentrating on one or more other things (e.g. which way am I going? Is that driver going to pull out? etc.). So get into the habit of checking for speed limit signs at junctions and looking for repeater signs after the junction, especially if the nature of the road has changed. If you are not sure assume the limit is lower until you see a sign.

Also, make sure that you know the speed limits for the vehicle you are driving.

Give yourself time

Plan your journey to allow time to complete it (including rest breaks and foreseeable weather and traffic conditions) at safe speeds and without needing to exceed speed limits. Your journey time is determined much more by your average speed during the whole journey than your maximum speed for part of it. This is especially the case in urban areas, where you constantly have to slow down for junctions, traffic lights and other road users. Knowing that you have plenty of time to complete your journey will help you to relax and avoid the temptation to push your speed.

While driving

RoSPA's top ten tips to stay within the limit

Many car drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit, often without realising it. Modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give drivers little sensation of their speed. It is too easy to creep above the limit, and in particular, many drivers believe it is difficult to drive a modern car at no more than 30mph on a road with a 30mph limit. Drivers are responsible for the speeds at which they choose to drive, but there are some simple and practical things drivers who find it difficult to stay within speed limits can do to help themselves:

1. Check your speedometer regularly, especially when leaving high speed roads
2. Know the limits – look for signs, especially at junctions
3. Assume lamp posts mean 30mph, until signs say otherwise, but remember it could be 20mph
4. Remember, speed limits are a maximum, not a target
5. 20's plenty when kids are about – and may even be too fast
6. Try no higher than 3rd gear in a 30mph limit
7. Recognise what makes you speed – keeping up with traffic, overtaking or being tailgated
8. Concentrate – distracted drivers speed
9. Slow down when entering villages
10. Give yourself time – there's no need to speed and you won't get there quicker

■ Even a small amount above the limit makes a big difference

■ Refresh your skills on a refresher driver training course

For more information see

www.rospace.com/roadsafety/adviceandinformation/driving/speed/toptentips

While driving

Distractions

Driving requires your full concentration all of the time. Trying to do something else while driving will distract you, slow your reactions and make a crash more likely.

Mobile phones

Using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, and substantially increases the risk of crashing.

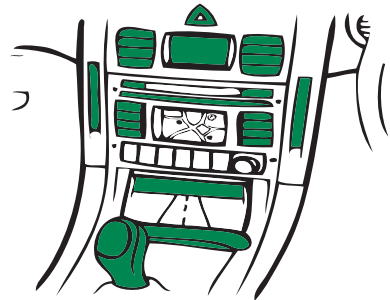
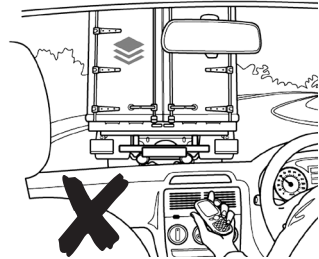
It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving (this includes any activity that involves holding the phone such as dialling a number or writing a text).

It can also be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving. Depending upon the circumstances, drivers could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle', or careless or dangerous driving if they are distracted because they are using a hands-free phone.

Using a hands-free phone while driving does not significantly reduce the risks because the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving.

Other equipment

An increasing number of vehicles are being fitted with various devices designed to help the driver, with sat navs being the most common. While these devices can make driving safer and easier if used properly, they can also increase risk (e.g. by distracting you) if used improperly.



While driving

If your vehicle is provided with technology (such as sat navs) ask your manager for training in how to use it safely. In particular, you should not adjust or operate devices while actually driving. For example, routes in the sat nav should be set before the journey starts. If it is necessary to make adjustments or to input new information, only do so when stopped in a safe place.

Eating, drinking, smoking, tuning the radio

Many other things that might seem simple and innocent can be distracting when driving. Fatal crashes can and do occur because a driver chose to unwrap a sweet, take a drink or light a cigarette whilst driving.

Safe driving needs concentration; avoid unnecessary distractions.



Motorway driving

Motorways are the safest type of road, but also the least forgiving. High speed driving means that dangerous situations develop quickly; vehicles travel much further before drivers even start to react. If you drive too close to the vehicle in front, or forget to use your mirrors before moving out, it could be disastrous.



Joining a motorway

Unless you join the motorway at its start, you will normally join via a slip road. Use the slip road to adjust your speed to the traffic already on the motorway. Sometimes, you may have to slow down to merge safely.

On the motorway

Drive at a steady cruising speed in the left-hand lane (lane one), keeping a safe distance from the vehicle in front. Stay within the maximum speed limit of 70mph, even if other drivers are going faster.

Stay in lane one unless you need to overtake. Only overtake if you are sure you can move into the right-hand lanes without interfering with other traffic. Check your mirrors first, and if it is safe (remembering that other vehicles are moving at high speed) give your signal and move out. When you have overtaken and have allowed plenty of distance for the vehicle you have overtaken (wait until you can see its front bumper in your interior mirror) move back into the left-hand lane.

Active Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) and variable speed limits

Some motorways (for example Junctions 3a – 7 of the M42) now have Active Traffic Management Systems (ATMS) and/or variable speed limits. Electronic signs on gantries above the motorway show the maximum speed limit in force at the time, and whether any lane(s) are closed. In ATMS, drivers may be allowed to use the hard shoulder as a running lane – but only when the electronic signs say so.

Motorway driving

Leaving the motorway

You normally leave a motorway by moving onto a slip road and then join a roundabout or a non-motorway road. Move into lane one in good time, so you are ready to signal that you are exiting when you reach the 300 yard countdown marker. Do not slow down too soon - maintain your motorway speed if traffic allows until you have exited the motorway onto the slip road. Then decelerate steadily until you have reached an appropriate speed.

If two motorways are merging, or a motorway is dividing into separate ones, check the direction signs for the lane you need to be in and get into that lane in good time to avoid last-minute, sharp manoeuvres.

Once you have left the motorway use your speedometer to check your speed. After high speed driving, 40mph may feel like 20mph, and remind yourself that you will now be facing oncoming traffic and the usual hazards for conventional roads.

Motorway breakdowns

ONLY use the hard shoulder in an emergency (except in ATMS when the signs indicate the hard shoulder may be used as a running lane).

If your vehicle breaks down or you become so unwell that you cannot drive, continue to a safe stopping point, pull over onto the hard shoulder of the motorway and keep as far left as possible, preferably near an emergency telephone.

If the motorway has an Active Traffic Management System, allowing the hard shoulder to be used as a running lane, there will be emergency refuges built next to the hard shoulder. Use these rather than the hard shoulder if possible.

Switch on your hazard lights.

You and any passengers should leave the vehicle by the nearside doors. Leave animals in the car. If possible lock all the doors except the front passenger door.

Motorway Driving

Stand as far away from the running motorway lane as possible – over the crash barrier and on the embankment is best.

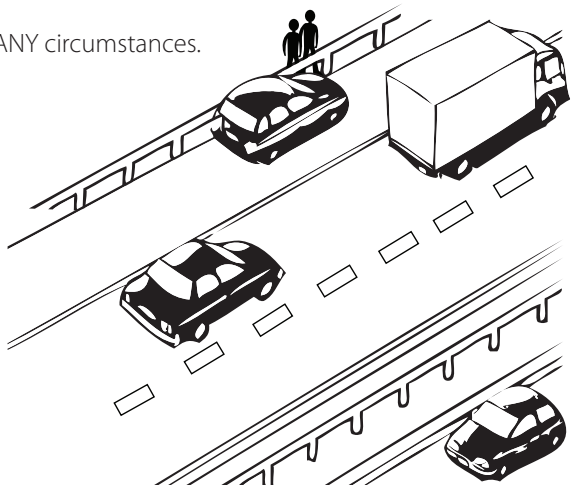
Call for help on the emergency telephones rather than on your mobile. The emergency telephones are at approximately one mile intervals along the back of the hard shoulder. Walk to the nearest telephone keeping to the inside of the hard shoulder (arrows on the marker posts at the back of the hard shoulder point to the nearest emergency telephone).

Tell the operator the number shown on the telephone box (this will enable them to pinpoint your exact location so that help can be provided quickly) and the details of your emergency. If you are a woman on your own, make this clear.

Return to the vicinity of your vehicle so that you can see help arrive. Wait on the embankment if possible. There is far greater risk of an accident on the hard shoulder than of being attacked. If you feel threatened return to your car and lock all doors until any perceived danger has passed.

DO NOT attempt repairs, even changing a wheel, on the offside of your vehicle. Seek assistance.

DO NOT cross the carriageway in ANY circumstances.



Driving at night

Driving at night is more dangerous than driving in daylight because visibility is reduced.

Darkness reduces your ability to estimate speed and distance and to assess accurately the position of oncoming traffic. Also, your body naturally slows down at night – especially if you are driving when you would normally be asleep.

Remember that your eyes need time to adjust to darkness, especially when coming out of a brightly-lit area or building, such as motorway service stations or stretches of road that have street lights.

Keep a particular look out for pedestrians and cyclists who will be harder to see.

Don't wear tinted glasses when driving at night.

Vehicle lights

Put your lights on before lighting-up time (dusk) and don't switch them off (at dawn) until you are sure it is safe to do so. Use them with dipped beam to avoid dazzling other road users.

Use dipped headlights in built up areas and watch out for pedestrians, who may be difficult to see. Approach pedestrian crossings more slowly, so you can stop safely if necessary. Watch out for cyclists, too – not all of them carry lights!

Keep your headlights clean and check them before each night journey.

Keep your distance from the vehicle in front. The beam from your headlights should fall short of the rear of the vehicle in front. Any closer and you may dazzle the driver – and you will probably be too close.

Driving at night

Overtaking at night

Be especially careful when overtaking at night. Be sure you can see the road ahead is clear enough for you to complete the manoeuvre safely – remembering that you can see much less and it's more difficult to judge speed and distance. Don't be caught out – if in doubt, hold back.

Don't use full beam in the face of oncoming drivers. Dip your headlights.

If you are being overtaken by another vehicle, dip your headlights as soon as the vehicle passes you.

Noise

Be considerate.

Only use your horn to avoid an accident, not to rebuke another person or to announce your arrival or departure from an area. The law says that you must not use your horn between 11:30pm and 7:00am in a built up area.

Try to keep noise to a minimum at night. Avoid revving your engine and loud music. Open and close doors quietly and take care when setting and disarming vehicle alarms.



Poor weather

The weather can cause all sorts of driving hazards, especially reduced visibility and slippery road surfaces. We need to adjust our driving accordingly.

Prepare for winter

Poor weather occurs throughout the year, but it's a good idea to have your vehicle fully serviced before winter starts and have the anti-freeze tested. Check that your lights are clean and working. Make sure your battery is fully charged. Always keep the windscreen and windows clean and the washer bottle filled with screen wash to the correct concentration to prevent the solution freezing.

Before setting off in adverse weather

Listen to local/national weather broadcasts and travel bulletins. If conditions are very bad, avoid making your journey unless it is absolutely necessary. If you decide to travel, let someone know where you are going and what time you hope to arrive, so that they can raise the alarm if you get into difficulties.

Think about taking warm clothes, boots and a torch – it could be a long walk to a phone, if you don't have a mobile phone. Consider keeping a couple of long-life energy bars in the glove box. Clear your windows and mirrors completely of snow and ice before you set off. (Make sure the heater is blowing warm air before setting off – it will keep your windscreen clear.)

Rain

Rain reduces your ability to see and greatly increases the distance required to slow down and stop. Remember that you will need about TWICE your normal braking distance. There is an increased risk of skidding and, in heavy rain, aquaplaning. Use windscreen wipers, washers and dipped headlights; drive smoothly and plan your moves in plenty of time.

Poor weather

Aquaplaning

Aquaplaning is caused by driving too fast into surface water. When the tyre tread cannot channel away enough water, the tyre(s) lose contact with the road and your car will float on a wedge of water. Aquaplaning can be avoided by reducing speed in wet conditions. Having the correct tyre pressure and tyre tread depth will maximise your tyres' ability to maintain their road grip. If it happens, ease off the accelerator and brakes until your speed drops sufficiently for the car tyres to make contact with the road again.

Flooded roads

Avoid the deepest water – which is usually near the kerb. Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep. If you are not sure of the water's depth, look for an alternative route. If you decide to risk it, drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch – this will stop you from stalling. Be aware of the bow wave from approaching vehicles – operate an informal 'give way' with approaching vehicles.

Remember to test your brakes when you are through the flood.

Snow and ice

Hail, heavy snow and rain all reduce visibility – use dipped headlights. Only travel at a speed at which you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear.

Keep your vehicle well-ventilated. The car heater full-on can quickly make you drowsy.

Always reduce your speed smoothly and in plenty of time on slippery surfaces.

Avoid harsh braking and acceleration, or sharp steering.

Slow down in plenty of time before bends and corners.

To slow down on ice and snow without locking your wheels, squeeze the brake pedal very gently until the speed has dropped, then select a lower gear.

Increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front. You may need up to TEN TIMES the normal distance for braking.

In snow, stop frequently to clean the windows, wheel arches, lights and number plates.

Keep your speed down and give yourself time!

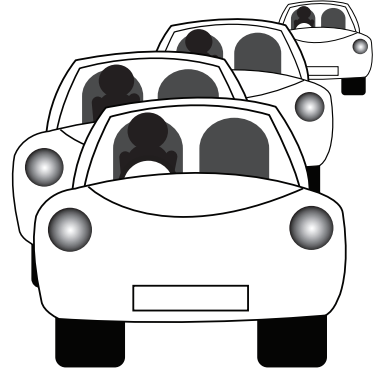
Poor weather

Fog

Avoid driving in fog unless your journey is absolutely necessary.

If you must drive:

- Follow weather forecasts and general advice to drivers in the local and national media
- Allow plenty of extra time for your journey
- Check your car before you set off. Make sure everything is in good working order, especially the lights



Reduce your speed and keep it down.

- Switch on headlights and fog lamps if visibility is reduced
- If you can see the vehicles to your rear, the drivers behind can see you – switch off your rear fog lamps to avoid dazzling them
- Use the demister and windscreen wipers
- Do not 'hang on' to the rear lights of the car in front as you will be too close to be able to brake safely
- Switch off distracting noises and open the window slightly so that you can listen for other traffic, especially at crossroads and junctions
- Beware of speeding up immediately visibility improves slightly. In patchy fog you could find yourself 'driving blind' again only moments later
- If you break down, inform the police and get the vehicle off the road as soon as possible. Never park on the road in fog and never leave it without warning lights of some kind if it is on the wrong side of the road

Poor weather

Low sunshine

In winter and spring the angle of the sun in the sky will frequently be too low for your visor to help. If blinded by glare reduce your speed. You can reduce the effect of glare by keeping both the inside and outside of your windscreen clean and grease free.

If you wear sunglasses (with prescription lenses if necessary) take them off whenever the sun goes in. They should not be worn in duller weather or at night as they seriously reduce the ability to see.

Hot weather

Stay cool! Wear cool, loose, comfortable clothing and keep your vehicle well-ventilated. Carry wipes and cold drinks and take regular breaks to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.

Avoid even small amounts of alcohol on hot days as the dehydrating effects on the body will be greater.

Use your visor as the first measure to combat dazzle. Dark glasses help but should be taken off when you can manage without them.

If the sun shines in your mirrors, adjust them to give you the best visibility with minimum glare.

Remember that other drivers will have similar problems and may not be able to see you. Keep your distance and lower your speed.

Also remember:

Never leave children or animals shut up in your vehicle in hot weather. Animals need air and water. Children shouldn't be left at all.

Personal safety

A well-maintained and regularly-serviced vehicle is less likely to break down and leave you stranded.

Join a reliable breakdown organisation. Your employer may have done this for you.

Take a mobile phone with you for emergencies, but never use it while actually driving.

Don't pick up hitchhikers or offer lifts to people you do not know.

Keep valuables and bags out of sight and out of reach.

It is better not to keep the car doors locked while driving, except in slow moving or stationary traffic if you feel vulnerable. But, always lock the door when you are away from the vehicle – even when paying for fuel.

Safe parking

The golden rule is to ensure that others can see you. Bear in mind the time you will be returning to your vehicle – a safe place during daylight may be quite different at night.

Car parks

Choose a car park that is close to your final destination. Many car parks have won safety awards having attendants, CCTV, and good lighting. Note what time the car park closes. Lock your doors and close the windows as you enter the car park.

If possible, choose a location that is:

- Visible to other people
- In an open area, so that you have a good all-round view
- Well-lit
- Not close to bushes or dark corners

Personal safety

In multi-storey car parks choose a space that is:

- Near the manned kiosk, if there is one
- Close to the exit level required

Reverse into your chosen space if possible, so you can pull away more easily.

To minimise the risk of damage to your vehicle, park next to a fixed object and consider the position of the vehicle on the other side of your intended space. Think about pulling in your wing mirrors, but remember to pull them out again before driving off.

Leaving the vehicle

Listen and look around before getting out.

Put all valuable items out of sight, e.g. in the boot. Lock all doors, windows and the sunroof.

Note the name of the street and/or car park and the level you parked on.

Returning to the vehicle

If you are alone, try to follow a group.

Approach the vehicle with your keys in your hand so you can get in quickly if necessary.

Check the vehicle as you approach. If there are any signs of it having been tampered with, do not get in – call the police.

If you have one, keep a personal attack alarm to hand – it's no good at the bottom of a bag!

Road rage

Avoid getting into conflict with another driver. There will be some bad drivers who are looking for a reaction or conflict. "Competing" with another driver could lead to the incident becoming serious. Keep your mind focused on your driving.

Do not overreact to, or panic about, another driver's error, bad driving or poor attitude. They may be unaware of their actions. Try to stay away from them and concentrate on your driving.

Personal safety

Stay calm and think logically – when confronted by an irate driver don't engage in gestures, headlight flashing or sounding the horn as this will serve no purpose and may exacerbate the situation. It will also distract you. Concentrate on driving responsibly.

Refrain from eye contact with an angry or aggressive driver as this has the potential to make the situation worse.

If you find you are being followed by an impatient driver (tailgated) – do not allow yourself to be “pushed” along, intimidated or made to increase your speed. Without actually pulling over or stopping – find a safe opportunity to allow that driver to pass. Circumnavigating a roundabout to enable a tailgater to get past you will add little time to your journey but can make a significant difference to stress levels.

If you find that you are being persistently followed by an aggressive driver – try to make your way to a public place, police station or busy street and if necessary call the police. Do not allow an aggressive driver to follow you home.

Under no circumstances endanger yourself by getting out of the car to deal with an angry or aggressive driver. If confronted with a road rage situation remain in the car with the windows closed and door locked. If necessary, call for help on a mobile phone (not while driving).

If you accidentally cause another driver to become angry – hold up your whole hand as a friendly acknowledgement of your mistake – this can diffuse the situation.

If your mood is affected by an incident during your journey, once you have moved away from any danger, find an opportunity to stop and take time out.

After your journey

If you are able to recognise when you're becoming stressed, angry or impatient while driving, you will be better-equipped to deal with these emotions. Try to find time occasionally to reflect on your driving and how mood or stress has affected your actions.

Accidents, breakdowns and emergencies

Your employer should have procedures for emergencies, such as accidents or breakdowns. It is essential that you are familiar with, and follow these procedures.

In the vehicle, keep copies of:

- The emergency procedures
- Contact details for the person(s) to whom you should report emergencies
- Contact details of the breakdown firm and insurers your organisation uses and any reference numbers that you may need to quote

Make sure you have a fully-charged mobile phone to summon help if necessary. Do not use the phone while driving.

A summary of the main points to remember is below, but always follow the procedures set down by your organisation.

Accidents

- Stop. It is an offence not to stop, if your vehicle is involved and damage is caused to property or someone is injured
- Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine
- Do not move injured passengers unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion
- Call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances (for example, if carrying oxygen bottles) and if any passengers have special needs
- If child passengers are present, ensure an adult remains with them
- Give first aid if required and if you are competent to do so
- If the emergency services are called, stay at the scene until they allow you to leave
- Obtain the names and addresses of all independent witnesses (if possible)

Accidents, breakdowns and emergencies

- Ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing the journey
- If there is any injury or the names of people involved are not exchanged, you must report the accident to the police as soon as possible, or in any case within 24 hours

Record and report the accident

If your vehicle was involved in the accident, sketch the accident scene (or take photos), if you can do so safely.

Report the accident to your employer. You may need to discuss the details with your line manager at the next appropriate moment. This will help them ensure that any risk assessments that they have made are relevant and up to date.

Breakdowns

- Move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights
- If this is not possible, move it as far away from moving traffic as you can
- Move passengers out of the nearside of the vehicle and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. No-one should stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic
- On motorways or other busy roads, passengers should be taken onto the embankment or grass margin and as far from the traffic as is practicable
- Keep passengers together and keep children under constant supervision
- Telephone the emergency services or breakdown firm. Give them accurate details of the vehicle's location, and let them know if children or passengers with mobility problems are being carried
- Telephone your nominated contact person to tell them what has happened
- On a motorway, use the roadside emergency telephone as this will enable the police to pinpoint your location

Appendices

Refresher driver training will help you:

Enjoy your driving

You'll enjoy driving more and feel much less stressed. Your passengers will prefer being driven by you, and children who suffer from motion sickness will be less likely to feel ill, because the drive will be so much smoother and safer.

Improve your confidence

You'll feel much more confident, both in your own driving and in your ability to deal with the behaviour of other drivers.

Reduce your crash risk

It will help you to avoid making mistakes and misjudgements that lead to crashes, and help you cope with the mistakes of other road users.

Improve your fuel consumption

You'll spend less money on fuel, and cause less harm to the environment, because your driving will be smoother and more systematic, with less sharp acceleration and braking and better use of gears.

Ensure less wear and tear on your vehicle

Your car (possibly the second most expensive item you own) will last longer and may have a higher resale value.

Lower your insurance premiums

You may be able to receive insurance discounts – make sure you tell your insurer what extra training you've taken.

Meet people

By joining a driving group, you can meet a variety of people.

Become an advanced driver

RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders (RoADAR) has a network of local groups able to provide you with assistance and free advice in preparation for your Advanced Driving Test. For details of your nearest RoADAR Group, call **0121 248 2127** or go to **www.roadar.org**

Appendices

Further reading

The Highway Code

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelandTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm>

Driving for Work

A series of RoSPA guides about many of the aspects covered in this booklet, and sample policies for organisations to put into practice:

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/resources/videos/driving-for-work.aspx

Driving for Work DVD

A short film designed to raise awareness about the risks faced and created by people who drive for work. It features three 'typical' at-work drivers: a van delivery driver, a young sales rep and a senior manager. It can be viewed at:

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/video/drivingforwork/index.htm

Volunteer Driver's Handbook

Free to download from:

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/adviceandinformation/driving/speed/toptentips/

Roadcraft

Available from bookshops.

Top Ten Tips for Staying Within the Limit

www.rospa.com/roadsafety/toptentips/index.htm

Useful websites

www.rospa.com/roadsafety

www.helpingLdrivers.com

www.roadar.org.uk

www.dsa.gov.uk

www.tfl.gov.uk

www.trafficengland.co.uk

www.traffic-wales.com

www.rospa.com/driverandfleet/

www.stoppingdistances.org.uk

www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk

www.dft.gov.uk

www.dvla.gov.uk

www.highways.gov.uk

www.trafficscotland.org

www.transportdirect.info

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelandTransport/>

[Highwaycode/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelandTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm)

Appendices

Next steps

RoSPA offers a portfolio of complementary services and resources to ensure the safety of drivers and others on the road.

Driver Training

RoSPA can provide a range of courses for every driving-related requirement, and aimed at all levels of employee. From fleet managers through to general staff, RoSPA's courses can help reduce accident rates, save money and improve driver performance. RoSPA's driver training services include:

- Driver development
- Operator and driver CPC
- Risk assessment
- Online training
- Course accreditation
- Fleet consultancy
- Online training
- Instructor and assessor training
- Specialist skills including:
 - Banksman
 - SAFED / Eco-driving
 - Chauffeur
 - Many more...

Membership

From discounts on training courses, events and resources, to keeping up to date with the latest issues in our award-winning journals, unlimited access to RoSPA's Infocentre helpline and more, RoSPA membership can provide your organisation with all the support and advice needed to build a safer future for your business.

Next steps

Resources

RoSPA offers a wide range of fleet support materials including:

- Driving kits
- Publications
- Posters
- DVDs
- Much more...

Visit **www.rosplashop.com** and enable your fleet to be safer on the road.

Free advice and information

Being a registered charity, RoSPA's primary aim is to educate and inform as widely as possible, making information easily accessible to all who need to view it. To review and download a host of free material simply visit **www.rospa.com/roadsafety**.

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