

Driving for Work

A general guide



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Introduction

This REVISED guide has been mainly compiled for **drivers of commercial vehicles not exceeding 3500Kg and cars** being used for work purposes. It contains some advice with regard to responsibilities, safe driving techniques and the importance of positive attitudes. Also included is basic recommended good practice to assist businesses, organisations and individuals to manage road risk. Information and advice provided should also apply to voluntary drivers, often used by various organisations.

There are many sources of information and advice for managers and drivers. The contents are intended as a general guide only, and should be used with other publications and advice available, some of which are cross-referenced within the guide with links provided. This is NOT a comprehensive driving manual, but could be used when setting up or reviewing road risk policies and procedures, along with initial practical driving assessments and ongoing driver training and development programmes, particularly when recruiting new staff.

The primary aim of this guide is to enhance awareness, promote best practice and assist in managing road risk, with the emphasis on the practical aspect of vehicle use for work purposes.

The contents should also prove useful to the self-employed and sole traders.

This guide is NOT a substitute for practical driver assessment, training and support!

Care has been taken to ensure correct information and advice with regard to best practice. However, there may be changes in legislation and regulations, along with recommended techniques and procedures, which may not be reflected here. I will not accept any liability for any inaccuracies or for actions taken by employers, organisations, managers, drivers or any other individuals, as a result of reading this guide. It is recommended that those responsible for the management of drivers and vehicles seek information from all available sources, in order to make informed decisions with regard to best practice and managing road risk.

This is a guide only and not a legal document

I have compiled this guide in the interest of road safety on a '*not for profit*' basis.

IN MEMORY OF MY LATE PARTNER GILL PALTY 1961-2019

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Various updates 2016, 2018 & 2020
New edition Jan 2021
E. & OE.

My personal background

I had been providing road safety advice, driver training and assessments for around thirty-five years prior to my retirement at the end of April 2015. My basic qualification was as an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI Fleet Registered).

In addition to the above qualification, I also held a RoSPA¹ BTEC/Diploma in advanced driving and teaching techniques. I am still a member of IAM RoadSmart² (previously known as the Institute of Advanced Motorists). During 2014, I was awarded a Fellowship from the Association of Industrial Road Safety Officers (AIRSO). This organisation is now known as the Association for Road Risk Management³ (ARRM).

During my career I provided training and assessments at various levels from learners to fleet driver training for businesses and organisations, minibus use, and advanced courses, including emergency response/blue light driving. I have also conducted many classroom sessions, including speed awareness workshops.

Continuing professional development was important to me, and I would urge all drivers to update their knowledge and skills from time to time. It is generally accepted that approximately 95% of road traffic collisions can be attributed to human error! It is very easy to become complacent; “it won’t happen to me” or “I’ve never had an accident”. However, there were 117,536⁴ **reported** personal-injury collisions during 2019 in Great Britain, involving 153,158 casualties⁴. This, of course, does not include unreported incidents. Drivers likely to be at higher risk are the 17-24 year olds and those driving for work (page 10).

I have written a few operational manuals for organisations during my career and sincerely hope this guide will also prove useful.

Acknowledgements- I would like to thank the following people for their help, support and encouragement with the first edition and in some cases, subsequent editions;

My late partner Gill Palty, Barry Rawlings and other family members, along with Karen Jervis, Rosemary Pell FARRM, *Manager - The Road User Support Service*⁵ and Graham Feest FIRSO, F Inst MTD, FARRM, *Road Safety Consultant*⁶.

I am also grateful for additional information from the Health & Safety Executive, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency, the official Highway Code, Roadcraft – the police driver’s handbook, along with various road casualty reports and other sources; all of which, are clearly cross-referenced.

This guide is intended to be a road safety information and educational document.

1 Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - www.rospa.com/

2 IAMRoadSmart - www.iamroadsmart.com

3 Association for Road Risk Management - <http://arrm.org.uk/>

4 Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2019 Annual Report - www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019

5 www.roadusersupportservice.co.uk

6 www.grahamfeest.com

Responsibilities - business/organisation

Business/Organisation – the vehicle

The self-employed, employers, businesses and organisations have a ‘duty of care’ to manage their activities, conduct risk assessments and minimise risk¹. There should be specific policies and guidance in place for drivers and vehicle use². This should also include specific guidance with regards to pool, hired and own³ vehicle use.

The operator of a vehicle (owned or leased) should ensure the vehicle:

- is fit for purpose;
- is properly maintained with service history;
- is checked daily and/or weekly⁴ with a record of these checks stored;
- is fully insured for the purpose of use;
- has its annual vehicle road tax paid (vehicle excise duty, if applicable);
- has a current MOT certificate (if applicable);
- has a ‘No Smoking’ sign⁵ clearly displayed within the enclosed compartments.

There should be a procedure in place for vehicle checks carried out to be recorded⁴, whether by written forms or digital formats using tablets or PDAs. There should also be a robust system for reporting and recording vehicle defects identified, along with subsequent action taken to correct such defects. All records regarding vehicles should be safely stored and available for inspection⁴, if required.

Having a tracking and monitoring system fitted to business/organisation vehicles should be considered. Telematics (Dash cams etc.) can, of course, prove very useful in the event of road traffic incidents, complaints, and in order to generally monitor driver behaviour, and is certainly recommended. Any systems used, however, would require a robust system in place for data storage.

Business/Organisation – the driver

Ensure drivers:

- have a valid driving licence, which MUST be properly checked⁶ (also see next page);
- have necessary licence entitlements⁶;
- comply with health requirements⁷;
- know drivers’ hours⁸ regulations along with transport & driving policies;
- have their driving ability checked, initially and periodically, with support provided, as necessary;
- are familiar with the vehicles and equipment in use;
- conduct and record vehicle checks;
- are aware of the procedure for reporting any defects.

¹ Refer to HSE ‘Driving at Work’ publication - INDG382 (rev1) at: www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg382.pdf

² Refer to: www.gov.uk/government/news/vosa-launches-van-best-practice-guide

³ More information regarding ‘own’ vehicle use on page 8

⁴ The record of drivers’ checks, repairs and service history for a specific vehicle, may need to be inspected by the DVSA and/or police

⁵ Refer to: www.gov.uk/smoking-at-work-the-law

⁶ Driving licences should be checked using the online “View & Share My Licence Service” – see pages 6 & 7

There are other ways to check at: www.gov.uk/check-driving-information#other-ways-to-apply

Simply looking at the licence presented is no longer sufficient or acceptable!

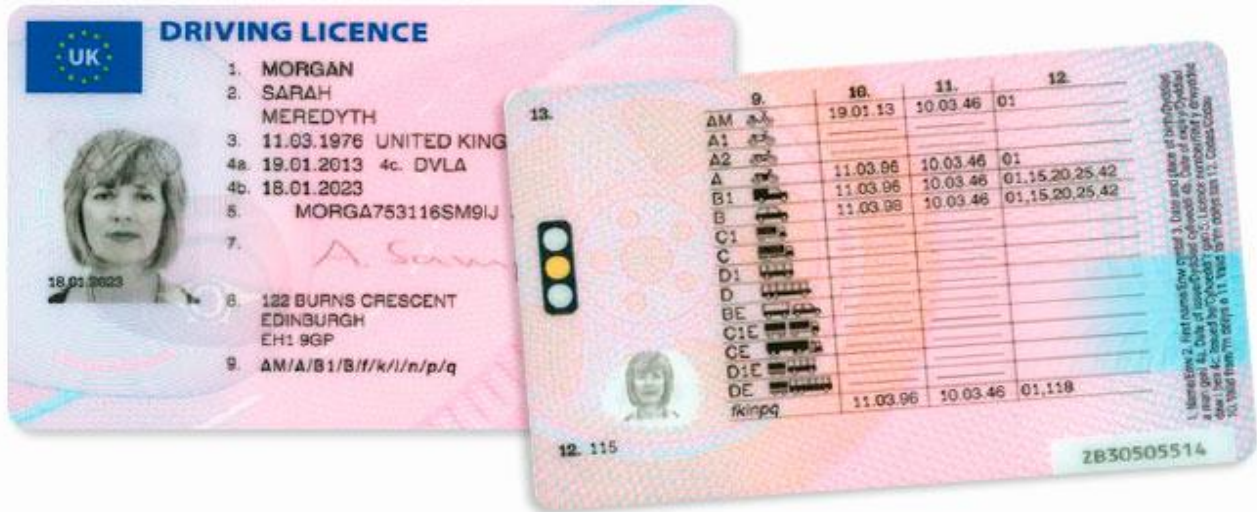
⁷ Refer to DVLA regarding health matters that could affect driving ability at: www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

⁸ Refer to page 18 for more information and www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-a-van

Responsibilities - driving licence checks

- Does the licence relate to the right person?
- Is the information shown correct?
- Have relevant entitlements expired?
- Has the photo card expired? (see section 4b.)
- Are information/restriction codes being complied with?

Date of birth is shown in section 3 and also contained within the Driving Licence Number in section 5 (MORGA **7 5 3 11 6** ...). The Driving Licence Number is sometimes referred to as the Driver Number



(The above licence card illustration is for sample purposes only and not an actual licence – UK Gov)

The back of the card shows the following: **9** = Entitlements **10** = Start dates **11** = Expiry dates **12** = Information codes. **01 means eyesight correction, for example.**

Full details regarding information codes can be found at: www.gov.uk/driving-licence-codes

PLEASE NOTE: Card layout and design vary depending on date of issue. For example, newer cards may have the Union Flag displayed on the front. Employers/Organisations can also obtain further information at: www.gov.uk/employing-people-to-drive

Note: The licence holder can take the following action to check their own licence and/or share with a third party online. (Old-style paper licences were issued up to 1998, and can also be checked in the same way and are still valid, providing they are in-date and details shown, such as, home address, for example, are correct).

To **view** your licence details and **SHARE** with an employer, organisation or a vehicle hire company (you may not be required to do this yourself, if there is a system in place for the business or organisation to conduct licence checks):

1. Go to: www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence
2. Enter your **driving licence number** (see above)
Enter your **National Insurance number**
Enter your **post code**
3. Read the privacy notice, then tick
4. Click on **'View now'**
5. To **share** your licence details with a third party, click on **'Share your licence'**
6. Click on **'Create a code'**
7. Make a note of the **'check code'** issued and pass it to the third party needing to check your licence. They will also need the **last 8 characters** of your **driving licence number** (driver number) **THE CODE IS VALID FOR 21 days and CAN ONLY BE USED ONCE!**

Responsibilities - driving licence checks, continued

To **check a licence** – go to: www.gov.uk/check-driving-information - **enter the code** and **last 8 characters** of the licence holder's **driving licence number**. Full details can then be seen, including any valid endorsements (points) and restrictions etc.

Note: The person checking the licence details should ensure that the on-screen details match the actual licence presented. Taking a photocopy of both sides of the original licence is recommended, so details can be compared when using the online facility. Any copies taken must be safely destroyed or securely stored.

Details of vehicle categories shown on licences can be found at: www.gov.uk/driving-licence-categories

Those responsible for conducting licence checks should be trained and fully aware of all details that must be checked.

NOTE: Membership of the Association of Driving Licence Verification may be useful to a business or organisation at: www.adlv.co.uk

Responsibilities - own vehicle use

Using own vehicle for work purposes

Many businesses and organisations allow, and sometimes expect, employees (or voluntary drivers), to use their own vehicles for work purposes¹. This is sometimes referred to as “The Grey Fleet”.

Employers and organisations should still conduct certain checks, as follows:

driver –

- has a valid driving licence;
 - has necessary licence entitlements;
 - complies with health requirements;
 - is made aware of transport/driving policies.
- } see pages 5, 6, 7 & 9

Consideration should also be given to an initial, and then periodic, driving assessments.

vehicle –

- the annual vehicle road tax is paid;
- is insured for business use;
- the insurance certificate is inspected annually and a copy filed;
- require the MOT certificate to be presented annually and a copy filed (if applicable);
- seek confirmation from the driver that vehicle checks will be conducted²;
- require confirmation from driver that the vehicle is serviced, as recommended by the manufacturer².

Specific advice regarding own vehicle use for work purposes can be found at:

www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/employers/work-own-vehicles.pdf

¹ This procedure would not normally apply to employees or volunteers just commuting to and from their normal place of work.

² An ‘Own vehicle use’ form could be devised where drivers would confirm actions required are conducted

Responsibilities - drivers

Drivers

You must:

- ensure you are fit, well and rested before driving;
- seek professional help should you ever experience any sleep disorders such as, for example, Sleep Apnoea¹;
- inform your line manager of any sleep or general health issues;
- not drive if you are likely to have alcohol in your body, *many drivers are stopped the day after drinking, and find themselves being arrested for drink drive offences*;
- not drive if there is a possibility of controlled drugs being in your system, prescribed or over-the-counter medication that may impair your driving ability and render you unsafe to drive, or specific drugs covered by new legislation that recently came into force, making it unlawful to drive with these drugs, at above specific levels, in your system² (roadside testing for both alcohol and drugs are now more frequently conducted by the police);
- be honest with yourself and your employer should you have any personal issues with regard to alcohol or drug use;
- ensure you are fully aware of all transport/driving policies, and comply with all advice and instructions provided;
- have a valid driving licence, with necessary entitlements to drive the business vehicle allocated to you;
- ensure your licence photo card has not expired, along with the entitlements you are using, (*Licence photo cards normally have to be replaced every ten years, more frequently if medical restrictions apply*);
- inform DVLA of any changes, such as change of address or any health issues³ that may impair your ability to drive safely and legally;
- inform your manager of any pending prosecution and/or endorsements;
- carry out and record vehicle checks⁴, as required;
- report any defects found and ensure they are corrected;
- be satisfied the vehicle you are driving is legal and safe⁵;
- drive in a safe and competent manner at all times;
- comply with working and drivers' hours^{5,6}, under UK regulations, as applicable;
- inform your manager of any road traffic incidents, in which you are Involved;
- not smoke in any van and goods vehicle⁷ if used by more than one driver;
- not smoke in company cars⁷ used by more than one employee.

¹ Refer to: www.sleep-apnoea-trust.org/driving-and-sleep-apnoea/general-guidance-on-driving

² Refer to: www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law

³ Refer to: www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

⁴ Refer to pages 13 - 16

⁵ Refer to: www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-a-van

⁶ More information on page 18

⁷ Refer to: www.gov.uk/smoking-at-work-the-law

Also refer to the business/organisation's policy regarding smoking in vehicles within the law and use of e-cigarettes.

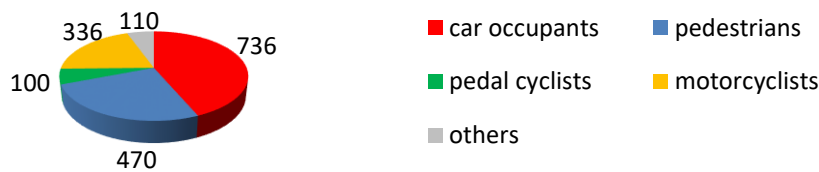
The risk! A few facts and figures...

During 2019 –

Between 4 and 5 people died and just over 71 were seriously injured EACH DAY as a result of **reported** road traffic collisions (or incidents) in Great Britain (This is an approximate daily calculation using the total annual figures below divided by 365).

This amounts to **1,752 killed** and **25,945¹ seriously injured**. In addition, there were 125,461¹ road users slightly injured.

The 1,752 deaths were made up from the following groups:



The “human cost” of road traffic collisions!

There were 117,536 **reported** personal-injury road traffic incidents during 2019

A frequently ‘officially’ reported contributory factor in incidents is –

‘Failed to look properly’

Driving for work – during 2019 more than 1 in 4 road traffic incidents involved a driver or rider on a business journey¹.

Age-related risk - approximately 1 in 10 drivers are aged 17-24, but this age group is estimated to be in around 1 in 7 crashes. However, there appears to be a slight downward trend, although the population in this age group has also decreased slightly. There were 88 car driver fatalities and 55 car passengers died during 2019 within this age group².

Are you in one or perhaps both of these higher risk categories?

¹ www.iamcommercial.co.uk/why-train/

² These figures are based on - ‘As reported to the police’ and are subject to estimated adjustment. Refer to the Main source.

Main source: Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2019

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019

Attitude

It is accepted that negative attitudes (see next page for definition of 'attitude'), and inappropriate behaviour increase road risk, whether through not looking after the vehicle properly and/or actual driving actions. Even passenger attitudes and behaviour can affect the driver's emotions and actions. Other road users will make mistakes, perhaps causing you what you consider to be inconvenience or delay, and generally not acting as you wish. However, it is very likely that there will be occasions when another road user will feel exactly the same about you! We SHARE the roads and therefore we all have a SHARED responsibility for road safety and managing risk to the best of our ability. Accepting this leads to a more positive attitude.

If we allow other road users to seriously annoy us, and we respond in a negative manner, our attention and focus will be towards them, which results in our attention being taken away from what we should be concentrating on – driving in a safe and competent manner. Of course, we all have bad days - "got out of bed on the wrong side!"

So managing our own feelings and emotions can be difficult, especially when there are other issues and pressures we might be experiencing at the time. If, however, we accept that we ALL make mistakes and have behaviour issues from time to time, tolerance and patience towards others may be a little easier to achieve.

You may have witnessed another driver clearly acting in a dangerous, careless or inconsiderate manner. Surely your aim in this situation should be to minimise risk, risk to YOU perhaps, and maintain a calm, controlled approach. Any adverse reaction is very likely to make the situation worse, and will certainly divert your attention, which could result in you failing to maintain concentration and safety. You might also compromise your personal safety!

One thing that often comes up when drivers are asked- "what worries or annoys you when driving?" is - "being tailgated". In other words, vehicles following very close behind, which is dangerous and can be intimidating¹.



Have you been tailgated? Do you ever tailgate others?

¹ Refer to pages 24-27 for more information and advice regarding the importance of 'space' and 'road positioning'
The next page emphasises the importance of '*positive attitudes*'

Positive attitudes

We share the roads with complete strangers, with no idea what may be going on in their minds or how they might behave. We should at least try to control what is going on in our own mind, and control our behaviour by adopting positive attitudes. 'Attitude' is defined as: "A feeling or opinion about something or someone, or a way of behaving that is caused by this"¹

So, in this context, *attitude is the state of mind with which we approach the task of driving, such as, interacting with other road users, complying with road traffic law and looking after the vehicle being used.*

Attitudes can be influenced by:

- personality;
- emotions;
- peer pressure;
- tiredness;
- stress;
- health.

One of the first very important actions to take when trying to control and improve negative attitudes, and, in fact, enhance driving skills overall, is to self-assess performance, recognise and accept any issues. Once you have accepted that there is an actual or potential problem, you'll be more likely to work at improving the recognised issue(s).

The correct mindset and positive attitudes will reduce risk!

Self-assessment

Ask yourself the following at the end of each journey:

- did I drive in a safe and competent manner?
- did I put myself or other road users at risk at any time?
- do I have any bad habits which need addressing?
- did I allow another road user to upset or annoy me? And if so, did I manage my emotions and maintain concentration and safety?
- did I maintain a professional and calm approach throughout?
- what mark would I give myself out of 10 and why?
- which aspects could I improve?

The above exercise will only be effective with an honest and realistic approach.

What is the overriding safety feature of any vehicle?²

¹ http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/attitude_1?q=attitude

² Find my answer later in this guide.

Vehicle checks

Daily checks for Vans and other light commercial vehicles

The condition of the vehicle **MUST** be assessed by the driver **BEFORE** taking it onto the road. This should ideally be done by **daily checks for vans and other light commercial vehicles**¹.

You must refer to your business/organisation's instructions regarding what is actually required to be checked and the frequency of the checks. However, the following should be included¹:

Daily checks –

Ensure the vehicle is parked securely and in a safe place before starting any checks. Also, when first using the vehicle, access the previous daily record of checks, to ensure any defects reported have been repaired.

- Outside
- bodywork undamaged and clean, and check that the fuel (or charging) cap is secure;
 - light lenses, number plates and mirrors, are clean and undamaged;
 - tyres, look for cuts or damage, ensure wheels are undamaged and wheel-nuts secure;
 - tyres tread depth legal² and pressures checked³ including the spare, (if applicable);
 - doors operating correctly and all secure;
 - windscreen, undamaged and clean, ensuring nothing has been placed on, or near, the windscreen which obstructs the driver's view in any way;
 - wiper arms and blades in good condition;
 - roof rack and any items attached all secure;
 - any special equipment⁴ operating correctly and stowed securely.

- Fluids
- engine oil level;
 - coolant;
 - screen wash;
 - power steering fluid (if applicable & accessible);
 - brake and clutch fluid (sometimes a combined reservoir);
 - battery – look for fluid leakage or corrosion (if accessible).
- } Add oil, coolant or screen wash, if required and available. Or: seek help!
↓
} Should these fluids appear low, or you identify a problem, refer the matter to a vehicle technician!

Note: fluid levels should be topped-up, if the level is at, or below, minimum. But, not overfilled! – seek advice if in any doubt.

When checking fluids, look around the engine compartment and glance underneath, for signs of leaks, damage, rubber hoses perishing or general corrosion. However, always consider your own safety!

¹ Refer to the DVSA advice at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/van-drivers-daily-walkaround-check

Some vehicles have sophisticated monitoring systems, such as 'bulb out', low fluid, 'tyre pressure warning' etc. However, regular checks should generally still be made. All vehicles should be checked. However, refer to business/organisation's policy regarding the frequency of checks for cars, for example (also see page 15).

² Many businesses and organisations have a policy of 2mm minimum tread depth. The current legal minimum is 1.6mm throughout a continuous band across the central three-quarters and round the full circumference of the tyre. This applies to passenger vehicles with no more than eight passenger seats not including the driver, and goods vehicles and trailers not exceeding 3500kg.

³ Refer to vehicle handbook (or label displayed on the vehicle) for recommended pressures.

⁴ Special equipment might include Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP), tail-lift or winch.

Daily van and other light commercial vehicle checks, continued

- Functional
- all lights¹, including warning beacons (if applicable);
 - screen washers and wipers;
 - horn;
 - seatbelts, seat and head restraints correctly adjusted;
 - cooling/heater fan and demister system working properly;
 - first aid kit present (items in-date and properly stocked)²;
 - fire extinguisher secure and in-date²;
 - parking brake operating correctly;
 - instrument warning lights and display working;
 - sufficient fuel (or charge³) for the journey;
 - listen and look for excessive noise or smoke from the exhaust;
 - steering wheel condition and operation, when moving, along with a brake test⁴;
 - speedometer and other instruments fully working⁴.

Additional checks will be necessary for trailers (Refer to page 42 for advice regarding trailer use).

- Goods/equipment
- ensure any goods or equipment carried are secure and safely stowed;
 - avoid having unnecessary items in the passenger area, on the dash or floor, which could cause danger⁵ or distraction;
 - ensure any required protective clothing/equipment is present;
 - check the 'emergency kit', if applicable⁶;
 - record checks and report any defects⁷.

You should be provided with the means (hard copy or digital), to record the vehicle checks carried out.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency conduct roadside stop checks for commercial vehicles, including vans, in order to carry out safety inspections. Any defects found can result in prosecution!

Ensure the vehicle is roadworthy and does not exceed its weight limit⁸

Keep goods and/or equipment carried to a minimum, in order to reduce weight and improve economy.

The above checks would normally take around 15-20 minutes to complete.

Special note: All vehicles used for work purposes should be frequently checked!

Refer to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) with regards to daily checks for vans – www.gov.uk/government/publications/van-drivers-daily-walkaround-check/van-drivers-daily-walkaround-check

¹ Check brake lights by getting help, use reflection, or lean something on the pedal.

² Subject to policy. If carried, should be properly stocked and functional.

³ See page 17 – Electric vehicles

⁴ Check when you start the engine and once you are moving. However, consider the safety of others around you.

⁵ Items can potentially cause serious injury under certain circumstances, perhaps even becoming a missile!

⁶ Refer to Appendix 1 page 48 regarding an Emergency Kit that might be carried

⁷ Refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/vosa-launches-van-best-practice-guide>

⁸ Refer to the vehicle's VIN plate usually placed in the engine compartment or on a door pillar. Goods vehicles should ideally be regularly checked on a Weighbridge, if available, and the actual weight recorded with the date/time the check was made. See Appendix 1 for an example of a VIN plate.

Daily and weekly checks for cars

Cars should also be checked at least, weekly, which should include most aspects listed on pages 13 and 14, as applicable. This should then be supported by a driver's daily check during the rest of that working week. However, refer to the business/organisation's policy for specific instructions.

All vehicles used for work purposes should be frequently checked!

Driver's daily checks for cars:

- bodywork, undamaged and reasonably clean and the fuel (or charging) cap is secure;
- windscreen, windows, light lenses, mirrors and number plates, undamaged and clean;
- tyres, general condition, undamaged and each appears to be correctly inflated;
- wheels appear secure and undamaged;
- all items being carried are secure and safe;
- trailer properly coupled, safely loaded with correct number plate, (if applicable).

Ensure the following are working:

- all lights, including any warning beacons;
- wipers/washers, including a visual check and top-up of screen wash, if necessary;
- horn;
- cooling/heater fan and demister system;
- all warning and information instruments.

Adjust and/or check:

- fire extinguisher and first aid kit, (if applicable);
- seat and head restraint positioning;
- steering wheel condition and positioning;
- mirrors;
- seat belts;
- all doors are secure;
- sufficient fuel (or charge²);
- complete the vehicle's check record and report any defects found¹.

As soon as you move away, check:

- any excessive noise or smoke from the exhaust;
- brakes and steering action;
- speedometer and other instruments.

Pool cars - There should be a specific policy/procedure in place regarding the use of pool cars. The general advice, however, is to carry out a weekly check on day one, followed by daily checks for the remainder of that working week, if you are still driving the same vehicle. Also, should you have to take a vehicle over from someone else – follow the advice above. Hire vehicles³ should also be covered within the policy.

Special note: All vehicles used for work purposes should be frequently checked!

¹ Refer to your business/organisation's policy.

² See page 17 – Electric vehicles

³ Hire vehicles should still be checked!

Vehicle checks in general

You should:

- not assume a vehicle is in order today because it was yesterday;
- carry out and record vehicle checks before driving on the road;
- never take a vehicle onto the road knowing it is defective, except when taking it to a workshop for repair and only then if safe to do so (refer to policy/procedure);
- ensure any defect found is reported, (refer to policy/procedure);
- check the defect book, particularly if you are taking the vehicle over from someone else, making sure any defects noted previously, have been repaired.

A well-respected chauffeur (my late Grandfather) used to say "Look after the vehicle and the vehicle will look after you!"

Proper and frequent vehicle checks will reduce risk by enhancing overall safety, help you to stay legal and offer less likelihood of a breakdown. A breakdown can increase the risk to you, any passengers or other road users, and certainly cause inconvenience. There would, of course, also be cost implications for the business or organisation should a vehicle break down!

Customers, clients or service users expect the service agreed, and a broken-down vehicle is likely to seriously affect that service!

Do you:

- conduct essential vehicle checks before driving onto the road?
- record these checks¹?
- report any defects and ensure they are repaired or corrected?
- liaise with your manager with regard to any vehicle issues?

You may not own the vehicle, but if you are driving it for work, you certainly have a shared responsibility for looking after it.

¹ Keeping a record of all vehicle checks (repairs and service history) is very important.

Electric vehicle (EV) checks



Recent figures¹ suggest that there were around 298,000 electric cars and 8,800 electric vans registered in the UK, as at May 2020. There is no doubt that these figures will increase substantially over the coming years. In fact, the UK government has recently announced a plan for all new cars and vans sold in this country to be electric by 2030 with Hybrid vehicles² only being sold until 2035. This means that new standard petrol and diesel cars and vans will no longer be sold in the UK from 2030 under current plans.

The Electric Vehicle (EV) has a rechargeable battery and needs to be charged from an external power source (charging point). Some electric vehicles claim to have a potential range of up to 300 miles on a single charge, although this will vary depending on the model and various driving factors.

Although the checks will differ slightly with regard to EVs, the majority of checks listed on the previous pages would generally still apply and should be conducted as recommended. There are additional risks with EVs, such as high voltage equipment. It is therefore essential that users of these vehicles are made aware of the risks and refer to the business/organisation's policy and procedures for this type of vehicle, along with the manufacturer's instructions (vehicle owner's manual).



It should be recognised that driving an electric vehicle³ will be a somewhat different experience to driving petrol and diesel models. Smooth, gradual and planned acceleration, deceleration and braking are required in order to maintain safety, stability and efficiency. Also remember – these vehicles usually run more quietly and therefore other road users, such as pedestrians, pedal cyclists and horse riders, may not hear you approaching. As with all vehicles, **drivers should ensure they are familiar with the controls and operating procedures before driving!**

1 www.nextgreencar.com/electric-cars/

2 Hybrid vehicles have a petrol or diesel engine along with a rechargeable battery and electric motor. Some charge the battery whilst being driven. However, this type has a very limited range on electric only drive! Some models still need to be plugged-in to charge the rechargeable battery with a range of around 20-30 miles on a full charge. These are known as 'plug-in hybrid vehicles'

3 More general information can also be found at:

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk/advice/electric-vehicles/>

<https://legacy.rosipa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/electric-vehicles/>

www.rac.co.uk/drive/advice/know-how/electric-cars/

www.hse.gov.uk/mvr/topics/electric-hybrid.htm

Driving and working hours

Drivers' Hours

When towing¹ with a goods vehicle with the combination weight exceeding 3500kg, you may be subject to driving hours rules ('in scope'), in which case you will be required to operate a Tachograph, or you may be subject to domestic hours regulations. However, there are exemptions within the existing regulations.

You should refer to your employer's transport policy and any information provided.

Your employer should advise with regard to this matter. However, if in doubt, seek official advice.

Information can be obtained by employers and individuals from the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency².

Working Time Regulations³ should be complied with, although there are a few exceptions depending on the work being carried out. Also, temporary legal amendments can apply under special circumstances.

Briefly, they are:

- 30 minute break after 6 hours of work;
- not exceed an average 48 hours per week over a 17 week period (can be extended to 26 weeks with written agreement);
- no more than 60 hours in any week.

The regulations are in place to promote safe working practices and ensure drivers/workers have appropriate rest, which reduces the risk of unacceptable fatigue and tiredness.

Note: Check the websites^{2&3} below for any updates as a result of the UK leaving the EU.

When driving generally you **MUST** be prepared to stop and take a short break. Refer to the current Highway Code for further advice.

Consider: **Tiredness** – *lack of sleep?*

Stop and have a short nap for 15-20 minutes, then a coffee.

Fatigue – *conducting a specific task for too long?*

Take a break, have a coffee and walk around a little.

Tiredness and fatigue can KILL!

¹ Specific advice with regard to towing is provided on page 42

² www.gov.uk/drivers-hours

³ www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours

Practical driving

A cost!

Clearly, there is 'a cost' associated with road traffic collisions. We have already discussed the "human cost" which is surely the most important aspect to consider. However, there are also financial costs; it is estimated that the value of preventing **reported** road collisions (or incidents) in Great Britain could be worth over £12bn per year¹. However, the rather negative 'a cost' can be turned into a positive, using the following acronym, in order to encourage better and more thoughtful driving:

- A**ttitude (positive attitudes reduce risk!)
- C**oncentration (managing distractions, staying focused and aware)
- O**bservation (Look, but actually SEE! and anticipate)
- S**pace (Maintain space around the vehicle, space will give you....)
- T**ime (Time to react, and potentially allow others more time too)

The thinking distances quoted in the current Highway Code are based on an average reaction time of approximately 0.7 second. This could be optimistic!

If the driver is expecting something to happen, then this reaction time is likely. However, how many drivers out there are in that frame of mind, fully aware and anticipating throughout the drive? In fact, a reaction time of at least 1 second would not be unusual².

Thinking distance (reaction time) is: decision time + response time.

When travelling at 30 mph, the vehicle is covering the ground at about 13 metres per second! And at 70 mph, 31 metres per second!

So, if travelling at 70 mph and the driver takes 1 second to react to something ahead, they will be 31 metres closer to the problem before actually reacting! This is nothing to do with actual braking distance which has to be added, and will vary depending on many factors apart from speed. These factors include vehicle type, load, tyre pressures and condition, and the condition of the road surface (see pages 32-33).

Good levels of concentration, observation, awareness and anticipation, along with effective spatial awareness, will reduce risk and allow the driver more time.

¹ Reported Road Casualties Great Britain: 2019 Annual Report – Department for Transport (DfT). *The figure quoted above excludes unreported incidents!* More details at www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019

² More information can be found on pages 32-33.

A systematic approach to hazards

We tend to conduct everyday tasks in a similar or routine manner, such as getting dressed or making a cup of coffee. How we go about these everyday tasks would not usually cause risk to others, but the way we drive certainly can! When learning to drive, we are encouraged to adopt a system or routine, such as Mirrors-Signal-Manoeuvre, Position-Speed-Look (MSMPSL)¹. However, over time this routine can become rushed, disorganised or even forgotten.

There is a more advanced system of vehicle control. It is referred to as *“The system of car control”* and *“Is a way of approaching and negotiating hazards, which is methodical, safe and leaves nothing to chance”*² and when used effectively, will also allow the driver more *Time to react!* This system is sometimes referred to as the IPSGA system.

The system is taught to drivers within the emergency services and clearly detailed in ‘**Roadcraft**’ a TSO publication². All drivers are encouraged to have a look at this book which contains excellent information, advice and details regarding advanced driving techniques.

The system consists of five phases (or stages);

Information - Taking, Using and Giving information, runs throughout the system.

Position - appropriate and early road positioning at the approach to a hazard will usually improve safety and view, along with making your intentions clearer to others.

Speed - adjusting to an appropriate speed at the correct time will enhance control, and, of course, overall safety.

Gear - once the correct speed has been achieved, then the correct gear for that speed should be selected, unless stopping completely. This will provide control and flexibility in order to deal with the hazard safely.

Acceleration - safely and smoothly away from the hazard, after re-checking.

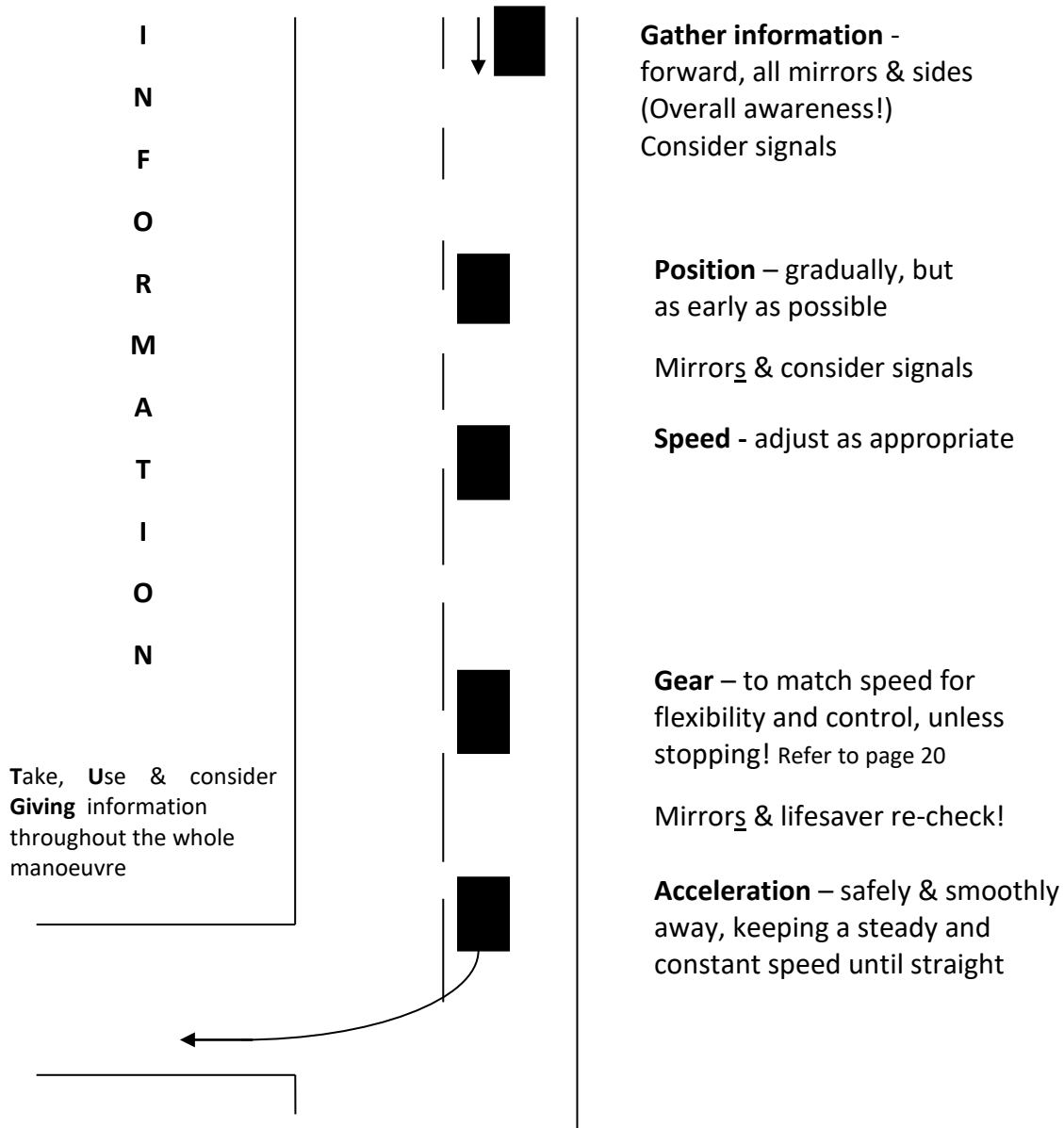
The next page illustrates this system put into practice for a right turn.

¹ Refer to The official DVSA guide to driving – the essential skills at: www.dsabooks.co.uk

² Refer to **Roadcraft** - The Police Driver’s Handbook (new edition Oct 2020) at: www.tsoshop.co.uk/
Also listed under- **Publications for drivers**, page 47

A systematic approach to hazards using – IPSGA

Below is an example of the system for a right turn



Junctions are high risk!

Application of the system

Each part should be considered IN SEQUENCE at the approach to any hazard. Road junctions, for example, are high risk! Should the situation change as you approach, then re-run the system starting at the appropriate phase for the circumstances.

Information gathering – it is essential to constantly take, use and, where necessary, give information throughout the drive and, in particular, when planning or actually carrying out any specific manoeuvre. *A manoeuvre is any change of position or speed.*

The information phase overlaps the next four phases. There are key points within the system when mirrors should be used:- before taking up the initial position, changing speed and final 'lifesaver' checks before the acceleration phase, namely, before commitment.

Effective information-gathering is only possible with full concentration, observation and overall awareness and anticipation.

Signals should always be considered before any change of position or speed (except in an emergency). Remember- brake light application is a signal. Brake lights can normally be activated with slight pressure on the pedal, before actually applying the brakes. Correct planning and timing of any change of position or speed, will allow others more time to react.

Many road traffic incidents are rear-end collisions

Position – the earlier you can position the vehicle appropriate to the hazard, the better. Positioning can also convey information and intentions, along with making it easier for you to see and be seen.

The importance of correct road positioning for the situation is an essential part of a well planned manoeuvre.

There is further advice with regards to vehicle road positioning later in the guide.

Position the vehicle for maximum safety, view and stability

Speed – should always be appropriate to the circumstances. However, remember mirrors should be effectively used before any change of speed (except in an emergency). Early speed adjustment will enhance safety, and control, allowing others more time to respond accordingly.

Inappropriate speed is often a major factor in collisions

Application of the system, continued

Gear – once the speed is correct for the hazard, the correct gear for that speed should be selected in order to negotiate the hazard safely, in full control and with good flexibility. However, if it becomes clear that you will have to stop, for example, if lights change to red, then there is little point in changing down on approach, unless required for another reason such as slow-moving traffic or a steep gradient. Generally, when stopping, no advantage would be gained from changing down gear(s). Changing down through gears as you slow is known as sequential down-changing; although acceptable, it increases the workload on both driver and vehicle, which can also increase risk. The whole point of the systematic approach is to ‘do one thing at a time’, i.e. position, speed, then the appropriate gear for that speed.

Brakes are for slowing and gears are for going!

When descending a steep hill, adjust the speed at an early stage, then match the gear to that speed in order to help you maintain control through engine compression.

Acceleration – if nothing has changed, and you are sure it is safe to complete the planned manoeuvre, then steadily accelerate in order to maintain the present speed, unless moving downhill, and then accelerate safely and smoothly away from the hazard once straight, with due regard to road surface and other hazards. Bear in mind that the amount of pressure applied to the accelerator pedal will either be sufficient to maintain the present speed or actually increase speed.

Adopting a ‘systematic’ approach, whether the basic MSMP SL¹ routine or the more advanced system described, will, if consistently applied, enhance overall vehicle control and safety.

¹ Mirrors-Signal-Manoeuvre, Position-Speed-Look. The official DVSA guide to driving – the essential skills at: www.dsabooks.co.uk

Management of space and road positioning

The importance of positive attitudes, concentration, observation, anticipation and overall awareness have already received mention. Also noted is the fact that drivers need time to react! An integral part is the management of space.

If we run out of space, we are likely to hit something or somebody!

Forward spacing – on the move

As a minimum, allow a 2 second time gap¹ from the vehicle in front.

As the vehicle ahead passes a fixed point, you should be able to count at least 2 seconds before reaching the same point. When driving vehicles other than cars, such as 3500kg vans, increase the time gap to at least 3 seconds (the heavier the vehicle – the further it will take to stop it). Generally, the minimum time gap¹ should be doubled on wet surfaces and increased much further on really slippery surfaces, such as ice or snow. Also, consider maintaining additional space when visibility is reduced.

Don't be a space invader!



*Maintain the recommended **minimum¹**
forward spacing in free-flowing traffic*

Around 130 were killed or seriously injured in collisions during 2018 involving drivers following too closely!

More space gives you more time²

By managing forward spacing we also better manage rear space. If you have sufficient forward space and **“drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see to be clear”¹** you will potentially allow more time for following drivers to react and reduce the risk of being hit from behind. Effective forward observation and planning is essential, along with being prepared to adjust speed early and gradually, and showing brake lights in a timely manner in order to encourage following drivers to respond accordingly. It is also worth remembering that many rear-end shunts occur in stationary queues. So, if stopped, keep an eye on the mirrors and although ideally you should not hold your vehicle with the footbrake (use the parking brake for better safety, unless a very short stop), show brake lights if a vehicle approaches from behind.

¹ Refer to the current Highway Code at: www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code-road-safety

² See pages 32-33 for more information with regard to reaction times.

Management of space and road positioning, continued

Forward spacing – in stationary queues

When stopping behind another vehicle it is still important to keep forward spacing. What if you were hit from behind, the vehicle in front runs back, you have to drive around the vehicle for some reason or an emergency vehicle¹ comes up behind you? In order to allow for these and other possible scenarios, maintain space! It can also be intimidating for other drivers, if you stop too close behind them.

When stopped you should be able to see the rear tyres of the vehicle in front, along with some road surface (tyres and tarmac!). Allow more space if behind a larger vehicle, which should improve your view ahead and also help the driver to be aware that you are there!

When stopping at light signals, stop slightly short of the stop line. This should allow you room to manoeuvre, without putting yourself at risk, should, for example, an emergency vehicle¹ approach from behind.

SPACE will potentially allow more TIME and other OPTIONS

Spacing to the sides (and ahead) –

Maintaining space each side of the vehicle, although important, can be difficult to achieve. However, keeping as much space as practicable around the vehicle, along with being prepared to **slow down**, will reduce risk. Consider the following few potential risks:

- pedestrians near the edge of the footway (pavement)²;
- people stepping or running out into the road²;
- elderly or disabled people near the edge of the footway or actually in the road²;
- movement of wheelchairs, powered wheelchairs and mobility scooters²;
- cyclists and motorcyclist suddenly changing position, with little or no warning²;
- horse and rider suddenly changing position²;
- wild or uncontrolled animals straying into the road;
- parked vehicle doors opening or sudden movements;
- vehicles emerging from side roads, or stopping with their front partly out in your path;
- oncoming traffic changing position, for whatever reason.

Of course, there are many other things that can happen. Try making a list of your own.

*Show respect for, and try to **maintain space** from, **all** vulnerable road users...*



See page 44 for specific advice regarding sharing the roads with horses



¹ Refer to page 45 for more information with regard to dealing with emergency vehicles

² Allow **extra space** and respect these particularly vulnerable road users. Always be ready to **slow down** and **STOP!**

Management of space and road positioning, continued

In order to reduce risk at the sides, try to position to maximise space.

Even in lanes of traffic, avoid staying alongside another vehicle longer than necessary, for example, on multi-lane roads, such as dual carriageways or motorways. This may, however, be impossible in slow moving queues and very heavy traffic situations. When planning to overtake on multi-lane roads, hold a diagonal position until you can go pass safely. Be especially careful on motorways, where drivers of large goods vehicles may not be able to see you, due to you being in their blind spot. Many 'sideswipe' collisions occur on motorways! Also, consider spacing to the sides when negotiating roundabouts, another driver may allow their vehicle to drift off-line as they go through, and, of course, larger vehicles are likely to need more space in any case.



Try to have a 'plan B' – an escape route, should you need it!

Road positioning –

There are many factors to consider when positioning the vehicle for 'best advantage'. However, generally position to maximise:

- safety;
- view;
- stability.

Also, consider:

- being seen;
- making your intentions clear.

It is essential that all decisions regarding road positioning are based on safety as the main priority.

To maximise **safety** the vehicle needs to be as far away from the danger as practicable. If the danger is on the nearside (left), then the vehicle might be positioned towards the middle of the road, but only if it is safe to adopt this position.

Should the danger be on both sides, the vehicle should ideally be positioned in order to minimise risk, by finding a position of relative safety.

Overall awareness is essential in order to make **correct** and **safe** decisions with regard to road positioning. Effective overall awareness relies on good levels of **concentration** and **observation**.

Management of space and road positioning, continued



ALLOW FOR THE "WHAT IF?"

*Doors might suddenly be opened
Vehicles could move off without warning
Pedestrians may walk or run into the road
Children playing and may run out
There may be a concealed road junction
Vehicles might emerge from driveways
Cyclists could suddenly appear*

LESS SPACE SHOULD EQUAL LESS PACE!

Adopting a central course and travelling at an appropriate speed will reduce the overall risk in this situation. However, all driving plans must be reassessed as the circumstances change, for example, if oncoming vehicles are approaching.

concentration – observation – space – time

If in doubt, SLOW DOWN and be ready to STOP!

In order to maximise **view**, position the vehicle so you can see as far ahead as possible and as widely as you can, for example, into side roads, around parked vehicles, and into bends; make full use of reflections from windows, side of parked vehicles, lights etc. Also, make it easier to read road signs, markings and road layouts, by adopting a positive, but **safe** position.

Observation should be a cycle of scanning – the far distance, the nearer distance, the foreground, to the sides and rear throughout the drive. Look well ahead by lifting or extending your vision as far as possible.

The further you can see, the more information you have and the more time you'll have to respond to that information.



Bends

In order to maximise **safety**, **view** and **stability** when dealing with bends, the following should be considered:

- **position** of the vehicle both on the approach and throughout the bend;
- **speed** on the approach;
- **gear** for that speed.

Then:

- ideally negotiate the bend at a constant speed, whenever possible;
- be able to stop the vehicle well within the distance you can see to be clear and be able to keep the vehicle on the correct side of the road!

All round effective observation, early recognition and planning are essential aspects!

Each situation must be assessed by the driver on the approach; many factors need to be considered, for example, view into the bend, road width, vehicle being driven and other road users, either in view or, as yet, unseen. However, the following is a general guide:

Vehicle positioning for –

Left-hand bend – it is now generally accepted at ‘advanced’ driving level that the vehicle should ideally be **positioned towards** the centre of the road (not actually in the centre!). This position should be established as soon as possible on the approach.

However, careful observation and anticipation is essential with the driver prepared to re-adjust the position, if necessary, such as for oncoming traffic or other potential danger. Also, consider whether this position might cause any confusion to others.

Right-hand bend – the vehicle should ideally be **positioned** towards the left-side of the road (nearside). However, you should allow for any nearside danger, such as junctions, concealed driveways, pedestrians, over-hanging trees and hedges, protruding road signs and the condition of the road surface.

The smoother the line through the bend, but keeping the vehicle on the correct side of the road, the better the stability

Bends, continued

Speed – adjusting to a **safe** and **appropriate speed** at an early stage is essential!

This can be done by deceleration and/or braking well before the corner or bend. Again, early recognition and planning are very important aspects.

Allow yourself plenty of SPACE and TIME!

All driving decisions must be based on **what you can see**. However, consider **what you cannot see** and **what might happen** (anticipation). Also, **what to do if things change?** (plan B).

Effective information-gathering is essential when deciding upon the correct speed, such as road markings, signage, road surface, the view into the bend, other road users and the vehicle being driven. It is also often possible to obtain a 'cross view'.

Whenever possible to do so, look over hedges or through gaps in order to see across towards the other side of the bend.

Speed and '**limit point**'¹ – one method, if correctly used, to help judge the **safe speed** on the approach to a blind bend² in a rural area, is to use the **limit point**. In most cases, when you look at a bend, the verges or hedges each side will appear to meet. This is the furthest point you can usually see into the bend, i.e., '**limit point**'. If, as you approach, this limit point is static, so that the distance between you and this point is reducing, you need to lose speed until the limit point either starts to move away from you or the distance between you and this point is no longer reducing and the view starts to increase into the bend, which is known as 'matching the speed with the limit point' and should be the maximum speed. However, other issues may require less speed! Whether negotiating a blind or open bend³, **you must have the ability to stop the vehicle well within the distance you can see to be clear. Maintaining full control and stability, whatever the circumstances, is essential!**

Remember to make full use of all information available to you when deciding upon the **safe** and **appropriate speed** on the approach.

Better to be a little slower, than too fast!

Gear – the **correct gear** should be selected before entering the corner or bend. This will then provide control and flexibility in order to go around at a constant speed with both hands on the steering wheel and the clutch fully engaged.

Speed should not be increased until the vehicle is straight again.

Adopting the basic **position, speed** then **gear** system, coupled with effective observation and planning, will enhance safety when dealing with bends.

Maximise safety, view and stability

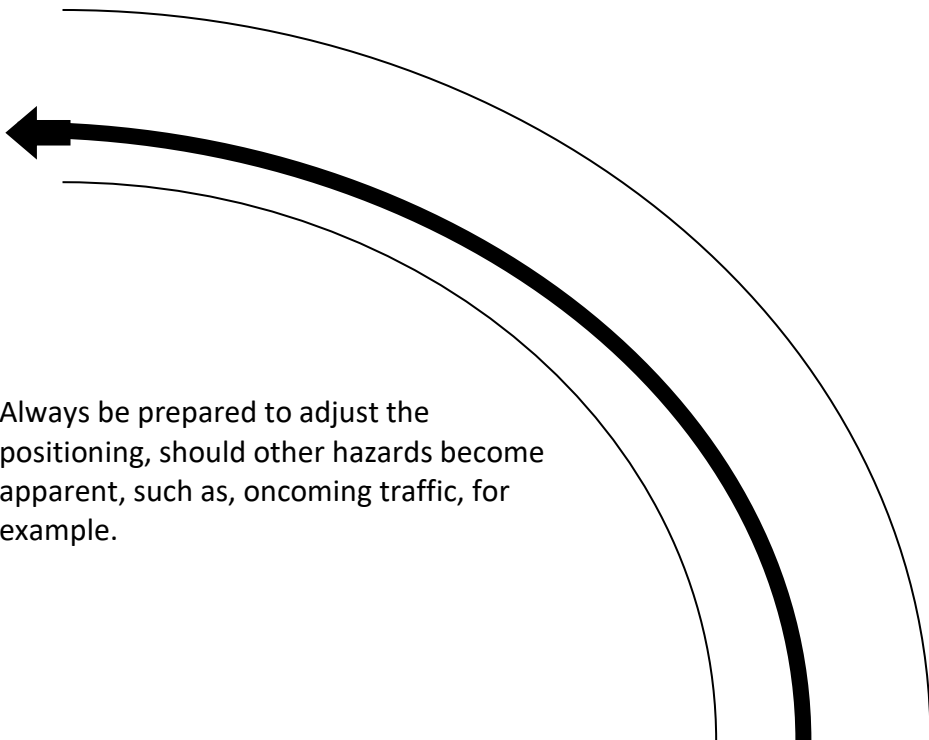
¹ Refer to **Roadcraft** - The police driver's handbook for specific advice at: www.tsoshop.co.uk/

² A 'blind bend' is where the driver is unable to see the road surface throughout the bend and beyond.

³ An 'open bend' is the type where the driver can see the road surface throughout.

Bends

Here is an illustration of positioning for a left-hand bend:

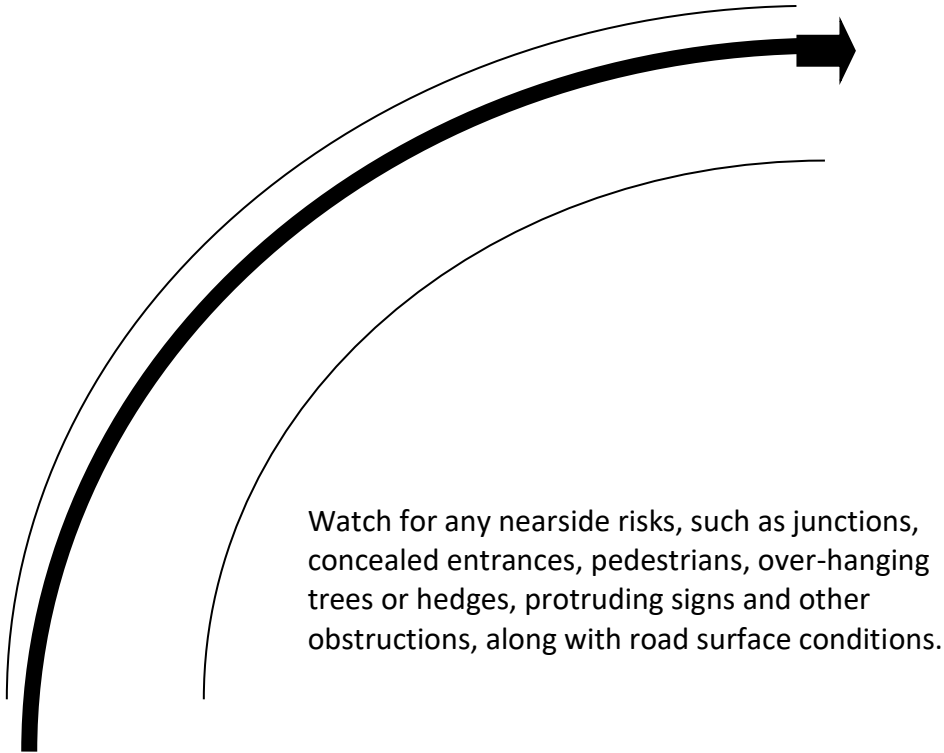


Always be prepared to adjust the positioning, should other hazards become apparent, such as, oncoming traffic, for example.

Safety must always be the priority!

Bends

Here is an illustration of positioning for a right-hand bend:



Safety must always be the priority!

Remember- correct road positioning and smooth lines will enhance safety, view and stability.

Roadcraft – The police driver's handbook provides far more detailed information and advice with regards to safe cornering. Available from: www.tsoshop.co.uk/ (also see Publications for drivers, on page 47).

Speed and safety

Speed is usually an element in road traffic collisions; *a stationary vehicle won't hit anything!* However, **excessive** or **inappropriate speed** is often a major factor in collisions.

Correct use and choice of speed for the circumstances is critical in reducing risk, maintaining control and enhancing overall safety for all. We all have places to go and people to see. However, safety must surely be every driver's priority.

Better to arrive late, than not arrive at all!

When planning a journey, allow for the "what if?" Delays are only too common these days and likely to become worse in the future. So, if a journey should take, say, an hour, add a little time, perhaps 15 minutes or so. By allowing extra time, there is less likelihood of being late and, hopefully, you will arrive in a more relaxed manner.

If, however, it becomes clear that you are going to be late, find a safe and legal place to stop and contact someone at your intended destination. Once you know that they know you will be late, it should reduce your stress and anxiety somewhat, and hopefully not cause you to take additional risks. It is all too easy to focus on our own lives and commitments, etc, which can then sometimes cause us to forget that there are many others sharing the roads with us at any given time.

Also, your loved ones, relatives, friends and colleagues all want you to be safe!

Please remember –

"Drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see to be clear" ¹

The current Highway Code suggests the **typical stopping distances** as a guide. They will always depend on many factors such as the driver, road surface, tyres, vehicle type and condition, along with actual vehicle weight at the time and, of course, the speed of the vehicle!

It is the driver who has to react and, where necessary, stop the vehicle. However, there is a system known as 'Autonomous Emergency Braking' (AEB)² now available. This system will only operate in safety critical situations. However, it may be a while before this system is fitted to all vehicles as standard, as with Anti-lock Braking, Electronic Stability and Traction Control Systems ² now found on vehicles. EU legislation will, however, require manufacturers to fit AEB to new vehicles by 2022. Although the UK has left the EU, it is very likely the UK will generally mirror European road safety rules. Speed limiters and Lane departure warning systems will also have to be fitted as standard on new vehicles.

Clearly, the driver's recognition of the hazard and reactions are both critical elements. The problem is that there are many factors involved, such as health, tiredness/fatigue, concentration, observation and overall awareness. As previously noted on page 19, the distance travelled during the actual reaction time (thinking distance), will also vary depending on the vehicle speed.

Should the driver be distracted, tired, unwell or under the influence of alcohol or drugs, their recognition and reactions will be slower. Also, as we grow older, our reactions are likely to slow.

¹ Refer to the current Highway Code.

² Refer to Appendix 1

Speed and safety, continued

When travelling at 30mph, you will travel around 9 metres¹ before reacting to an emergency, assuming your reaction time is approximately 0.7sec. which means you were fully focused and concentrating. **The actual braking distance then needs to be added to the equation, likely to be another 14 metres¹** (in good conditions!) giving a potential total stopping distance of 23 metres¹. However, should your reaction time be longer, say 1 second², which would not be unusual, you would travel around 13 metres during that time (as illustrated below) which would then increase the overall stopping distance.

Although technology has clearly moved forward with vehicle braking and stability systems, what has not changed is 'the human factor'. In fact, there is an opinion that there are many distractions in modern vehicles, especially with regards to mobile phones (hands-free, of course!) and Sat Navs, etc, which could lead to late recognition and slower reactions.

Reaction time is the time it takes from seeing the problem to actually reacting to it

The overriding safety feature of any vehicle must surely be - THE DRIVER! ³

Distance travelled during an average reaction time ¹

 9 metres

30mph

 13.4 metres

Distance travelled during a ONE second reaction time

Distance travelled during an average reaction time ¹

 15 metres

50mph

 22 metres

Distance travelled during a ONE second reaction time

Distance travelled during an average reaction time ¹

 21 metres

70mph

 31 metres

Distance travelled during a ONE second reaction time

When considering appropriate speed, also remember '**speed + speed**'.

If you were travelling along a narrow country road at, say, 40mph and another vehicle was approaching from the opposite direction at the same speed, **then the closing speed and potential impact speed would be 80mph!**

Being legally fit to drive, along with good levels of concentration, observation, anticipation and overall situational awareness, will improve recognition and reaction times.

¹ Based on a reaction time of 0.7 second, as quoted in the Highway Code. **Actual braking distance has to be added** to these figures in order to calculate a **typical overall stopping distance**.

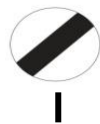
² As discussed on page 19.

³ This statement may be challenged with 'driverless or autonomous vehicles' now very much on the horizon.

Speed limits

Knowing and, of course, complying with speed limits will reduce risk and help you to stay within the law. **Roads with a system of street lighting** would usually be subject to a **30mph limit**, (excluding motorways), unless signs show otherwise. Although **posted speed limits apply to all motor vehicles**, there are specific limits for different types of vehicles within 'national speed limit' areas.

For the purposes of this guide I have only listed cars and light goods vehicles, including towing speed limits:



National speed limits (mph) indicated by this sign:

Vehicle	Carriageway type		
	Single	Dual	Motorway
Cars	60	70	70
Cars towing	50	60	60
Car-derived vans ¹	60	70	70
Light goods vehicle (vans etc), that are NOT car-derived or exceed 2000kg MAM ²	50	60	70 ³
Light goods towing	50	60	60

Speed limits are NOT targets!
Speed must always be appropriate to the circumstances within the legal maximum

1 Car-derived van is a goods vehicle which is constructed or adapted as a derivative of a passenger vehicle which has a maximum laden weight not exceeding 2000kg, such as, Fiesta van, for example.

2 Maximum authorised mass (gross vehicle weight). Includes, Transit Connect, Transit, Sprinter and Vivaro, as examples. (These speed limits apply to goods vehicles up to 7500kg) Refer to: the current Highway Code or www.gov.uk/speed-limits

3 Many businesses/organisations fit speed limiters to their vehicle. Refer to policy and vehicle being used.

The following pages contain some general practical ‘hints and tips...’

Topic	Page
➤ Dealing with road junctions	36
➤ Roundabouts Overtaking	37
➤ Use of vehicle controls	38
➤ Effective use of mirrors Signal use Adverse road and weather conditions Flooding	39
➤ Multi-lane roads Motorways	41
➤ Towing and trailer use	42
➤ Reversing and manoeuvring	43
➤ Safely sharing the road with horses Road works Mobile phone, Sat Navs and any other communication equipment	44
➤ Emergency vehicles	45
➤ Dealing with vehicle breakdowns Driving off road	46

General practical hints and tips

Dealing with road junctions – the majority of road traffic collisions occur on built-up roads¹ and, more often than not, at or near a road junction. However, incidents on non-built-up or rural roads¹ have a much higher fatality rate, which is mainly due to speed. A frequently reported reason for incidents is – “failed to look properly”¹

Apart from **correct positioning** and **speed** on the approach to any road junction, **effective observation is essential**. Give yourself time to assess the position, distance and speed of other traffic and re-check before continuing. The ‘double-check’ might save you from becoming involved in a collision. Early planning and careful observation will enhance safety. Be especially watchful for the vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and mobility scooter users.

“Sorry, I didn’t see you!”

Crossroads are also generally high risk, but be particularly careful at unmarked crossroads, where people may be confused or unaware.

Always allow for the mistakes of others - anticipation and awareness.

Turning right into a side road – when waiting close to the centre of the road or in a dedicated lane for oncoming traffic, try to keep the front wheels (steering) straight. Otherwise, if you were hit from behind and the front wheels were turned slightly right, you would potentially be pushed into the path of the oncoming traffic.

Junctions controlled by light signals also require careful planning, anticipation and awareness. Green is actually potentially ‘high risk’ because, a) drivers tend to assume it is safe to continue and b) the light WILL change to amber, then red, at some point!

Correct approach speeds will reduce the risk of you not being able to stop and help you to manage the spacing behind you. When going through a green light, look wide and watch for ‘red runners’ and emergency vehicles.

¹ Main source: Reported Road Casualties GB Annual Report 2019 - See Appendix 1 for definitions of Built-up, non built-up and urban roads. 653 were reported as killed on built-up roads compared with 994 on non built-up roads and 105 on motorways during 2019.
www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019

General practical hints and tips, continued

Roundabouts – these traffic management systems are generally safer than junctions, but still require effective observation. “Plan to stop, but be looking to go”. The speed of vehicles on roundabouts can, in some cases, be quite fast and their intended route not always clear. Better to be sure! Avoid staring to the right, keep checking forward, in case the vehicle in front stops. A great number of rear-end shunts occur at roundabouts! Treat mini-roundabouts in the same way, but allow for the lack of space, along with the potential for misinterpreting signals and intentions.

Even when you think you have priority, be prepared for others thinking the same! A priority can only be taken if it is safe to do so

Overtaking – very careful planning and awareness are essential. You should be particularly watchful when overtaking on single carriageways, especially with regard to oncoming traffic; single carriageways with three lanes can also be high risk.

Head-on crashes are usually very serious with potentially catastrophic consequences. **First, ensure it is safe and legal. Then ask yourself - “is it really necessary to overtake?”** You should never cause another road user to change position or speed as a result of you overtaking. **Safety must be the priority!** Also, ensure you can give plenty of room for others when overtaking, for example, cyclists and motorcyclists.

Before starting an overtake make sure you have a gap to go into and consider the potential for others, as yet unseen, coming into your path (or you into their path), as for example, from side roads, bends, entrances and driveways, etc. **If in doubt, hold back.** When planning to overtake, don’t get too close to the vehicle you want to pass, as this may reduce the view ahead and increase risk, especially if the driver ahead brakes suddenly. You should also consider the vehicle you are driving, the speed of the vehicle you want to overtake and whether the driver knows you are there.

Avoid exceeding the speed limit during overtakes and, if your vehicle is fitted with a speed limiter, make sure you have sufficient acceleration to complete the manoeuvre quickly and safely.

Even on multi-lane roads, allow for the potentially sudden change of position of other vehicles and keep as much space around your vehicle as possible.

Ask yourself “Can I see well ahead and do I have enough space and time?”

Should the situation change, be prepared to abandon the overtake. Always be prepared for, and allow, others to overtake you, if they so wish.

General practical hints and tips, continued

Use of vehicle controls – developing systematic, smooth, calm and unhurried driving actions will enhance control, safety and awareness, as well as reducing stress and anxiety. This approach not only reduces the workload on the driver, but also on the vehicle. Reducing the workload and wear and tear on the vehicle will in turn have cost and environmental benefits such as improving fuel economy, fewer emissions and fewer repairs and replacements. Driving in a rushed manner normally results in harsh acceleration, snatched and rough gear changes, often followed by harsh braking, none of which leads to a calm, controlled and thoughtful drive. Police, ambulance and fire service drivers are obviously taught to drive quickly when responding to emergencies. However, they will always be expected to be calm, controlled, smooth and very aware of their surroundings. It is also worth remembering that they undergo very rigorous training and assessments before authorisation is given.

Rushed actions often means rushed thinking, and rushed thinking will often lead to rushed decisions which potentially can lead to serious consequences!

Harsh acceleration and braking will affect vehicle stability, increase wear and tear, use a lot more fuel or charge, which in turn will increase costs and the environmental impact.

Steering – smooth fluid movements, with both hands on the wheel as much as possible, will certainly enhance control and stability. The ‘cross arm’ steering technique is very common, although, under normal circumstances, I would still generally recommend the ‘pull-push’ method. Also, consider the possible consequences should the steering wheel airbag deploy when your arm is across the centre of the wheel, when adopting the ‘cross arm’ method! Whatever method you use, keep it smooth and keep your thumbs on the rim, not inside the wheel (thumb nails facing you), especially if driving off-road. Maximise control and safety!

Clutch and Gear use – the clutch action should be smooth and unhurried when moving away and during gear selection. Avoid depressing the pedal too early when slowing or stopping, which is known as ‘coasting’, which will reduce control and increase wear on the clutch mechanism. Riding the clutch, i.e. resting the foot on the pedal, will also result in additional wear and tear. Keep the clutch engaged as much as possible when the vehicle is moving. Selecting neutral when driving along is also ‘coasting’ and should be avoided.

Make effective use of ‘stop/start’¹, if fitted to the vehicle, when stationary for more than a few seconds. This will enhance economy and reduce emissions.

In manual gear box/transmission vehicles, make all gear changes smoothly and quietly, avoiding rushed actions. When driving a vehicle with an automatic, semi-automatic or Tiptronic transmission, refer to the vehicle handbook for specific advice and information. The use and timing of gears has already been noted on pages 20 and 21, with specific advice given on page 23.

¹ Refer to Appendix 1 – Definitions

General practical hints and tips, continued

Effective use of mirrors – it is essential that all road users are fully aware of what is going on around them. Drivers need to maintain all-round information by making effective use of all rear view mirrors throughout the drive and before any action (except in an emergency), not forgetting the ‘blind areas’, especially when moving away and changing lanes. A systematic drive¹ involves effective use of mirrors.

Signal use – signals, especially **indicators**, should be given if they would help or warn another road user, including pedestrians. They should be properly timed, not cause confusion or misunderstanding. Also, ensure they are cancelled once the manoeuvre has been completed. Over-use of indicators should be avoided, but clearly given where necessary. Other than indicators, remember **brake lights**, correctly used, can give very useful information too. Road positioning can also convey information to others. **Flashing the headlights**, as an invitation to another road user to proceed, is not recommended. This action can be misinterpreted and confusing. Flashing headlights is officially a warning of your presence, like **sounding the horn**. However, be careful, for what you intend as a warning may be taken as an invitation to go! If you wish to allow another road user to proceed, simply hold back, if safe to do so, and let them make their own decisions. Should another driver flash their headlights, apparently at you (?), be very cautious before acting upon it. Waving at another road user to proceed is also not generally recommended and could result in an incident.

Carefully consider the situation and then take the safe and appropriate action. **Hazard warning lights** should not be used as “I can park anywhere” lights! They should be used to warn others of an obstruction or danger. Also, amber warning beacons, if fitted, should be used in a similar way. **Arm signals** are rarely used nowadays, but drivers should be fully aware of them. And finally, a **courtesy** ‘thank you’ hand signal will be appreciated by most people, if giving it is appropriate and safe.

Adverse road and weather conditions – before setting out in poor conditions, ask yourself “is this journey really necessary?” Depending on your role, the journey may be essential. If so, ensure the vehicle is ready! It should be fully checked, fuelled-up, with clean frost-free windows, mirrors and light lenses

Check any route information available to you and ensure you are prepared in case you become stranded somewhere or suffer vehicle problems. Have a map with you, even if using a Sat Nav. The system might ‘go down’ for whatever reason or you may have to find an alternative route. Consider taking a non-alcoholic drink and snack with you, especially if embarking on a reasonably long journey. It is in any case always a good idea to have perhaps a bottle of water available in order to stay hydrated, whatever the conditions. Even what is normally a short journey can of course take much longer in some situations, whether due to traffic, an incident or the weather. However, you should not drink or snack while actually driving along! Having some warm and rain-proof clothing and appropriate footwear should also be considered. You might have to leave the vehicle and walk some distance or perhaps stay in your vehicle until help arrives. In extreme conditions, try to be prepared for all eventualities²

¹ Refer to pages 20-23

² See Appendix 1 ‘Emergency Kit’

General practical hints and tips, continued

Allow plenty of time for your journey. Stay watchful, as surface conditions can change rapidly. Tyre noise, or lack of it, could indicate ice! Whether driving in fog, mist, wet, floods, ice, snow or windy conditions, allow plenty of time, maintain space around the vehicle, ensure smooth use of all controls and adjust your driving accordingly, with good forward planning and anticipation. **Be seen!** Display dipped headlights, if light or visibility is poor, and if visibility is seriously reduced (less than 100 metres), use front and/or rear fog lights. However, remember to switch off fog lights once visibility improves. You must not cause unnecessary glare. Should a vehicle come up behind and follow you, switch the rear fog lights off. Do not use fog lights just because it's raining, but do use dipped headlights, especially in heavy rain. Visibility must be seriously reduced to justify front or rear fog light use. However, excessive spray, say on a motorway due to surface water, may justify fog light use, depending on overall visibility. Remember- rear fog lights can make brake lights more difficult to see! If driving in falling snow, remember light lenses, especially at the front, along with side windows, can become covered with snow. In heavy snow conditions, find a safe and legal place to stop occasionally, in order to check light lenses and perhaps clear windows, as necessary. It is also worth remembering that high temperatures and/or very bright sunlight, especially at low level, can also be very hazardous.

When driving with the sun low in the sky, your perception range will likely to be much reduced. Forward planning and observation should allow you to anticipate when you are likely to have the sun ahead of you, so be prepared to slow down. Remember, in changing light conditions, the eyes need time to adjust! In high temperatures try to keep the vehicle's inside temperature cool.

Refer to the current Highway Code for comprehensive advice



Flooding - Before driving through deep surface water, always be ready to stop and check the depth. Some modern vehicles, especially cars, have air intakes set low. Depending on the depth, it is possible that water could be sucked up into the engine, potentially causing damage. If you decide to drive through, having checked very carefully first, drive slowly keeping the engine revs steady, but not too high. This can be achieved usually by slipping the clutch, in order to stay at a steady pace. If you drive too fast, this creates a bow wave and raise the water level at the front. Try to avoid going through with another vehicle coming towards you. Together, your vehicles will raise the water level. Also, the best 'shallow' route will often be in the middle of the road, a course you would be unable to use if another vehicle was coming the other way at the same time. Do not decelerate or change gear, this may allow water to be sucked up into the exhaust pipe and thus into the engine, again potentially causing serious damage. However, if the water level is so high that it is around the level of the exhaust, do not attempt to go through! Also, consider that if you are unable to see the road surface, then you have no idea what other problems may lay beneath. Once you have cleared the flooded area, carefully check the brakes, when safe to do so.

If you have any doubts whatsoever, do not attempt to go through!

Should you have any concerns with regard to the vehicle after driving in adverse conditions, seek professional advice immediately. It should also be remembered that driving in adverse conditions can be stressful and tiring. Allow plenty of time and take regular breaks!

General practical hints and tips, continued

Multi-lane roads – dual carriageways¹ are generally higher risk than motorways, there are usually only two lanes, often with road junctions, including crossroads, traffic lights, parking areas (lay-by) and can normally be used by all road users, unless a restriction applies. Yet cars and motorcycles can legally travel along a dual carriageway, subject to the national speed limit, at 70 mph! (the same as a motorway), if conditions allow.



Start of motorway regulations

Motorways – statistics show that motorways are our safest roads. During 2019 there were 4,130 injury collisions recorded, compared with 113,326 on all other roads. This included 105 people killed and 789² seriously injured. When an incident does occur, it is often serious due to the speeds involved and lack of space management by some drivers. The hard shoulder³ is potentially high risk and should only be used in an emergency (unless open as a running lane). If you are unfortunate enough to have to stop on the hard shoulder, use hazard lights, exit the vehicle by the nearside door and wait the other side of the barrier, with any passengers doing likewise, unless you or a passenger are unable to safely get out, for example, due to a disability. There is a real risk of the vehicle, and anyone standing near it, being hit by another vehicle. Call for help as quickly as possible. It is still recommended to use the emergency telephones, usually situated at one-mile intervals, if practicable to do so. The sooner staff at the motorway control centre are aware, the better. Keep an eye on the traffic, especially when using the emergency phone. But, if you or others are unable to get out of the vehicle, use your mobile phone. The rectangular blue location signs now placed at regular intervals will allow you to give the location if, for any reason, you are unable to use the emergency phone. Highways England Traffic Officers and/or Police may attend in order to help protect the scene. However, if it is possible to safely get to the next exit or service area, rather than stopping on the hard shoulder (which clearly depends on the actual problem), then this is generally a safer option and strongly recommended. See page 46 for more advice with regard to breakdowns.

When driving on dual carriageways and motorways try to maintain good levels of concentration, observation and planning, as well as keeping space around the vehicle (especially forward spacing). Comply with **all** signage; even advisory signs are used for a reason, (although you may not know the reason at the time). Plan your route and take regular breaks on long journeys. And as always, ensure both you and the vehicle are fit for purpose! See below regarding 'Smart' motorways³.

Comply with signs -



Red flashing lights from side to side in pairs, together with a red cross, means “**do not proceed in the traffic lane directly below**”. These signals are mounted above the carriageway: there is a signal board for each lane. A previous signal may direct traffic into an adjacent lane. More than one lane may be closed to traffic.

You MUST comply with Mandatory Signs!

¹ A dual carriageway is a road with a central divide, such as kerb, grass, hedging or barrier. If there are only road markings separating the carriageways, it will NOT be classed as a dual carriageway. Also, a three lane two-way road is NOT a dual carriageway!

² Reported to the police and subject to estimated adjustment.

www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019

³ So called 'Smart' motorways may still have a hard shoulder, which can be used as a 'live running lane' at times OR may NOT have a hard shoulder, but 'Emergency Refuse Areas' (ERAs) at regular intervals. Motorway design and safety has recently been reviewed!

Further information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-drive-on-a-smart-motorway>

General practical hints and tips, continued

Towing and trailer use –

- ensure you have the necessary licence entitlement, training and experience to tow safely¹;
- make sure the trailer does not exceed the recommended maximum towing weight and combination weight for the towing vehicle²;
- the trailer must never be overloaded;
- ensure the trailer is roadworthy, remember tyre regulations also apply to trailers;
- make sure it is correctly and safely coupled, with the breakaway cable or secondary coupling also securely attached, and correct number plate displayed;
- check that all the electrics are properly connected and all lights working;
- make sure it is loaded correctly and securely;
- raise and securely store the jockey wheel assembly;
- ensure the manufacturers' recommended 'nose weight' on the towbar is correct;
- before moving away, ensure the brake is released;
- employ good spatial awareness so that you can allow for the additional combination weight, width, length and possibly height;
- maintain well-extended observation and planning, allowing more time for slowing, stopping and manoeuvring;
- be very careful with regards to overall length, especially when turning, negotiating roundabouts, bends and when emerging from road junctions;
- take care when descending steep hills; set the appropriate speed at the top, then select the correct gear for that speed, in order to help control the descent with engine compression, if possible, avoiding prolonged periods of braking; however, some braking may be necessary;
- should the trailer start to 'snake', ease off the accelerator, control, but do not grip the steering wheel too tightly, allow some twitch, do not brake or make sudden steering movements, allowing the combination to steady and regain stability.
You might then like to find somewhere safe and legal to stop and perhaps take a deep breath before continuing!
Inappropriate speed, abrupt steering action and/or high cross-winds can cause instability and snaking;
- seek training or advice, if in doubt, as safety must always be the priority!

Remember – should the combination weight exceed 3500kg, you may be subject to UK driving hours rules and thus required to have a Tachograph fitted and operated. Refer to page 18 for more information.

Driver training and assessment for those towing is highly recommended

¹ Shown as BE on the driving licence. Refer to: www.gov.uk/towing-rules

² Refer to the vehicle handbook and VIN plate attached to the vehicle for train or combination weight. There should also be a maximum weight plate on the trailer. See Appendix 1 for more information.

General practical hints and tips, continued

Reversing and manoeuvring – a significant number of incidents occur that involve work vehicles reversing or manoeuvring at low speed. Most could be avoided with better planning, observation, control and seeking any available help.

Manoeuvring a van is clearly more risky than manoeuvring a car, bearing in mind fields of vision and potential size difference. However, adopting the following will reduce the risk of an incident whatever the vehicle type:

- carefully look at the area into which you wish to manoeuvre, getting out to have a look, if necessary;
- if turning or manoeuvring on a road, ensure it is safe, legal and appropriate;
- open the windows, especially on the driver's side, as you may hear something you have not seen or are unable to see;
- seek help, if available;
- maintain good speed and steering control, take plenty of time and keep looking all round throughout the manoeuvre, being especially watchful for other road users, including pedestrians and cyclists (you cannot normally hear them!);
- when manoeuvring in off-road situations, car parks, work yards or perhaps 'on-site', comply with any instructions, such as one-way systems;
- reverse into parking bays, whenever possible, as this is normally safer and easier when you drive out and slightly more economical, with less fuel used if the vehicle can be driven straight out, especially if the engine is cold;
- should you have to manoeuvre and/or reverse without any assistance, keep checking around, stopping if necessary, getting out and making sure it is safe;
- make good use of any additional aids, such as reversing cameras and sensors, but not forgetting the importance of effective use of mirrors and overall observation;
- reversing should be kept to a minimum.

If in doubt, get out and have another look at the situation, don't wait for the bang!

When selecting a parking space, particularly in a public car park, consider your personal safety – for example, walking distance to and from the exit/entrance. Also, check the car park lighting in case you return after dark. Better to stay in well-lit areas and, whenever possible, try to keep to a minimum the distance you have to walk within the car park.

Should the vehicle have a 'Parking assist' system, then make good use of it. However, stay focused and aware of the surroundings! Also, ensure you are fully aware of the particular system fitted, along with its use and limitations.

General practical hints and tips, continued

Safely sharing the road with horses –



- **slow right down** and be prepared to stop;
- allow **plenty of space** – both on the approach and when actually passing;
- avoid excessive noise, such as revving the engine or harsh acceleration;
- NEVER sound the horn;
- watch for and comply with any signals given by the rider(s);
- ONCE you have safely passed, accelerate gently away;
- be patient and courteous.

During the period 02/2019 to 02/2020 **1 person died**¹ and **135 were injured**¹ as a result of road incidents!

¹ More information from the British Horse Society at: www.bhs.org.uk/our-charity/press-centre/news/2020/november/road-safety-week-1

Road works (sometimes referred to as “work zones”) –



- comply with any restrictions and directions in force, including speed limits;
- maintain good levels of concentration, observation and awareness;
- watch out for any activity, such as workers and vehicles moving around;
- be aware of any road surface issues and narrow lane situations;
- show respect and consideration towards road workers, their job can be high risk!

Reduce speed, concentrate and consider the safety of others!

Mobile phone, Sat Nav and any other communication equipment –

- priority must always be given to maintaining **concentration on the driving and full control of your vehicle**;
- avoid using ‘hands-free’ when driving, you will be distracted! (refer to your business/organisation’s policy);
- hand-held mobile phones must not be used when driving¹;
- do not handle your hand-held mobile phone, when driving¹;
- avoid being distracted by the Sat Nav, or any other equipment in use.

Hand-held mobile phone use, when driving¹, has become a serious issue². **DO NOT TOUCH OR EVEN LOOK AT IT, WHEN DRIVING!** Better to put it out of sight, in fact. If you need to check it or make a call etc., find somewhere to **safely** and **legally** stop, and switch off the engine, before using it.

¹ Refer to: www.gov.uk/using-mobile-phones-when-driving-the-law

² Figures for 2019 suggest that around **420 collisions occurred**, of which **17 involved fatalities**, where mobile phone use was a factor!

General practical hints and tips, continued



Emergency vehicles – such vehicles showing blue lights and possibly using audible warning equipment should be given priority. However, you should not put yourself or other road users at risk because of your actions. Early recognition of an emergency vehicle approaching is key, in order to allow for effective and timely actions. The problem is that many drivers play their in-vehicle entertainment equipment so loudly, that they are not able to hear an emergency vehicle approaching until it is reasonably close. Effective observation should include using all our senses to gather as much information as possible. By keeping the radio or CD player volume down a little, you will enhance your ability to hear an emergency vehicle approaching, possibly even before it comes into view; this in turn, might allow you to plan in advance and make way, as necessary. It is also essential to make good use of all mirrors and maintain situational awareness throughout the journey.

Drivers in the emergency services are trained to manage traffic situations, but this still requires the cooperation of other road users:

- drivers should DO ALL that is reasonable to assist the emergency services and make way;
- drivers should NOT put themselves or other road users at risk, or commit road traffic offences.

Good levels of concentration, observation and awareness, as well as planning and keeping space around the vehicle (particularly forward spacing in stationary queues and from stop lines at traffic lights), should provide early recognition and the ability to respond accordingly. Any actions taken should be controlled and calmly done, avoiding any sudden braking or change of position. Signal your intentions, which will help the emergency vehicle driver to plan their positioning and route.

Always consider and allow for the possibility of other emergency vehicles approaching, after the initial vehicle has passed.

There are other emergency vehicles that may display different colour beacons, or only have alternating flashing headlights when responding to an emergency. Some emergency vehicles are unmarked with built-in blue lights. **View the video using the link below for more general information and advice¹**
Green flashing lights - can be displayed on a vehicle being used by a medical practitioner (Doctor), responding to an emergency.

Recognise the situation early, stay calm and try to safely make way for the emergency vehicle (s)

¹ <https://blog.motoringassist.com/driving-tips-and-advice/general-driving-tips/blue-light-aware/>

General practical hints and tips, continued

Dealing with vehicle breakdowns – the likelihood of breakdowns will be reduced by ensuring the vehicle is regularly checked and serviced. Things can still go wrong, of course, for example, a puncture.

Whatever the problem, safety must be the priority! If possible, try to get the vehicle off the road, without putting yourself at risk by doing so. Should you be unable to get the vehicle off the road, try to warn other road users by displaying hazard warning lights, and/or amber beacons, if fitted. Consider placing a warning triangle at least 45 metres behind your vehicle, on the same side of the road. But do not put yourself at risk while placing it. **DO NOT** attempt to place a warning triangle on a motorway! (refer to page 41), and be very cautious on other roads with potentially fast-moving traffic.

Stay away from the vehicle and ensure any passengers do the same, if there is a danger from other traffic. Never stand between the broken-down vehicle and approaching traffic (see page 41 re- procedure on motorways).

Call for help, (refer to your business/organisation's procedure). Some employers advise against attempting any minor repairs, including changing a wheel, on health and safety grounds. In any case, you should **NOT** attempt any repairs whatsoever on motorways!

Consider safety above everything else!

As with all aspects of driving, definitive advice can be obtained from the current Highway Code. Also, see Appendix 1 'Emergency Kit'

Driving off-road –

If you are required to drive 'off-road', you should receive specific training and support. However, below are a few points for consideration:

- ensure you are familiar with the vehicle and all controls, referring to the vehicle handbook for specific advice and information;
- make sure you know how to get the maximum safety and flexibility from the vehicle by appropriate use of controls, gears and systems available;
- carefully scan the situation and the terrain you intend to drive over, with special care taken when dealing with steep gradients and soft surfaces;
- when driving diagonally downhill, look for an escape route in the event of the vehicle starting to lose balance, whether due to hitting something or to the angle, which, if not corrected, could result in it overturning;
- corner at a steady speed, do not rush steering actions, especially when the wheels are locked with the transmission (Differential locked), which will enhance stability;
- knowing the vehicle's capability and more importantly, its limitations, is essential in order to maintain safety;
- never expect the vehicle to do more than it is clearly capable of;
- before returning onto the road, check around the vehicle, for example, light lenses may be covered with mud or tyre damage may have occurred;
- ensure the systems are changed to on-road settings, as appropriate.

Remember – off-road vehicles often have a higher – centre of gravity and dual-purpose tyres, both of which can seriously affect stability and grip when driving on-road, particularly in wet or icy conditions!

As always, safety must be the priority!

Recommended reading and sources of information

Publications for drivers –

- The Highway Code (www.tsoshop.co.uk/) or to view online at: www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code
- Know your traffic signs (www.tsoshop.co.uk/) or at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/know-your-traffic-signs
- Roadcraft – The Police Driver’s Handbook (Oct 2020) ISBN 9780117083783 (www.tsoshop.co.uk/)
- The official DVSA guide to DRIVING - the essential skills (www.dsabooks.co.uk)

The above publications can usually be purchased from all leading book shops or ordered online from TSO (The Stationery Office). Some can also be viewed online.

Publications for managers and drivers –

- Driving at Work – published April 2014 by the HSE INDG382 (www.hse.gov.uk)
- Driving a van (www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-a-van#van-maintenance) Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).
- Van best practice (www.gov.uk/government/news/vosa-launches-van-best-practice-guide)
- RoSPA¹ (www.rospace.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/)
- www.fleetnews.co.uk/fleet-management

The above publications provide essential information and guidance for those responsible for managing work-related road risk and can be ordered or downloaded.

A few useful road safety websites –

- www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence
- www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency
- www.gov.uk/government/.../driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency
- www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety (Health & Safety Executive)
- www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2019
- www.grahamfeest.com (Road Safety Consultant)
- www.iamroadsmart.com
- www.rospace.com/
- www.rospace.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/employers/work-own-vehicles.pdf
- www.adlv.co.uk (Association of Driving Licence Verification)
- <http://arrm.org.uk/> (Association for Road Risk Management)
- www.brake.org.uk (Road safety charity). Follow link - info & resources, then employer’s professional resources.
- www.fta.co.uk (Freight Transport Association)

¹ Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

Appendix 1

Definitions –

Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) – sensors detect an obstruction ahead and if the driver doesn't respond, braking will be automatically applied to either avoid the collision or, at least, reduce the impact.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) – under emergency braking, the system should prevent the wheels from completely locking-up, allowing directional control (steering) to be maintained to a degree. However, do not assume stopping distances will improve. ABS can also sometimes operate when braking firmly on loose or slippery surfaces. It is worth remembering that ABS can only work efficiently if tyre grip and friction with the road surface is maintained. When braking in an emergency, the clutch pedal should be depressed at the same time, otherwise engine compression will potentially affect the operation of the ABS.

Electronic Stability Programme or Control (ESP or ESC) – often works with the ABS system and under adverse conditions helps to maintain vehicle stability when braking abruptly, cornering or steering sharply. The system will apply or release braking on individual wheels, depending on the forces and movements being monitored.

Traction Control or Acceleration Skid Control (TCS or ASR) – helps to maintain tyre grip, when pulling away or accelerating firmly, especially on slippery or very smooth surfaces.

There are other systems which often form part of the above, such as Emergency Brake Assist and Electronic Brake Force Distribution (EBA & EBFD). Drivers should always refer to the vehicle handbook for specific guidance.

None of the above systems will change the laws of physics and so drivers, whenever possible, should always try to drive in such a way as to avoid these systems being activated.

Parking Assist – helps maintain control when manoeuvring in confined spaces. Some systems allow the vehicle to partly control itself during these manoeuvres. As with all systems and driving aids, refer to the vehicle's handbook for information. Also, always consider '*driver responsibility*'.

Stop/start – reduces fuel consumption and emissions when stationary in queues of traffic. Once the vehicle is stopped, and assuming the stop is likely to be more than just a few seconds, the driver should keep the brake pedal depressed, select neutral and then take the foot off the clutch pedal. The engine will stop running until the clutch pedal is depressed again, which will then re-start the engine.

However, there are slight operational variations from model to model and there are, of course, differences with vehicles with an automatic transmission.

Stop/start systems monitor, for example, the battery, and whether any auxiliary equipment is switched on; it will not always operate under certain conditions. The system may also have an on/off switch.

Specific advice regarding the operating procedure should be obtained from the vehicle's handbook.

Urban Road – within an area of population of 10,000 or more (Some stats are based on urban/rural areas).

Built-up roads – refers to roads with a speed limit of 40mph or less.

Non built-up roads – refers to roads with a speed limit above 40mph, excluding motorways.

Dual carriageway – has a central reservation (something physical), such as kerb, grass, hedging or barrier.

Appendix 1, continued

Vehicle Identification Plate (VIN Plate) – usually positioned in the engine compartment or just inside one of the door pillars. The weights noted will vary depending on the vehicle.

Example:



2800kg = Gross Vehicle Weight (GVW) or Maximum Authorised Mass (MAM).

3500kg = Gross Train Weight (GTW) or Maximum Authorised Mass with trailer.

1400kg = Maximum front axle weight.

1550kg = Maximum rear axle weight.

The weights shown on the VIN plate must never be exceeded!

Emergency Kit –

Carrying an emergency kit may be useful, although the contents will vary slightly depending on the time of year and expected weather and road conditions.

Routine kit –

- standard tools/jack supplied with the vehicle (use subject to business/organisation's policy);
- warning triangle;
- fluorescent/reflective jacket;
- first aid kit (and fire extinguisher, if applicable);
- substantial torch;
- waterproof coat or jacket;
- map book (in the event of Sat Nav issues or alternative route needed);
- list of useful contact phone numbers (in case your mobile goes down);
- plastic bottle of drinking water (which should be replaced frequently, if not used).
- spare bulb kit for the vehicle (depending on policy).

Additional items in severe weather conditions –

- de-icer and ice scraper;
- warm clothing and boots or, at least, sturdy shoes;
- blanket;
- a shovel (in case you get stuck in snow);
- flask of tea or coffee along with a snack (in case you get stuck somewhere or the vehicle breaks down).

Make sure your mobile phone is fully charged, if you are unable to charge it in the vehicle. Even if you can so charge it, you may lose that ability in the event of a breakdown involving electrical power loss in the vehicle.

Better to be prepared!

Appendix 2

First Aid training –

Many employers and organisations provide in-house first aid training for their staff. However, there are many external training providers for members of the public, employees and volunteers.

There are many organisations and individuals offering first aid training. Noted below are two such providers:

St John Ambulance -
www.sja.org.uk/sja/training-courses.aspx

Red Cross -
www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk

Advanced Driving –

Have you ever considered taking a driving 'A' level? The following organisations provide advice and support for members of the public wishing to achieve an 'Advanced Driving or Riding Standard'.

IAM – RoadSmart
www.iamroadsmart.com

ROSPA – Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Advanced Drivers and Riders – RoADAR)
www.rospa.com/safety-training/on-road/advanced/

Both organisations have local groups around the country providing advice, training and support. They also organise social events, guest speakers and much more for their members. Joining a group does not mean you are obliged to take a test. However, should you wish to take an advanced test, members will help you to prepare for it. Have a look at their websites and should you decide to join or simply go to one of their meetings, you would be made welcome.

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