



# How 2 deal with....

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## Driving Alone

Well done. You have passed your Driving Test. Now you have to drive on your own...Some persons prefer to use their first trip after passing their test, with the help of their parents, big brothers, sisters, or friends sitting in with them to give moral support.

This is fine, but there will still be a time when you will have to drive alone.

### How about displaying 'P' plates

They show other road users you're new on the road and most people will give you a bit more time and consideration.

Try to choose a journey with some degree of knowledge of the roads. Don't fear it. Perhaps you can drive around the area where your Driving Instructor has been taking you for your driving lessons. You may prefer to stick to a route you have planned beforehand, or you may choose to keep following the road ahead until you are well and truly in a new area.

Always keep an atlas in the car and an A-Z of the district where you live. Then if you get lost, you can use them to find your way back.

If you get lost, don't panic. Wait until you find a convenient stopping place then use your maps to find out where you are, and how to get back to where you wish to go. If you are really lost, ask a policeman or traffic warden. Another good choice is to call into a Service station or to ask a shopkeeper.

Try and ensure you have enough petrol for your journey, if not remember to fill up early.

Let someone know your estimated time of arrival.

If you are travelling at night, or even in the daytime, in some situations it is wise to lock your car doors.

Why not rent a personal Mobile phone. There are many types available, some of which are relatively inexpensive with cheap rental. The calls may be expensive but the idea is to only use them in an emergency.

## Driving in Fog

Driving in heavy fog is like driving with a blindfold on. Statistically it's the most dangerous driving hazard in existence. No matter how important the trip is, it's not worth gambling your life. By far the safest thing to do if you run into fog is to move well off the road and wait for the fog to lift. However, the simple and safe solution is not always the most practical, so read on to find out what driving procedures should be followed in fog.



### What is fog?

Fog and mist are both made of tiny water droplets suspended in air. The difference between them is the density. Fog is denser so contains more water droplets than mist. For pilots, if you cannot see further than 1000 meters, then it is called fog. For most people including motorists though, visibility

has to be less than 200 metres before it is classed as fog.

### Driving in Fog

- Take particular care when driving in fog, especially at night. Fog can be patchy, going from a light mist to a thick blanket in an instant. Obviously, the faster you drive in these conditions, the less time you will have to avoid danger.
- As you enter fog, check your mirrors and slow down. Use your foot brake lightly so that your lights warn following drivers.
- Use dipped headlights and fog lights if visibility is reduced so you can be seen. But remember it's an offence to use high-intensity rear fog lights in clear conditions (that is, if visibility is greater than 100 metres). Make sure your main beams aren't turned on by accident. Main beams direct light up into the fog, making it difficult for you to see. Dipped headlights direct light down onto the road and help other drivers to see you.
- Keep an eye on your speedometer because studies show that some drivers acclimate themselves to foggy conditions and unconsciously increase their speed over time. If you can see less than 12 metres (40 feet) ahead, your speed needs to be reduced to less than 20mph.
- Use your windscreen wipers and demisters.
- Beware of other drivers who are not using their headlights.
- If you park your car on a main road, try and get your vehicle completely off the road. You could be rear-ended!

## Driving in Snow

**Nobody likes driving in the snow** and dealing with the delays that result. If you must travel in the snow, taking these steps should increase your chances of getting home again safely.

There's nothing more beautiful than a blanket of new-falling snow. Unless of course, you're driving in it. Winter snow and ice pose special problems for even the most experienced driver. Take a few moments to learn these basic rules of winter driving safety.

- **Make sure** that your car is well maintained, plan your route carefully and check the latest weather forecast.
- **Keep a full petrol tank.** It may be necessary to change routes or turn back during a bad snow storm.
- It's also a good idea to keep a **breakdown kit** (warning triangle, torch, blanket, and chocolate bar) in your car in case of emergency. Membership of a breakdown service is also advised.
- **The first fall of snow is very dangerous** if the roads have not been gritted. Once gritted, there should be enough grip for careful driving, but it's when snow becomes compacted and refrozen overnight that the greatest care must be taken. Un-gritted roads will become impassable by most vehicles and even gritted surfaces can remain extremely slippery.
- **Keep your windshield and windows clear.** Keep a ice scraper handy, and use the car defroster or a clean cloth to keep the windows free of mist
- Allow more distance between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead. At least **TEN** seconds.
- **If your vehicle skids,** don't hit the brakes! Ease off the accelerator and steer slightly into the direction of the skid until you gain control. Turn with steady rather than jerky motions.
- An equally common problem is getting **stuck in the snow.** Your wheels spin but your car goes nowhere. This is when emergency equipment is most important. Don't continue to spin your wheels; you'll only wind up in a deeper rut. Instead, pour sand, salt or gravel around the drive wheels to give them something to grab onto and improve traction (An old carpet is ideal). You can also shovel snow away from the wheels and out from under the car to clear a pathway.
- **Ice is even more dangerous,** because the thicker it is, the harder it is to see. When running or standing water freezes on the road, it forms black ice. This can linger in the shadows cast by trees and buildings throughout an otherwise sunny day. So if there has been a sharp frost overnight, be careful, especially when driving through shadows that keep the sun off corners and roundabouts.

# Driving in Floods

## Floods are Deceptive, Dangerous and Deadly

When a large amount of rain falls over a short period of time, ditches, rivers and lakes become filled with water and overflow into low-lying or poorly drained areas. In addition to the high frequency of excessive rainfall events, the impacts of flooding in Britain may increase as the country's urban development grows.



There are many types of flood that can occur around the country:-

- River Floods: -These floods occur when surface water flow rises and channels overflow.
- Coastal Floods: - These floods occur when coastal areas of land become inundated with sea water.
- Urban Floods :-Built-up areas can experience up to 6 times greater run off than rural areas due to abundant concrete and tarmac surface cover, therefore heavy rainfall can turn streets into swiftly moving rivers of rainfall runoff.
- Flash Floods: - When precipitation in a particular watershed is channelled quickly to the outflow point of the basin, a sudden increase in discharge can be caused. These floods usually occur within 6 hours of a large rainfall event.

## Useful tips for Drivers in flooded areas: -

✚ Escape from a sinking car

### Escape from A Sinking Car

In deep water you will have to get out and swim to safety.

If the windows are electric open them immediately. We are told that if the windows are crank operated, wait until the car is almost filled with water, then crank the windows down to swim out.

**However**, an experiment was shown on television to see whether it was better to stay in a sinking car until the pressure was equal inside and out and then escape, or whether to open a window and get out as soon as possible. The result was that to stay in the car to allow the pressure to equalise as it filled with water, opening the windows at the last moment nearly got them drowned, as the force of the water was even too great for them to overcome without severe difficulty. When they opened the windows straight away before the car started sinking and left the car and swam away from it there was no problem, and the experiments showed that there is ample time before a car sinks to do this.

So open the windows as soon as you can and hold on to a part of the car such as the steering wheel. After the car fills with water, swim through the windows.

- If you live in an area where flooding may occur, move your vehicle to higher ground if flooding is expected. As well as the risk of damage to your vehicle by leaving it in a flooded area, it may also be a hazard or cause obstruction to emergency services.

- Do not drive unless your journey is absolutely necessary.
- If you have to drive in a flooded area take care. Do not attempt to drive through water if you are unsure of the depth.
- Don't drive through fast-moving water, such as at a flooded bridge approach - your car could be swept away
- Drive slowly and steadily to avoid creating a bow wave, and allow on-coming traffic to pass first.
- Keep the engine revving by slipping the clutch otherwise water in the exhaust could stall the engine.
- Modern vehicles are fitted with catalytic converters in the exhaust system. The catalyst normally works at high temperatures and may crack if it is submerged in water. Replacement catalysts are expensive.
- The air intake on many modern cars is located low down at the front of the engine bay and it only takes a small quantity of water sucked into the engine to cause serious damage. All engines are affected but turbo-charged and diesel engines are most vulnerable.
- Be considerate - driving through water at speeds above a slow crawl can result in water being thrown onto pavements, soaking pedestrians or cyclists. You could face a fine of £2,500, with the extra punishment of between three and nine penalty points if the police believe you were driving without reasonable consideration to other road users
- If your car stalls, immediately abandon it and climb to higher ground. Watch your footing. Just six inches of fast-moving flood water can sweep a person off his or her feet.
- Test your brakes as soon as you can after driving through water.
- If the vehicle has been stood in the flooded area for any prolonged period contact your local dealer for further advice.
- If the vehicle has only been in a flood for a short period, drive with extreme caution and take the car to be checked at the earliest opportunity.

Check out the  [Environment Agency Website](#) for the latest Flood Warnings.

## Driving on Motorways



Many new drivers worry about their first time alone on a motorway.

Motorways are safer, than normal roads, but they are also faster. Sometimes things do happen quicker, and you have to concentrate.

When you are on the main carriageway of the motorway, remain in the first lane until you get used to the speed. If you need to overtake you must return to the first lane as soon as possible but only if it's safe to do so! Many motorists try to stay in the overtaking lanes for normal driving. This is bad practice and causes inconvenience and tailbacks and annoys other users.

There are two types of motorway, rural and urban. You need to think of them as quiet and busy. Quiet motorways are boring, so you need to concentrate on the road and traffic conditions way ahead. Busy motorways need your attention all around you rather than just focused ahead.

Motorways are like dual carriageways only safer. They are safer because every motorway user is travelling in the same direction and at similar speeds. Another reason why motorways are safer is due to the fact that traffic is restricted to those who can make best use of it i.e. no pedestrians, cyclists, moped, no L drivers (except HGV), agricultural vehicles, and animals. Motorways are also safer because there are no sharp bends, no oncoming traffic, no right turn, and no roundabouts. The lanes are always wide, and well marked, and are usually straight for long distances.

Remember you are not allowed to reverse, cross the central reservation, or to drive in the wrong direction on motorways.

On urban (busy) motorways each lane of traffic has an electronic signal system which applies to traffic in each lane. Care needs to be taken to make sure you know the various signals and what they mean. Motorway signs are being used with increasing frequency to warn you of hold ups or accidents ahead.

- **When** joining a motorway you usually join from a roundabout or a main road by means of a slip road. This leads to an acceleration lane. The rule here is not to interfere with the traffic already on the motorway. Make sure your speed is the same as the traffic already on the motorway. Vehicles already on the motorway usually realise you need to join the main carriageway and they try and move over to the other lane. (This is not always possible if the traffic is busy). This makes room for you to join the first lane of the motorway. Mirrors and signals must be used correctly to avoid interfering with the following traffic. Full and proper observation as you enter usually involves looking over your right shoulder as well as using your door mirrors. Don't rely on mirrors alone.
- **To** get off the motorway the normal procedure is to look for the first advance warning sign (1 mile from the exit). This sign gives the exit number and the road number.

At half a mile from the exit a second sign identifies the towns for the exit. Then at 300 yards from the deceleration lane there is a three line countdown marker, (at this point you should begin to signal left to say you are turning off - but don't slow down yet), followed by the 200 yd and 100 yd marker signs. Only when you have crossed into the deceleration lane should you begin to slow down.



- **Once** you get back on to ordinary roads again, you need to watch your speed until you are acclimatised to the new lower speeds on the road. Don't forget too, that these roads are likely to have roundabouts, oncoming traffic, and sharp bends on them.

#### • **Breaking Down on the Motorway**

Hopefully if your vehicle is well maintained and fuelled up, you should be in no danger of breaking down on the motorway, but we all know that even a car which is only a few hours old can still break down.

If you do break down then the hard shoulder is there to help you. When you are stopping on the hard shoulder (remember, only use the hard shoulder in an emergency), try to stop at one of the emergency telephones. This will save you time if you have to walk to the phone. Switch on your hazard lights and try to stop as near to the left as possible. If you have passengers get them out of the car, off the hard shoulder, and as far away from danger as possible. Do this before you go to use the phone. The phone is always within half a mile from any spot on the motorway. Look at the arrows on the nearest post, *like the one in the picture on the left*. These will tell you the direction to walk to the nearest phone. The phones are free to use, and connect you straight to the police who control that stretch of motorway. When you return to your vehicle to wait for help, do not get back into the car, but stay on the embankment, or as far away from the traffic as possible. If you have a mobile phone its O.K. to use this initially, but the police do prefer you to use the roadside phones to confirm your exact location.

Remember that motorways are safe, but they are fast, you need to concentrate because things happen quicker than a normal road.

#### • **Lane Discipline**

When driving along motorways always remain in the left lane unless you are travelling faster than traffic ahead of you and it is safe to move over to the right lanes. If you use these lanes you must return to the left lane as soon as it is safe to do so.

It is bad practice to try and stay in the overtaking lanes for normal driving. This annoys other users because they can see that you are avoiding the empty lanes on the left, or never using your mirrors to see the tailbacks that you are causing. Remember the two-second rule. Four seconds will give you time to react easily and you will be more relaxed.



## Aggressive drivers

As a driver, you actually have a lot of control over the risks you face on the road. Knowing the best way to deal with the everyday situations you encounter will help ensure you reach your destination safely.

Here are some of the most important driving techniques and habits you can (and should) adopt.

We explain how you can:

- Protect yourself from aggressive drivers.
- Apply the 2-second rule to stay a safe distance behind the car in front, plus other critical vehicle-handling techniques.
- Not drive impaired - When most of us think of impaired driving, we think of people who drink and drive. But anything that decreases your ability to judge the situation around you and to react appropriately can be dangerous. And the problem with being impaired is that we often don't realise the extent of our own impairment
- Watch out at junctions. Share the road with lorries, and keep clear of their large blind spots.
- Pull over for a fire engines, ambulance or police cars.

### Don't be an aggressive driver

Whether you're doing the daily commute, seeing the sights on a day trip, or just running to the local grocery for a pint of milk, here are ways to keep calm on the road:

- Be realistic about your travel time. Allow time for possible delays because of traffic, construction or bad weather. If you're going to be later than you expected - deal with it. Take a deep breath and accept the delay. **Better to be late in this world, than early in the next.**
- Set a good example to other drivers and to the other people in your vehicle. This is especially important if some of your passengers are children who will learn their attitude towards driving from you.
- Give other drivers the benefit of the doubt. They might be from out of town, in a hurry, or distracted by things that have nothing to do with you.
- Slow down and keep your distance.

## Emergency vehicles

You could encounter an emergency vehicle at any time while on the road. It's important that you know what to do as delaying emergency vehicles could cost lives.

The Highway Code Rule 194 says :- You should look and listen for ambulances, fire engines, police or other emergency vehicles using flashing blue, red or green lights, headlights or sirens. When one approaches do not panic. Consider the route of the emergency vehicle and take appropriate action to let it pass. If necessary, pull to the side of the road and stop, but do not endanger other road users.

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**Different types of emergency vehicles include:-**

- Police
- Fire
- Ambulance Services
- Mines Rescue Service
- Mountain Rescue Teams
- Coastguard Service
- Bomb Disposal Teams
- National Blood Service
- Human Tissue for Transport Vehicles
- Life Boat Launching Vehicles



**If an emergency vehicle approaches using flashing blue lights, headlights and/or sirens, follow these tips to help it to get through safely:**

- Look and listen.
- Signal your intentions by using your indicators or hand signals.
- Pull in safely and be aware of pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles around you.
- Pull in as far as you can.
- Leave a gap large enough for the emergency vehicle to get through.
- Stay alert - more vehicles may be coming.
- Stay calm.
- **If you're a pedestrian, keep off the road.**

All vehicles on both sides of the road must slow down or even stop to leave a clear path, but do not endanger other road users. Don't stop in the middle of a junction. (If you're blocking the path of the emergency vehicle, you may have to turn the corner to get out of the way.)