

Safer Driver

Handbook



Driving towards a safer
and greener environment.



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Introduction

This booklet provides useful information to help keep you safe on the road, whether you are driving for business or leisure.

Between a quarter and a third of road deaths and injuries happen on work related journeys; that equated to more than 60,000 injuries with 500 fatalities each year, so particular care should be taken on business journeys.

Regardless of who owns the vehicle, the driver is legally responsible for it while driving and must have the correct licence and ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and taxed with an MOT and insurance.

This handbook provides practical advice and information on how to keep yourself, your passengers and your vehicle as safe as possible.



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The Driver

Keep your vehicle maintained

Keeping your vehicle in good running order will help keep you safe on the road and reduce your risk of breakdown.

Maintenance of the vehicle is the driver's responsibility, regardless of who owns it. Make sure you refer to the manufacturer's handbook for servicing and don't attempt to do any work on the brakes or steering without getting it checked by a qualified mechanic.

Your handbook should illustrate the location of the main items to check every week and before a major journey. The following mnemonic (POWDER) may help you remember to check.

Petrol (or diesel)

Have you enough fuel to complete the journey, or at least to reach a filling station? Fill up regularly and ensure you use the correct fuel. A spare fuel can is a fire risk, so we recommend that you do not carry one.

Oil (including engine oil, brakes, power steering)

Check the dipstick when the engine is cold. Too much or too little oil will cause damage. Cheap oil is a false economy, as is delaying an oil change. Check brake fluid and power steering fluid levels. If the levels drop sharply or frequently, the systems must be checked for faults or leaks.





Water (including radiator and screen wash)

Check the radiator reservoir when the engine is cold. Top up if necessary with the correct mixture of water and anti-freeze (usually 50:50). It is illegal to drive without working screen-washers, so keep them topped up. Add some screen-wash fluid to help clear grease and prevent freezing.

Damage

Carry out a visual check of the vehicle, looking for any obvious visible damage or defects e.g. loose trim, wheel covers etc or anything that could make the vehicle illegal or unsafe to drive.

Electrics (including lights and battery)

All lights fitted to the vehicle must be working, clean and adjusted to prevent dazzle. Check all your warning lights and instruments work too. It is a good idea to keep a spare set of bulbs and fuses in the car; replace blown ones promptly. Battery terminals should be tight and greased to protect against corrosion. Make sure the battery is securely clamped in place.

Rubber (including tyres, wipers, drive belts)

Tyres must be properly inflated and free from cuts and any other defects. Check pressures when they are cold including the spare. Refer to your handbook. Keep valve caps firmly screwed on. Look for wear and damage to tyres. Any worn or damaged tyre should be replaced before it reaches the legal limit.

- The grooves of the tread pattern must be at least 1.6mm deep throughout a continuous band in the central $\frac{3}{4}$ of the breadth of the tread round the entire circumference of the tyre.

RoSPA recommends that tyres are changed once the tread reaches 3mm in depth.

- Use the Tread Wear Indicators moulded into the grooves round the tyre to help judge when to change them. Uneven wear could indicate a fault.
- A tyre must be replaced if it has a cut in excess of 25mm or 10% of the section width of the tyre, whichever is greater, measured in any direction on the outside of the tyre and deep enough to reach the ply or cord.



Clean the wiper blades to prevent smearing and replace them when worn. Check the engine drive belts (e.g. fan belt) for tension and signs of wear. The battery may not charge correctly with a worn or loose belt.

Learning to change a wheel may save you a lot of time, frustration and expense. Read the handbook for your car and try the tools at home so you will know what to do. Car maintenance classes are often held at local colleges.

How well can you see

The Highway Code states: "You **MUST** be able to read a vehicle number plate, in good daylight, from a distance of 20 metres (or 20.5 metres where the old style number plate is used). If you need to wear glasses (or contact lenses) to do this, you **MUST** wear them at all times while driving".

Roadside enforcement of eyesight standards

The police will take immediate action against motorists who fail roadside eye tests. The police are able to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) electronically with details of eyesight test failures and a notice of revocation of the licence will be issued to the motorist within a matter of hours.

Choose your glasses carefully

- Always make sure that your glasses or contact lenses are clean.
- It is a good idea to carry a spare pair in case of loss or breakage.
- Choose frames for maximum all round vision. Thin metal frames are best.
- Choose your lenses carefully; plastic is tough and has a good resistance to impact, is much lighter than ordinary glass and is well suited to metal frames.
- Anti reflection coated lenses for night driving are best.
- Never use tinted or sunglasses at night, in conditions of poor visibility, heavy rain, fog or snow showers.

To Aid Clearer Vision

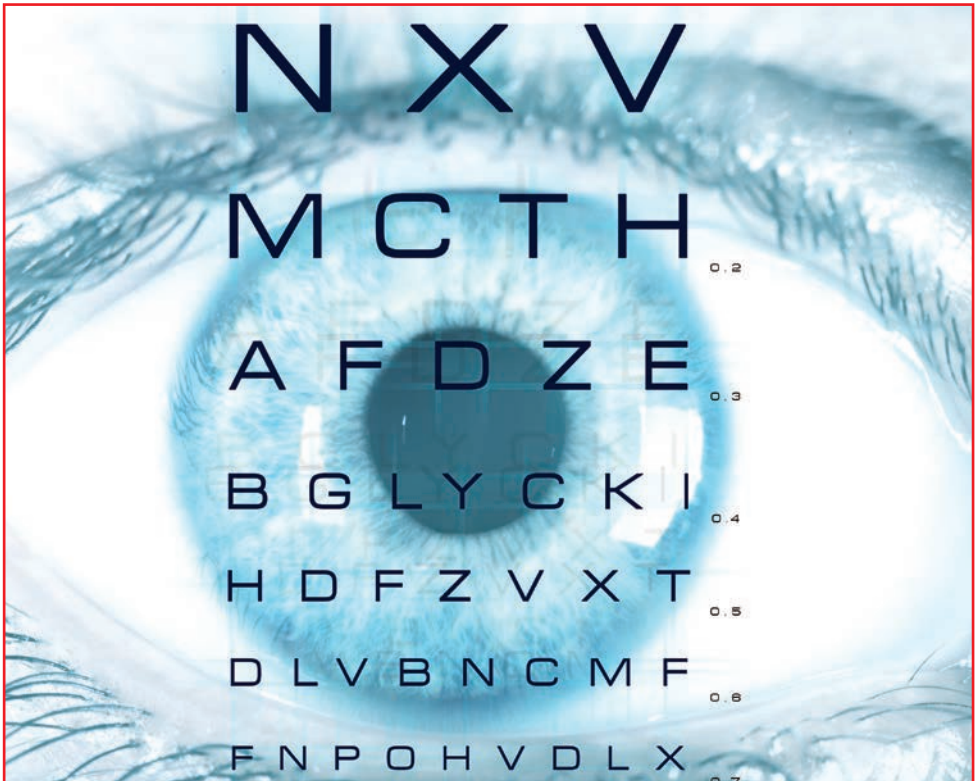
- Keep the windscreen and windows clean both inside and out and clear of unnecessary stickers
- Top up your windscreen washer bottle
- Replace worn windscreen wiper blades
- Don't spray the windscreen or windows with tints
- Check that all mirrors are clean and correctly adjusted before driving
- Check your lights are clean, in good working order and carry spare bulbs

Remember:

- Alcohol can reduce your vision, as can tiredness – particularly on motorways. If you're taking any medicine or drugs, check with your doctor that it is safe to drive.
- You should have an eye examination carried out by an optician every two years, or as advised by your optician. An eye test could pick up on a condition before you notice any changes in your vision.

You MUST inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) about any health condition that may affect your ability to drive safely. Use the A TO Z of medical conditions on the Directgov website to see if you need to contact the DVLA about your medical condition.

www.direct.gov.uk



Seat belt safety

Wearing seat belts saves lives and reduces the risk of serious injury in an accident. The law requires everyone to wear a seat belt if one is available, unless you are exempt.

Whose responsibility is it for ensuring that the occupants wear the correct seat belts?

	Front seat	Rear seat	Whose responsibility
Driver	Seat belt must be worn if fitted	—	Driver
Child under 3 years of age	Correct child restraint must be used	Correct child restraint must be used. If one is not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained	Driver
Child aged 3 – 11 and under 1.35 metres (approx 4ft 5 inches) in height	Correct child restraint must be used	Correct child restraint must be used where seat belts fitted.*	Driver
Child aged 12 – 13 or younger child 1.35 metres (approx 4ft 5 inches) in height	Seat belt must be worn if available	Adult seat belt must be worn if available	Driver
Adult passengers aged 14 and over	Seat belt must be worn if available	Seat belt must be worn if available	Passenger

*Must use adult belt in rear seat if correct child restraint is not available

- A) In a taxi
- B) For a short distance in an unexpected necessity
- C) If two occupied child seats prevent fitment of a third

Who is exempt from wearing a seat belt?

A driver may be exempted from wearing a seat belt on medical grounds. If this is the case a doctor will issue the driver with a "Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing". This will have certain conditions that the driver must abide by;

- Keep in your vehicle
- Show to the police if stopped

The driver should also inform their vehicle insurer that they have been issued with the certificate at the earliest opportunity. A list of other times when a driver would be exempted from wearing a seat belt can be found at **www.direct.gov.uk**



Child restraints

- You **MUST NOT** use a rear facing car seat fitted with an airbag unless the airbag/s have been switched off.
- Ensure that you use the correct child restraint
- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions when fitting
- Check that it carries the United Nations ECE R44.03 or 04 mark
- We strongly recommend that you try before you buy as there is no such thing as a universal child seat, this includes seats fitted with ISOFIX
- Avoid buying a second hand child seat as you cannot be certain of its history. It may have been involved in an accident and any damage may not be visible.

The correct type of restraint will depend on the weight, age and height of the child.

	Seat Facing	Weight and Age
Baby seats	Rear facing	For children up to 13kgs (approx 6 – 12 months)
Child seats	Forward facing	For children up to 9kgs to 18kgs (approx 9 months to 4 years)
Booster seats		For children 15kgs and up (from approx 4 years)
Booster cushions		For children from 22kgs (from approx 6 years)

A website you may find useful is **www.childcarseats.org.uk**

In a crash at 30mph, if you are unrestrained, you will hit an object in front of you with a force of between 30 and 60 times your own body weight.

Head restraints

Head restraints are provided for safety not for comfort

- A head restraint prevents the occupants head from being violently jerked backwards during an impact, reducing the risk of severe injuries to the neck such as whiplash.
- Anyone sitting in a seat with a head restraint fitted should ensure that the top of the rigid part of the restraint is positioned at or above eye level and as close to the back of the head as possible.
- No head restraint should have unpadded parts which a rear seat passenger may hit if thrown forward in an accident.

Air bags

Even the best design of seat belt does not prevent all head and chest injuries in serious frontal crashes. This is where airbags help by creating an energy absorbing cushion between an occupant's body and the steering wheel, dashboard or windscreen.

In moderate or severe frontal crashes, sensors signal inflators to fill the bags with gas. The bags fill in a fraction of a second and begin deflating instantly as they cushion occupants. The speed and force of inflation may occasionally cause injuries, mostly minor abrasions or bruises.

Due to the high speed and force of airbags when they are deployed the following recommendations should be followed.

- Seat belts must be used.
- Choose a seating position that does not put your face or chest close to the steering wheel or dashboard.
- Ensure position of the head restraint rests the back of the head, not the neck.
- Do not use rearward facing child seats with air bags.
- It is safer for children to travel in the rear of the car.
- Disconnecting or switching off an air bag should be a last resort.

- Drivers should use the ten to two or quarter to three position hand position to avoid having an arm/s over the steering wheel air bag in case it deploys.
- If the steering wheel is adjustable, point the airbag towards your chest rather than your face and make sure you can see all the instruments clearly.
- Never place or attach anything over or near an air bag.

If side air bags are fitted then these are there to protect the occupants from a side impact and the air bags will be located either in the side structure of the car or in the seats. These additional recommendations should also be followed.

- Ensure that the occupants are seated correctly.
- Do not fit seat covers if air bags are located in the seat.



Mobile phones

A mobile phone can greatly enhance your security and peace of mind, especially if you are travelling alone, but they can also be a serious distraction for drivers.

Should you break down on a motorway, roadside emergency phones, sited approximately every mile along the hard shoulder, are the best facility for obtaining help because the operator will know immediately your precise location. Many busy stretches of motorways are also monitored by the Highways Agency or the police on CCTV cameras.

Using a mobile phone when driving will distract your attention from the road. Switch it off, let the passenger use it or find a safe, legal and convenient place to park before using the phone. It is illegal to use a hand held mobile phone and similar devices (that must be held at some point) while driving.

You **MUST** not use these

- To make or receive calls
- To send or receive picture and text messages
- To access the internet
- When stopped at traffic lights
- When queuing in traffic
- Or if supervising a learner driver

Most mobile phones have a voice mail or call divert facility so messages can be left. You can then return the calls when it is safe to do so. If you call someone and they are driving finish the conversation as soon as possible and speak later, by carrying on with the conversation you are putting them at risk and encouraging them to break the law.

Although you may think that a hands free phone will enable you to control a vehicle, it will distract your attention from the road. Responsibility for the safe control of the vehicle rests with the driver. In law you must have proper control of the vehicle at all times. If the

use of a phone affects your control of the vehicle, causes you to drive without due care and attention or causes you to drive in a careless or dangerous manner, you could be prosecuted, receive a fine, disqualification or two years in prison. If you are driving for business purposes you may also face disciplinary action from your employer.

The best thing to do to keep safe is to switch off before you drive off



Watching your speed

Driving too fast for road and traffic conditions and misjudging speed and distance are the two most common causes of collision.

Vehicles have different speed limits on different types of roads; ensure that you know the speed limit for the type of vehicle you are driving.

Cars and motorcycles (including car derived vans up to 2 tonnes maximum laden weight) are subject to the following speed limits.

Built up areas	30mph – 48km/h
Single carriageways	60mph – 96km/h
Dual carriageways	70mph – 112km/h
Motorways	70mph – 112km/h

For other classes of vehicles please refer to the most recent edition of The Highway Code or alternatively visit the Directgov website for an online version. **www.direct.gov.uk**

It is important that car drivers recognise that drivers of other types of vehicle may be subject to a lower speed on different types of road. Being aware of this can save a lot of unnecessary frustration.

A limit of 30mph/48km/h usually applies to all traffic on all roads with street lighting, unless you see signs showing otherwise.

Always drive at a speed that will allow you to stop well within the distance you can see to be clear.

Stopping distances

Stopping distances depend on:

- Concentration and observation skills.
- Careful observation gives you extra time to see, think and react to hazards and gives you more control of your driving.
- How fast you are going.
- Vision/eyesight. How far you can see ahead.
- Tiredness/fatigue/stress/drink/drugs.
- The weather and the condition of the road surface.
- The gradient of the road, level, uphill or downhill.
- The condition of your brakes and tyres.
- Your driving ability and reaction time.

Keeping a safe distance

A useful way of keeping a safe distance is to use the two – second rule. As the vehicle in front passes a fixed object (e.g. road sign or a lamp post) start saying slowly “only a fool breaks the two second rule”. If you pass the same object before you finish the saying, you’re too close. This should give you adequate time to react in good conditions. This gap should be at least doubled in the wet and increased still further in icy conditions.

Give yourself the opportunity to remain safe

Check your vehicle regularly and have it serviced according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Always make allowances for variations in the road surface, the effect of weather conditions and the possible sudden appearance of other vehicles, horses and pedestrians – especially children.



Tiredness and fatigue

Like alcohol and some other drugs, driving when you are tired reduces your concentration level and greatly increases your risk of causing a collision. Long journeys on long featureless roads such as motorways, where there is little to stimulate your attention, can increase the feeling of tiredness. If you feel drowsy, try to find somewhere safe to pull over and take a nap of between four and 20 minutes.

A nap longer than 20 minutes can develop into a full sleep and you will need longer to fully wake up and be able to continue driving.

If you're not able to find somewhere to rest, have two cups of coffee or another high caffeine drink to help you reach a place of safety for the night. This is only a short-term measure and will allow you another 40 minutes or so to get to a resting place.

A "Revive and Survive Rest" session, devised by Hertfordshire County Council, is available free of charge from our website **www.hertsdirect.org/roadsafety**. It helps drivers get the maximum benefit from a 20 minute break from driving. The recording uses pulsing tones to help you relax more deeply, and is designed to reduce tiredness, increase concentration levels and improve standards of driving.

To help prevent boredom and tiredness, try to plan your journey to include alternative roads where the scenery and traffic controls change, where speed limits vary and junctions demand your attention.

Eat light meals before and during a journey; a big spread can make you feel lethargic. Drink plenty of water during the journey, it will help reduce lethargy induced by de-hydration, and ensure that frequent breaks are taken.

A comfortable seating position is essential. If you share the driving don't be tempted to use the same seating position of the other driver, the strain on your muscles can cause fatigue.

Keep your vehicle well ventilated to prevent drowsiness and don't wear thick or tight fitting clothes.

You should avoid driving for more than 8 hours a day and take a break of at least 15 minutes every 2 hours.

You should also rest for a period of 11 hours before starting another period of driving.

There are high risk times of the day when drivers are more likely to fall asleep at the wheel. These are between midnight and 2am; 4am to 6am and between 2pm to 4pm.

Younger and less experienced drivers should take particular care in the early mornings and older drivers in the early afternoon.

Experts estimate that tired drivers cause one in five fatal crashes on motorways and other monotonous roads. Crashes caused by drivers falling asleep at the wheel tend to be high speed, because they do not brake before impact. This increases the likelihood of death or serious injury.



Coping with severe weather conditions

- Bad weather is often blamed for causing accidents, but the real cause is inappropriate driving for the conditions.
- Extreme weather conditions, either very hot or very cold, will show up any deficiencies in both driver and vehicle.

Your vehicle

- Whatever the weather, make sure that your vehicle and equipment are in good condition and serviced. See “Keep your vehicle maintained”.
- The biggest single danger to any driver is being unable to see properly. You won’t be able to make the right decisions if you can’t see the road clearly. Never start a journey before ensuring that all glass areas are clean and clear, free of frost, ice and rain. Don’t drive away until the demisters and internal heating have completed their job.

Plan your journey

- Ask yourself is the journey absolutely necessary.
- Check national and local weather forecasts.
- Tell someone of the route you are taking and your estimated time of arrival and don’t forget to inform them when you have arrived.
- If your journey is going to be a long one, consider taking food and a hot drink with you, a thick rug/warm clothing and a mobile phone that is fully charged, spare battery or an in-car charger.
- Make sure that you have plenty of fuel in case you are delayed.

When driving

- See and BE Seen. If you cannot see clearly use dipped headlights.
- Use front and rear fog lights if visibility is seriously reduced, generally when you cannot see more than 100 metres. (Remember to switch these off when visibility improves).
- Keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front. You should always be able to stop within the distance you can see to be clear.
- Don't follow the tail lights of the vehicle in front as it could lead to a false sense of security.
- When visibility is low use the edge of the carriageway, hazard lines and cats eyes as a guide.
- Be aware of your speed.
- Pay particular attention to the road surface.
- Snow/ice will greatly reduce the grip of the tyres – drive slowly in a high gear to avoid loss of traction.
- Keep your speed down where the road has been gritted, where there are wet leaves, rain, oil, loose dust or gravel and moist muddy paths.
- Keep a careful watch on other road users, especially pedestrians, horse riders and motor or pedal cyclists.



What to do if you are involved in a collision

These steps should be followed if you are involved in a collision; Stop no matter how minor you think it is, switch off your engine and if appropriate switch on your hazard lights to warn others of your presence.

Assess the situation. If anyone has been injured call the police and ambulance service as soon as possible, also call the police if the incident is blocking the road.

- You must stop and exchange details with any third parties involved. This is a legal requirement. If available use an incident report form to help you record the information that will be required by your insurers. If you think you were deliberately hit don't stop, don't go home, keep calm and if possible continue driving until you come to a busy place or where there are other people around and ask for assistance. If you are afraid to get out of your vehicle upon arrival, sound your horn and flash your lights repeatedly, you will quickly draw attention to yourself. This occurrence is rare and will often be preceded by other abnormal circumstances.
- If you are involved in a collision resulting in someone being injured, or, if you are unable to exchange particulars with the third party, you must inform the police within 24 hours.
- Give your name and the vehicle owners name and address, registration number and insurance details to anyone having reasonable grounds to require them.
- No statements admitting fault or liability should be made to a third party. The police should be given all reasonable assistance.
- You should obtain the name and address of the owner/driver of the other vehicle/s involved along with the registration number/s, and the name/s of their insurers.
- Make a record of the names and addresses of independent witnesses if there are any.
- If the police are involved you should obtain the police officer's name, number and station.

- Try to sketch or capture on photograph details of location, name and width of road, position of any traffic, skid marks, positions of road signs, traffic islands, turnings etc.
- Note the weather conditions, time of day, the quality of the road surface and lighting.
- List damage to the vehicles involved and also of any injuries to any driver, passenger or pedestrian.
- If you take pictures or record the scene on a mobile phone ensure that you can do this without causing danger to yourself or others.
- All collisions should be reported to employers, if the journey was made on company business.

Cyclists

Cyclists are particularly vulnerable on the road and drivers need to take extra care whenever cyclists are nearby.

Drivers need to pay particular attention when;

- Overtaking always give cyclists plenty of room, as much room as you would give a car.
- Changing direction, use your mirrors and check your blindspots.
- Parking, ensure it is safe to open the door by checking your mirrors and blindspots.
- Assessing the speed of cyclist's particularly at junctions, they may be travelling much faster than you think.
- Checking is it safe to go, remember look once, look twice, think bike. If possible make eye contact with the rider.
- Do not park in cycle lanes, you could be committing a road traffic offence and cyclists may be placed into a risky situation.
- You **MUST NOT** stop in the advanced stop area at traffic lights; allow cyclists time and space to move off when the green signal shows.
- Negotiating roundabouts you must give way to vehicles approaching from the right and that includes cyclists.
- On rural roads, just around the next bend could be a single cyclist or a group.
- Approaching cyclists at night use dipped headlights as you would for any other vehicle.
- Following or waiting behind cyclists be patient, do not drive aggressively, sound your horn or rev your engine.

Remember that cyclists have the same rights on the road and that all road users are sharing the road.



Road worker safety

Roadworks are places of work, where essential works are carried out to improve or maintain our roads. The people working there should be given the same respect as you would expect in your workplace. Between 2005 and 2010 and as a direct result of collisions involving drivers 19 road workers were either killed or seriously injured. In the same period, 7 drivers and 3 passengers were also killed while driving through road works. Road works operate on busy roads in all weather conditions, day and night; drivers should negotiate road works with caution.

Drivers should:

- Get in the correct lane early and avoid making unnecessary lane changes.
- Keep your distance from the vehicle in front.
- Drive at an appropriate speed and keep within the speed limit.

Look out for

- Works traffic, especially at entrances and exits.
- Road workers in or near the road.
- Traffic slowing or queuing in front.
- Use the information signs to help you negotiate the road works safely.



Taking your car abroad

Taking your car abroad or hiring one in the country you're visiting is now commonplace, straight forward and gives you the freedom to see the landscape at your leisure. This guide summarises what you need to do to prepare for your journey.

Documentation

Driving Licence – A pink, pink and green or photo card EU format licence is valid in all EU and EEA (European Economic Area) countries. Many non – EU countries require an International Driving Permit (IDP). A list of each countries requirements can be found at www.theaa.com/

Provisional licence - does not entitle the holder to drive outside the territory of the issuing member state.

Note: In many countries the minimum age for driving is 18.

Insurance – Check with your insurers that you are fully covered to drive abroad, that you are covered for breakdown recovery and any medical expenses resulting from a collision.

Green Card – Check if you need one of these for the country you're visiting, this provides proof that you have the minimum insurance cover. Visit www.direct.gov.uk for details.

Vehicle Registration document – If the vehicle does not belong to you, a letter of authority from the owner should be obtained.

Regulations of what you need to carry with you when you are abroad can vary significantly from UK requirements. For the most up to date advice on the regulations that apply in each country visit the Foreign & Commonwealth Office website. www.fco.gov.uk

The vehicle

Have the vehicle thoroughly checked, serviced and the headlights adapted (if necessary) before the journey. Equipment such as a set of replacement bulbs, spare fuses, GB sticker, warning triangle, first aid kit, fluorescent/reflective jacket, breathalyser kits and fire extinguisher are required at all times in many countries. Travel operators will advise you and many will hire these as part of their service.

The route

- Plan regular stops into the trip, driving abroad can be more tiring.
- You should take a break from driving every two hours.
- Never compromise your comfort for the sake of carrying more luggage.
- Carry appropriate currency – many roads in Europe are toll roads.
- Drink/Drive laws and penalties are often more severe than those in the UK.
- It can take time to adjust to driving on the right. Use all your mirrors before carrying out a manoeuvre. Take extra care after a stop or when turning left.
- Make certain that you feel fit for the trip. Do not allow your concentration to lapse.
- If using a sat nav ensure that you have the most up to date map for the region.

The major motoring organisations can help you organise and plan the details of your trip.

Personal safety & security

Personal safety behind the wheel

Drivers need to be constantly vigilant and aware of possible dangerous situations. There are some actions you can take to minimise the risk to yourself, your passengers and your possessions.

Keep a check on your vehicle and have it regularly serviced.

Keep valuables and bags out of sight, locked in the boot.



Where possible, travel on main, well used roads.

If you are travelling at night, try to advise someone of your destination and your estimated time of arrival. Also inform them of your intended route.

Carry a mobile phone, some change for a phone call or car park, phone card, torch, first aid kit, road atlas and reflective jacket.

Keep all doors locked, especially in towns. Always keep your car locked when you leave it, for example when paying for fuel.

Park in well lit, busy areas.

If your car does start to play-up, stop in a busy, well lit area, near a phone box. Don't try to make it home regardless.

Never give lifts to strangers.

If you use a portable Sat Nav, remove the suction cup and the tell tale signs that may indicate the presence of an expensive device may be onboard.

Always park your car facing in the direction of your exit. This allows you to drive out rather than reversing which can delay your departure.

Driving alone

- When driving alone, do not under any circumstances give hitchhikers a lift.
- If you see an incident or collision or someone tries to flag you down, think first. Is this genuine? It might be safer and more practical to dial 999 for assistance when stationary in a safe place. You may use the emergency telephones on a motorway to get police assistance.
- If you think you are being followed, don't go home; remain calm and continue driving until you come to a busy place, where there are other people around and ask for assistance. If you are afraid to get out of your car on arrival, simply sound your horn repeatedly; you will quickly draw attention to yourself.
- If a car pulls up alongside you at traffic lights or a road junction, and the occupants try to catch your attention, ignore them and don't make eye contact. If they persist, follow the instructions as indicated above.
- Beware of other drivers signalling faults on your car; it could be a ploy to get you to pull over. Instead, drive on slowly until it is safe to stop and check for yourself.
- If a car pulls up in front of you and causes you to stop, never turn off the engine. Stay calm and if the driver approaches you, reverse as far as possible without causing danger, continually sound the horn and activate your hazard lights, regardless of whatever time of day or night. Ensure that all your windows and doors are locked.

What to do if you breakdown

If you keep your vehicle serviced regularly, well maintained and, ensure you have sufficient fuel for your journey you will reduce the chance of a breakdown. However, if it does happen, follow this guidance to help get you back on your way as quickly as possible.

- Stay calm. Breakdowns are common and can be dealt with easily.
- If you have enough warning of an impending breakdown, try to pull into a well lit place.
- If anyone offers to help, ask him or her to make contact with an emergency breakdown service. Do not get in their car.
- Membership of a recognised recovery service is highly recommended.
- Consider carrying an emergency breakdown kit, it should contain a fluorescent /reflective jacket, warning triangle, torch, blanket, and a first aid kit.
- It is a good idea to practise changing a wheel using the tools provided before you really need to.



Single carriageway roads

- First think of all other road users.
- Use your warning lights to warn other drivers.
- Place a red warning triangle at least 45 metres (147 feet) behind your vehicle, on same side of the road, particularly helpful if you are on a bend, hill or causing an obstruction. You should exercise caution whenever you are placing or retrieving it.
- Keep children and animals under control and away from the road.
- Contact a breakdown service if you are unable to rectify the fault.
- Contact the nearest police station if your vehicle is causing an obstruction, if you are travelling alone or want advice.



Motorways

- Do not stop on the carriageway. Move to the left hand lane close to the hard shoulder as soon as you feel a problem developing. Take your time, don't panic or cause other traffic to brake.
- Leave the motorway at the next exit or pull into a service area.



If you cannot do so

- Try to stop near to an emergency roadside telephone. They are one mile apart and the arrows on the marker posts point to the nearest one. Move your vehicle slowly on the hard shoulder and;
- Stop as far to the left of the hard shoulder as possible with your wheels turned to the left.
- Switch on your hazard warning lights.
- Keep your sidelights on if it is dark.
- Exit your vehicle by the left hand door and make your passengers do the same (leave any animals inside).
- You and your passengers should wait near the vehicle but well away from the motorway and hard shoulder, behind the crash barrier or on the grass verge.
- Wear a fluorescent /reflective jacket if you have one available.
- Do not use a red warning triangle.

- Do not attempt to carry out any repair no matter how simple.
- Use the emergency roadside telephone to seek assistance, these enable the emergency services to pin point your exact location. These are free and connect directly to the police - if alone - tell them. Most telephones are monitored by video cameras that are linked to the local police traffic operations control centre.
- Emergency roadside telephones are fitted with an inductive coupler for people with hearing impairment who are wearing a hearing aid. Those who are profoundly deaf should take the phone off the hook; this will alert the emergency services.
- Inside the door of the emergency roadside telephone you will find a list of all the information you need to give motorway control staff;
- If someone should approach you whilst you are on the telephone, tell the police the cars registration and a description of the driver. Then return to your car via the left hand door, fasten your seatbelt and lock all doors. Do not lower the window more than a couple of centimetres to speak. Leave the vehicle again as soon as the risk has passed.
- If you have a disability that prevents you following the advice given then you should;
- Stay in your vehicle.
- Switch on your hazard lights and display a “help” pennant.
- If you have a mobile phone dial 112 or 999 and advise the emergency services of your location.
- If you see another driver, either on a road or motorway, who has evidently broken down, do not stop to offer assistance. Your actions could be misinterpreted, ask a passenger to report the incident or drive to a safe place to park to call the police.
- When the breakdown truck arrives, check the driver knows your name and has in fact been sent to you.
- Once your vehicle has been repaired, take great care when rejoining the motorway. Use the hard shoulder as an acceleration lane, merge into the nearside lane when you have matched the speed of the traffic and there is a suitable gap.
- Remember the hard shoulder is the most dangerous lane on the motorway.

Parking at night

- When parking the car always aim to place it under a light, whether in the street or in a car park. Take a moment or two to look around before you get out.
- If you park in the daytime but will be returning to the car after dark, try to think what the car park will look like then. Try to avoid parking close to trees, bushes or other obstructions which could hide a person.
- When returning to your car, make sure you have your car keys ready and check the rear seats before getting in. Use a torch to help you see clearly.
- Never leave your keys in the ignition, even if you are only popping into a shop for a few seconds. Always lock the door and take the keys with you.
- Keep your headlights on when opening your garage doors at night so that you can see what's going on around you.
- When you get home, find your house keys before you get out of the car to prevent you having to search for them in the dark.



Vehicle security

To reduce the risk of your car being stolen or broken into, the following tips may help:

- Remove the ignition key and engage the steering lock.
- Fit an approved, visible security device over the handbrake, clutch or steering wheel.
- Lock the car and set the alarm or anti theft device, even if you are only leaving it for a few minutes.
- Close all windows.
- Never leave young children alone in the vehicle.
- Don't leave pets in the vehicle with the windows completely closed.
- Never leave anything of value on display in your vehicle.
- If you use a portable Sat Nav, remove the suction cup and the tell tale signs that may indicate the presence of an expensive device.
- If you have a garage use it and ensure that it's locked.
- If you park on the drive, consider having a security light fitted to illuminate the parking and surrounding area.
- Have your vehicle identification number etched onto all the windows.
- Use locking wheel nuts or other devices to prevent your expensive alloy wheels being targeted.
- Don't leave your vehicle running to warm it up on chilly mornings, while you go indoors to have a tea /coffee.
- If you own an expensive vehicle or it is of great sentimental value, consider fitting a vehicle tracker device.
- At home your car keys should be kept out of sight and in a safe place. Car security systems are highly developed; it can be easier for thieves to steal the keys than to break into the car.
- Items are stolen from vehicles on a regular basis; consider registering your property on the free, online property database **www.immobilise.com** – this could help police in tracing your property if it was lost or stolen.
- For further advice contact your police safer neighbourhood team through your local police station or visit **www.herts.police.uk**

First aid on the road

Many lives could be saved each year if every driver carried a first aid kit and had a basic knowledge of how to use it.

If you haven't any first aid training don't try to give medical assistance or try to move casualties unless there is a danger of further collisions, fire or other life threatening hazards.

You should:

- Warn other traffic if possible.
- Switch off the engines.
- Stop anyone from smoking.
- Send a bystander to call for the appropriate emergency service.
- Prevent a crowd getting too close.

Follow first aid advice from the emergency call operator.

St John's Ambulance and the British Red Cross offer first aid courses.



What next

Advanced Driving

Smooth driving helps relax your passengers and make them feel more confident with you behind the wheel. Travelling in the correct position at an appropriate speed and gear will help you stay in control of your car, think ahead and react to danger.

Research shows that advanced drivers are safer, smoother, use less fuel and cause less pollution. They make smooth progress and suffer less stress. They are also up to 50% less likely to be involved in a crash.*

If you are interested in becoming an advanced driver; you could join a local group of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) or RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders (RoADAR);

They offer coaching to help you reach the standard required to pass an advanced driving test.

Both organisations aim to raise driving standards and to reduce road collisions and driving offences. They also hope to revive the enjoyment of driving even in today's traffic conditions.

Benefits

- Improved safety for
You
Your family
The communities in which we all live.
- More economical and environmentally cleaner motoring.
- Reduce stress.
- More enjoyment of driving.
- Confidence to cope with today's demanding conditions.
- Passing an advanced driving test can lead to better deals from some insurance companies, but the very fact that you will be a safer driver helps to protect your no claims bonus!

Setting a good example

The manner in which you drive can have a major influence on your children's attitude to road safety and later driving career. They begin learning to drive by observing the example of others. How you drive and your attitude behind the wheel has a lasting influence.

*A 2006 report by Brunel University

Publications

The official highway code

This is essential reading for all drivers. It is regularly updated, so make sure you have the latest edition. An Online version is available and can be found at **www.direct.gov.uk**

Author: Department for Transport (DfT) -

Driving Standards Agency (DSA)

Publisher: TSO (The Stationery Office)

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Roadcraft – the police drivers handbook

This handbook is used to train police drivers. It is also used by the Institute of Advanced Motorists and the RoSPA Advanced Drivers Association as the basis for their Advanced Test programme.

Author: National Police Driving Schools' Conference Roadcraft

Working Party, The Police Foundation, National Extension College

Publisher: TSO (The Stationery Office)

www.tsoshop.co.uk

Know your traffic signs

Although The Official Highway Code shows most of the commonly used signs, the aim of this booklet is to illustrate and explain the vast majority of traffic signs the road user is likely to encounter.

Author: Department for Transport (DfT)

Publisher: TSO (The Stationery Office)

www.tsoshop.co.uk



Websites

A wealth of information is available online about occupational road risk, driver training and UK legislation.

Directgov

Public services all in one place, in the motoring section you will find information on driver licensing, driving for a living, buying and selling a vehicle, owning a vehicle.

www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring

RoSPA

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents is a registered charity and has been at the heart of accident prevention in the UK for more than 90 years. The Road Safety Department produces a vast array of advice and information on all areas of road safety and accident prevention.

www.rospace.com

RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders (RoADAR)

The aim of this group is to reduce road accidents by encouraging an interest in road safety and improving driving standards, knowledge and skill. They have 50 local groups that can provide free training to help you improve your driving skills.

www.roadar.org

IAM

The Institute of Advanced Motorists

One of the UK's leading road safety charities, they are dedicated to increasing skills for all road users, raising driving and riding standards and helping to save lives on our roads.

www.iam.org.uk

The AA/The RAC

Members of these organisations have access to a wide range of products and services such as breakdown cover, insurance and travel information.

www.theaa.com www.rac.co.uk

Euro NCAP

Check out the safety rating of your current or future car.

www.euroncap.com

TyreSafe

TyreSafe is one of the UK's leading tyre safety organisations, dedicated to raising awareness about the dangers associated with defective or illegal tyres.

www.tyresafe.org

British Red Cross / St Johns Ambulance

Both of these organisations provide first aid advice and training.

www.redcross.org.uk

www.sja.org.uk

Notes

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