

Road Safety Tips

We can't stop accidents from happening, but we can all take steps to make the roads a little safer. The following tips provide some useful safety advice for road users.

FOR DRIVERS

1. INDICATE YOU ARE TURNING WELL BEFORE YOU BRAKE

Most drivers know how and when to use their indicators to let other people know they are going to make a turn or a movement. Unfortunately we all have 'blank moments' where we forget to indicate, or indeed forget that we are turning until the last second and this can be dangerous for the driver behind you and yourself.

Sometimes cars can get too close behind you and there's not a lot you can do about that; however, you can prevent the likelihood of a car driving into the back of you by ensuring you signal well before you manoeuvre. If you're worried that somebody is too close, you could try braking early which in turn will help to reduce their speed.

2. KEEP TO A SAFE STOPPING DISTANCE

If you're travelling too close to the car in front (known as 'tailgating'), it can be hard to react quickly enough to their sudden movements and you may end up having an accident.

You can help to reduce the likelihood of this by ensuring you keep a safe distance between you and the car in front at all times. This distance can depend on the speed you are travelling at. The image below shows stopping distances and reaction times for different speeds. You can use this as a guide to how much space to leave:

Typical Stopping Distances



Source: <https://assets.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk/media/559afb11ed915d1595000017/the-highway-code-typical-stopping-distances.pdf>

3. BE AWARE OF THE SPEED LIMIT AND STICK TO IT

This is a simple one, but actually many people are unsure about how to tell the speed limit of the road they are on.

Remember that built up areas with street lighting will usually be 30mph. If this is not the case, i.e. if it is 40mph, there will be signs showing otherwise that are regularly repeated. Therefore, if you are in a built up area and unsure of the speed limit and cannot see any signs, assume it is 30mph. Always be more vigilant if driving past a school in case a child steps out in front of you.

The national speed limit for a single carriageway is 60mph and for dual carriageways and motorways it is 70mph. These are a guideline for a maximum speed and you do not have to drive at that speed if you are uncomfortable.



4. CONSIDER GETTING A BLUETOOTH HANDS-FREE CAR KIT

Making or receiving calls whilst driving is never recommended and if your phone is ringing or vibrating, the safest thing to do is pull over before answering.

For those people who spend a lot of time in their car, through work for example, then a Bluetooth hands-free car kits can help. They allow you to easily answer the phone at the touch of a button and most connect right into your car speakers. Some models have a text-to-speech function which means it can read out your messages.

5. ADAPT AND PREPARE YOUR DRIVING TO THE CONDITIONS

The conditions of the road can drastically effect your usual actions when driving. This can be more of a problem in the colder months when drivers have to deal with an increase in pot holes, wet and slippy conditions, snow, and poor visibility.

We recommend that you allow more time for your journey when faced with poor weather, remain patient and adapt your driving accordingly. If you ever have difficulty, slow down and perform your manoeuvres in good time without any sudden movements. During the winter, it is worth regularly checking your tyre tread depth and air pressure to ensure you remain safe on the road.

Finally, don't delay getting any repairs to your car done, no matter how minor they are. If you need a new headlight or brake light, get it fixed as soon as possible.



FOR CYCLISTS

1. WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

You should always wear the appropriate protective clothing for cycling. Wearing a helmet that fits correctly and that hasn't been damaged will greatly reduce your risk of head injury if you are in a collision.

It's also important to wear appropriate clothes that won't get tangled in a chain/wheel; this could cause you to lose control of your bicycle. Finally, it's a good idea to wear bright or reflective clothing where necessary to ensure you are seen by cars and pedestrians.



2. FIX LIGHTS TO YOUR BIKE

It's illegal to cycle at night without a white light on the front and a red light on the rear of your bike. These must be on at all times. Aside from this, your bike must have a red rear reflector. A white front reflector will also help you to be seen.

These lights will alert nearby traffic to your presence. Knowing that you are cyclist, they should give plenty of room when overtaking and be patient when they are unable.

3. DO NOT CYCLE ON THE PAVEMENT

By law you cannot cycle on a pavement. Cyclists should use the roads at all times. Where possible, you should use the cycle line as this provides extra protection for you and makes it easier for traffic to pass you. Cyclists may also use bus lanes.

You can also use cycle routes where signposted. This is not compulsory but cycle routes often take cyclists away from busy or congested areas, which may be safer.

