

Best Practice Guide

Sharing The Road



It's Fair To Share

Looking out for other road users and displaying considerate behaviour is an important part of everyday driving. Yet all too often road users fail to look out for each other, which can lead to avoidable collisions and even to injury and death.

You can decrease your chances of causing, or being involved in, a collision by following some simple tips for sharing the road safely.

Be Defensive

A defensive driver does not just concentrate on his or her own actions, but also concentrates on the actions of other road users.

Key points of defensive driving are:

- Use your mirrors.
- Look for hazards.
- Keep well back from others.
- Read the 'clues' of the road.
- Never make assumptions about other drivers - even if it is your right of way always proceed with caution!

Be Safe, Be Seen

Improving YOUR visibility to others can help you to share the road safely.

Make sure you:

- Signal all turns and lane changes in plenty of time.
- Regularly check all brake and exterior lights to make sure they are working.
- Position your vehicle so that other road users can see you - make sure you're not hidden in a vehicle's blind spots.
- Use your headlights at any time that visibility is reduced.

Be Considerate

Sharing the road safely requires drivers to be considerate of others.

Remember:

- To be understanding if other drivers cause problems - they may be inexperienced or may not know the area well.
- Not to become agitated with other drivers, even if they display dangerous behaviour.
- Everyone has an equal right to be on the road.
- Not to drive when stressed as you'll be a danger to yourself and to others.

Look Out For Pedestrians

Pedestrians are particularly vulnerable road users.

To help keep them safe:

- Drive slowly in residential areas, near schools or bus stations and in any situation where there are likely to be pedestrians.
- Remain patient when a pedestrian is crossing the road.
- Never gesture to a pedestrian to cross the road as there may be other vehicles approaching that you can't see.
- Be particularly aware of children who may not realise the dangers of the road and who may not have been taught how to cross the road safely.

Be Cautious Around Cyclists

Cyclists are also vulnerable road users.

When driving near to a cyclist:

- Be patient.
- Only overtake when it is safe to do so.
- Allow a clearance of at least one metre when passing.
- Never overtake just before you intend to make a turn which crosses their path.

Beware Near Buses

There are two main reasons to be cautious around buses:

- If a bus is stationary it is likely that some passengers may have stepped off and be intending to cross the road. Pass with extreme care, bearing in mind that children or the elderly might find it difficult to assess the dangers before stepping out from behind a bus.
- Buses are big and although they should indicate before moving sometimes manoeuvre without warning. Always expect a bus to pull out and pass only if you are sure it is safe to do so.

Think Bike

Motorcyclists are extremely vulnerable road users. Most crashes occur when a vehicle emerges from a junction into the path of a motorcyclist.

Always:

- Double-check for motorcyclists at junctions.
- Bear in mind that motorbikes are often travelling faster than you think.

Take Care Around Trucks

When driving close to trucks and other large vehicles remember:

- Sometimes large vehicles need to swing wide in order to make a safe turn. Look out for trucks indicating and keep well back in order to give them plenty of room to manoeuvre.
- Never attempt to overtake a turning vehicle as your vehicle could be forced off the road.
- It takes longer to get past a truck when overtaking.
- Trucks have larger blind spots so try to keep out of them.

Animals Can Be A Danger Too

The types of wildlife and animals you encounter will vary from country to country. Look out for road signs warning of animals crossing the road and slow down in anticipation of this.

If you spot an animal in the road:

- Slow to a crawling pace where possible and stop if necessary (and if safe to do so).
- Try to avoid swerving or stopping suddenly to avoid an animal as this could result in you colliding with another vehicle or person.
- Never get out and approach an animal or try to encourage it out of the way as some animals can be dangerous and may attack if they are frightened.
- Do not sound your horn to try to get animals to move as this will startle them.

Warning

A pedestrian is killed or injured in an intersection traffic crash every 16 minutes in the USA, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Some road users are more vulnerable than others.

Have consideration for others.

Animals require caution.

Remember to drive defensively.

It is vital to make yourself visible to others.

Never make assumptions about other road users.

Give trucks a wide berth.

