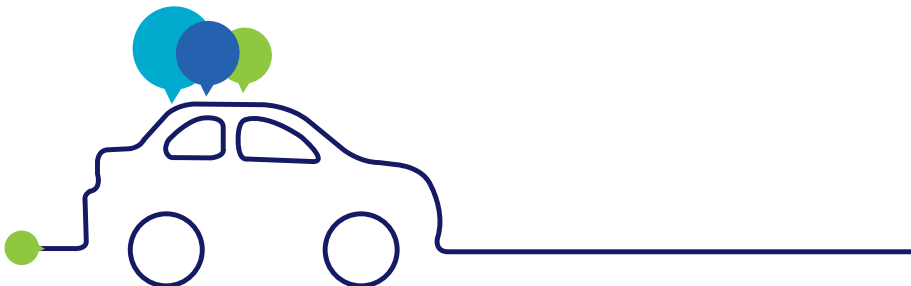


# Safer Driving for Work Handbook





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# Introduction

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**Driving (whether for work, commuting, popping to the shops, taking the kids out, etc) is an essential part of personal, family and work life for millions of us. It can be enjoyable and pleasant, but also stressful and dangerous.**

In fact, driving is one of the most dangerous activities that we do, and driving for work tends to be riskier than driving for private reasons. At-work drivers crash more often, even after their higher mileages are taken into account, are more likely to take risks and to be at-fault when they crash.

It is not just at-work drivers and riders who suffer in work-related road crashes. In fact, their passengers, pedestrians, pedal cyclists, motorcyclists and people in other vehicles are more often killed or injured in these crashes than the at-work driver or rider themselves.

These crashes are not just due to driving skills and attitudes, but also to the nature of the driving that at-work drivers are required to do. This may, for example, include unsafe schedules and time pressures or having to respond to work messages while driving. Young at-work drivers may find themselves driving vehicles (such as vans) which they have little experience of driving.

## Your Employer's Responsibility

*"Health and safety law applies to work activities on the road in the same way as it does to all work activities and you need to manage the risks to drivers as part of your health and safety arrangements."* (HSE "Driving at Work" Guidelines for employers)

Therefore, your employer needs to ensure that you are legally entitled to drive the vehicle, and are properly trained, competent and fit to drive it safely. They need to have systems to ensure that the vehicle is safe, roadworthy and road legal and policies and procedures to manage the risks involved in driving for work. They also need to monitor vehicle use and investigate and learn from accidents and incidents.

## Your Responsibility

As a driver, you must play your part, by ensuring that you are properly licensed, insured to drive for work, fit to drive, plan your journeys safely and comply with road traffic laws when driving.

As an employee, you must understand, and follow, your employer's driving for work policies and procedures.

This handbook will help you work with your employer to avoid accidents and injuries to yourself, your passengers and other people on the road. It should be used with your employer's driving for work policies and procedures.

# **Before you get in the vehicle**

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Before you get in the vehicle...

# Driving for Work

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## Using a Company Vehicle

Your employer will have policies and procedures:

- To make sure that your company vehicle is properly registered, taxed, MOT'd, insured and serviced according to the manufacturer's recommendations (although you may be responsible for booking the services).
- To check your driving licence, probably at regular intervals, to ensure that it remains valid for the vehicle you are driving.
- On safe driving, including vehicle checks, journey planning, driver assessment and training, driver fitness, speed, alcohol and drugs, mobile phones and other distractions, passenger safety, and reporting accidents and incidents.

Make sure you understand and follow these policies and procedures.

## Using Your Own Vehicle for Work

Even if the vehicle you drive for work is your own private vehicle, your employer has the same legal duty to ensure it is safe and legal when it is being used for work, as they have for company vehicles.

If you use your own vehicle for work (not commuting), your motor insurance policy must include business use cover. Make sure you inform your insurers that you use the vehicle for work, and how you do so.

### Your employer needs to be able to check:

- Your vehicle is properly taxed, MOT'd and serviced
- You have a valid driving licence and business use insurance cover
- Documentary proof of the above, on request (and at specified intervals)
- You conduct regular vehicle safety checks

Some employers carry out these checks annually (or more frequently); other's do random spot checks.

As an employee, you must co-operate with your employer's health and safety procedures and follow their rules and policies in regard to your own vehicle, when it is used for work. You also need to follow the same policies and procedures on safe driving that apply to company vehicle drivers.

Further advice is available in RoSPA's free guide [Driving for Work: Own Vehicles](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/) from [www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/)

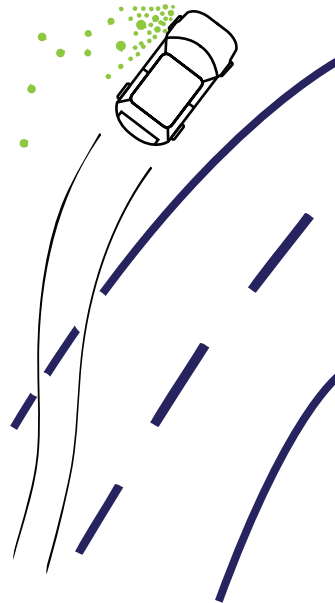
Before you get in the vehicle...

# Safer Journey Planning



**Thousands of crashes are caused by tired drivers. They are usually severe because a sleeping driver cannot brake or swerve and so the impacts occur at high speed. You are most likely to feel sleepy when driving:**

- On long journeys on monotonous roads
- Between 2am and 6am or between 2pm and 4pm
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol or taking medicines which cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts.



Most, if not all, of the risk can be avoided if you:

## Reduce Driving

Where possible, avoid driving by using the phone, email or video-conferencing, or the train or plane. Maximize car sharing to reduce the number of journeys.

## Avoid the Most Dangerous Times

Avoid driving at night, especially after a long shift, or after drinking alcohol or taking medicines that make you drowsy.

Check weather forecasts and traffic reports before you set off and try to avoid driving in poor conditions. If the emergency services are recommending that people don't travel unless it is absolutely necessary, consult your manager and if you cannot contact them, don't make the journey.

Before you get in the vehicle...

# Safer Journey Planning

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## Reduce Your Driving Time

Follow any limits set by your employer on maximum driving distances and/or times. If you are subject to drivers' hours and tachograph rules, make sure you comply with them.

Plan where you can take a break about every 2 hours, and build in enough time to do so. Take rest breaks as planned – resist the temptation to carry on. If possible, share the driving with a colleague. If necessary, plan an overnight stop.

## Make Sure You Are Well Rested

Avoid driving when you would normally be asleep, and make sure you get plenty of sleep before a long drive. Keep meals light during or before you drive; heavy meals can make you drowsy.

## Stop If You Feel Tired

Find somewhere safe to stop (not the hard shoulder), take two cups of strong coffee and a 'catnap' for 15 – 20 minutes. But remember, sleep is the only cure for tiredness. So, if necessary, find somewhere safe to sleep overnight.

## Discuss Concerns with Your Manager

If you are concerned about your driving hours, journeys or schedules, or if you find yourself driving when too tired, discuss this with your line manager.

For more advice, see:

[Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planner](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/) at [www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/) and  
[Safer Journey Planner](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/drivers/) at [www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/drivers/](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/drivers/)





Before you get in the vehicle...

# Fitness to drive

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**Your physical and mental health plays a major part in your fitness to drive. You must inform the [DVLA](#) about any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive safely:**

<https://www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions>

<https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>

Discuss any fitness to drive concerns with your doctor.

Inform your employer about any health issue or personal circumstances that may affect your driving.

## Eyesight

In good daylight, you **must** be able to read a vehicle number plate from 20 metres (about 5 car lengths), or from 20.5 metres for old style number plates.

If you need glasses or contact lenses to drive, you must wear them at all times when driving. It is an offence not to do so, and may invalidate your motor insurance. It is a good idea to keep a spare set of glasses in the vehicle.

Have your eyesight checked regularly (at least every two years, or more often if your optician recommends it).

## Alcohol

Alcohol makes drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks. It slows reactions, increases stopping distances, affects judgment of speed and distance and reduces the field of vision. Even a small amount, well below the legal limit, seriously affects your ability to drive safely.

Every year, hundreds of people are killed in drink drive crashes, and tens of thousands of people are convicted of drinking and driving, and lose their driving licence. Some are sent to prison.

The drink drive limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood in England and Wales, but lower in Scotland, at 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood. In Northern Ireland, it will soon be reduced to 50mg/100ml for most drivers, but to 20mg/100ml (effectively zero) for professional and novice drivers.

Before you get in the vehicle...

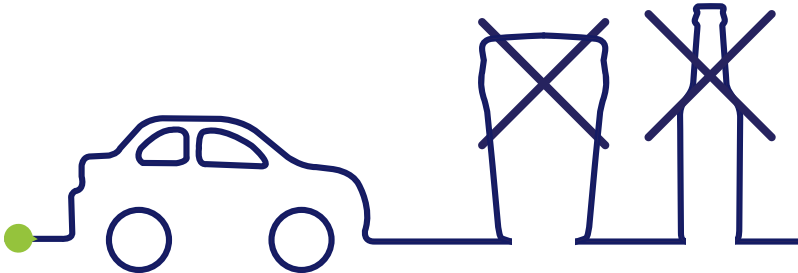
# Fitness to drive



Alcohol massively increases the risk of crashing. A driver who is double the 80 mg/100ml limit is 50 times more likely to be in a fatal crash than a driver who has not been drinking.

It takes about an hour for 1 unit of alcohol to be removed by a healthy liver. However, it's almost impossible to be sure how many units you've consumed because the alcoholic strength of drinks varies enormously, as does the size of measures. For example, a glass of wine could be 2 or 3 units of alcohol, depending on the size of the glass and the strength of the alcohol. Drinks poured at home are usually larger than ones bought in a pub or restaurant.

The only safe option is to avoid drinking alcohol in the hours before you will be driving. Never rely on trying to calculate accurately how much alcohol is in your body, and whether you are above or below the drink drive limit.



## Morning After

Many drink drivers are caught the morning after they have been drinking. It takes several hours for alcohol to disappear from the body, so if you were drinking late the previous night, you could easily still be over the limit the next morning. Even if under the limit, you may still be affected by the alcohol in your body.

For more advice see “[Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs](http://www.rosopa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/)” at [www.rosopa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/](http://www.rosopa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/).

Before you get in the vehicle...

# Fitness to drive

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## Drugs and Medicines

It is illegal and dangerous to drive if unfit to do so because of drugs or medicines. They can affect decision-making and driving skills, as well as your physical and mental condition and behaviour, and significantly increase your risk of crashing. The penalties are the same as for drink driving.

It is also illegal in England and Wales to drive with certain drugs (such as cannabis and cocaine) in the body above a specified limit (even a very small amount would put a person over the limit) or with certain prescription drugs above a specified limit. The limits for prescription medicines are higher than normal prescribed doses, so someone taking a medicine under their doctor's advice should not exceed the limit. However, they must still be fit to drive, so anyone taking medicines should talk to their doctor, pharmacist or healthcare professional before driving.

## Medicines

Check with your GP or pharmacist whether any over-the-counter or prescribed medicines you are taking are likely to affect your driving (for example, by causing drowsiness). If so, ask for an alternative that does not, or avoid driving.

Always check the label of medicines and the Patient Information leaflet for any warnings, and if it says that certain side-effects may occur, assume that they will do so.

## Illness

Common conditions, such as colds, flu, migraine, stomach upsets, hay fever, can affect your ability to drive safely. For example, the symptoms of a cold (headache, blocked sinuses, sneezing, tiredness), if severe enough, can slow your concentration, reactions and judgement. Don't be tempted to 'soldier' on, when in fact it would be safer for everyone concerned, not to drive until feeling better.

If you start to feel ill while driving, stop the vehicle somewhere safe. If the condition is not serious, you may feel well enough to continue after a short break or taking some medication. But if you find your concentration is affected, make other arrangements to continue your journey.

If you think that you are over the drink drive limit, or unfit to drive for any reason, do not drive. Contact your line manager to explain and allow alternative arrangements to be made.

Further advice is available in [Driving for Work: Fitness to Drive](https://www.rospea.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/) at [www.rospea.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/](https://www.rospea.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/).

# Your Vehicle

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Your vehicle...

# Pre-Drive Vehicle Checks



**You are responsible for ensuring that the vehicle you are driving is safe and legal.**

Before driving any vehicle, check:

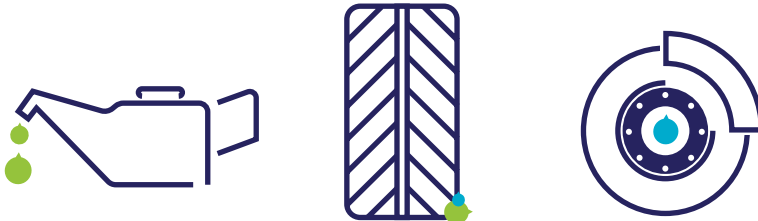
- Tyres are undamaged (no cuts or bulges), are at the correct pressure and have enough tread depth. The legal minimum is 1.6mm, but above 3mm gives much shorter braking distances in the wet
- There are no signs of vehicle damage
- Oil, coolant and windscreen wash levels are correct (check when the engine is cold)
- You know the correct type of fuel for the vehicle
- Brakes are working
- Lights and indicators are working
- Windscreen and windows are not damaged
- Washers and wipers are working
- Mirrors are correctly positioned

If you're not sure how to check any of the above, read the vehicle's handbook or ask someone to show you. RoSPA's video, [Vehicle Checks](#) will also help.

Ask your manager if the organisation provides a pre-drive checklist.

If you find a problem during the check, report it to your manager immediately.

If you think the vehicle is, or may be, in an unsafe or illegal condition, do not drive it until all necessary repairs have been completed.



Your vehicle...

# Pre-Drive Vehicle Checks



## Passenger Safety

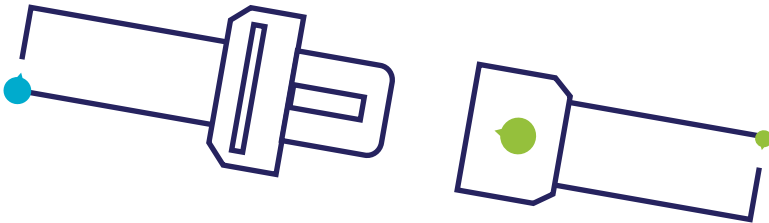
Make sure that all occupants are using their seat belts and head restraints are adjusted correctly before you set off, and that loads are securely restrained.

## Seat Belts

Make sure that everyone, including rear seat passengers, wears a seat belt on every journey, no matter how short the journey. This applies in vans, as well as cars, and in larger vehicles if they have seat belts fitted.

In a crash at just 30 mph, an unrestrained person is thrown forward with a force 30 to 60 times their body weight, injuring (or even killing) themselves and quite possibly, other people inside the vehicle. They could also be ejected through one of the windows.

Seat belts save thousands of lives, and could save hundreds more every year if everyone always wore their seat belt.



## Child Car Seats

Seat belts are designed for adults and do not fit children properly. In a crash, a child may slip out of their seat belt because it is too big, and an ill fitting belt could even cause injuries. So, children need to use child car seats.

The law says that children under 12 years old or under 135cm in height must use a child restraint that is suitable for them and correctly fitted in the vehicle. It is your responsibility, as the driver, to ensure that children under 14 years use the correct restraint or a seat belt.

If you carry children for work, ask your employer about child seats, and training so you know how to check that the right ones are being used and you are able to fit them correctly.

Advice on child seats can be found at [www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk).

# Pre-Drive Vehicle Checks



## Head Restraints

Adjust your head restraint correctly, and check that every passenger has their one correctly adjusted. The top of the head restraint should be level with the top of your head and as close to the back of your head as possible. This will help to protect against whiplash and long-term injuries.



## Driving Position

You should be able to see and reach all of the controls comfortably. Good all-round, unobstructed, visibility is vital. Check that your view is not obstructed by objects such as stickers or devices such as SatNavs, and that SatNavs are not placed where they might be hit and flung forward by an airbag.

Look at the dashboard when you start the car, check which lights illuminate and then go off. If you are not familiar with the vehicle, check the handbook so you know what the different lights mean. Finally, consider whether the vehicle is suitable for the task – for example,

- If carrying passengers, is there a seat belt for each occupant?
- If carrying children, is there an appropriate child seat for each child that needs one?
- If carrying a heavy load or an animal, can you secure it safely?

# Secure Loads

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**It is illegal and dangerous to drive a vehicle that is overloaded or has an insecure load. As the driver, you are responsible for ensuring that any load you carry is legal and safe, even if it was loaded by another person.**

Make sure the vehicle is not overloaded (check the handbook for the maximum weight). If you are not sure whether your vehicle is overloaded, take it to a public weighbridge.

Remember that a car is not a van, so do not cram as much as you can physically fit into it.

Put items in the boot rather than the passenger compartment and distribute the load evenly. Make sure the rear seat backs are secure and, if not carrying passengers, engage the seat belts across the rear seats for extra security.

Avoid loose items on the dashboard or rear parcel shelf – they will become missiles if you crash.

## Trailers

Only use a trailer if you have the correct licence entitlement, and you have been trained to drive with one. Make sure you know how to connect the trailer, including the electrical connections, that it is not overloaded and that the weight is evenly distributed and securely covered. Make sure no items are sticking out. Cars towing trailers are subject to lower speed limits and cannot use the outside lane on motorways with three or more lanes.

## Roof Racks

If you use a roof rack, make sure it is securely fitted, the load is evenly distributed and securely fastened. Think about how, and where, you can safely load and unload things in a roof rack.

When driving, remember to account for how the extra weight affects the vehicle's handling and stopping distances. Check whether tyre pressures should be adjusted when carrying a full load.



# While Driving

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# Good Driving

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**Almost all road crashes involve human error, ranging from simple, 'honest' mistakes to deliberate dangerous and illegal behaviour.**

Every year:

- Hundreds people are killed in crashes in which someone was 'careless, reckless or in a hurry'
- A third of crashes involve someone who 'failed to look properly'
- Hundreds of people die in crashes in which someone was speeding
- Hundreds of people are killed in crashes involving alcohol
- One third of fatal crashes occur due to 'loss of control'
- About 20% of crashes involve someone 'failing to judge other person's path/speed'.

Driving is a very personal thing; we all have our own views, attitudes and habits. Our attitudes as drivers, how we deal with our own mistakes and our reaction to those made by other people, influence our own safety and well-being and that of other road users around us.

Aggressive, selfish or impatient attitudes influence the way we drive, and can develop into a tendency to take irresponsible risks, such as tailgating, exceeding speed limits, undertaking, or jumping red lights.

Our emotional mood also influences our behaviour; drivers commonly express how they feel in the way they drive. Traffic delays and congestion can also influence our frame of mind. Life stresses, such as relationship anxieties, financial or employment problems, domestic or workplace arguments, influence our mood and can affect our driving.

Try to ensure you are in a calm, good mood before driving. Plan time to allow for traffic delays; this can help to alleviate the pressure you feel if you're running late.

Be tolerant towards others – shouting at another driver after their mistake or poor driving will not change anything, but anger will affect your judgement for some time after. Accept that drivers (including you!) make honest mistakes and have lapses in concentration. Be courteous and thank others for their courtesy.

Smile – it does work!

# Good driving

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## Eco-Driving Tips

Good, safe driving is also eco-driving. It uses less fuel and so saves you money and lowers emissions, helping the environment.

## Before You Start

- Keep your vehicle well maintained and serviced and check the tyre pressures regularly.
- Avoid carrying unnecessary weight (check what's in the boot) and only use roof racks and boxes if necessary.
- Plan your route, so you don't do unnecessary miles, and avoid making short journeys by car when possible.

## During the Drive

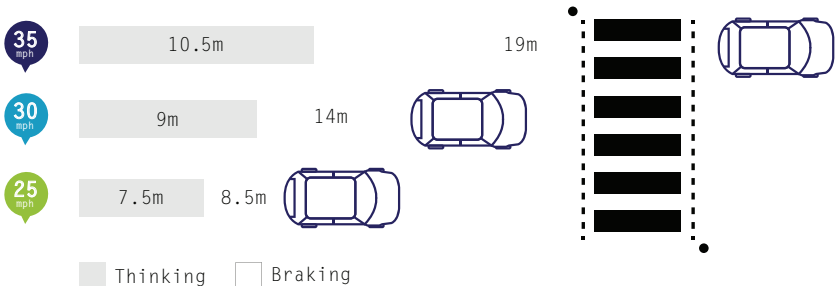
- Drive away immediately when starting from cold – don't leave your car idling.
- Drive smoothly
- Read the road ahead so you can keep moving as much as possible, and avoid harsh acceleration and braking.
- Accelerate gently and decelerate smoothly.
- Change gear as soon as possible without labouring the engine (around 2000 rpm in a diesel car or around 2500 rpm in a petrol car).
- Only use the air conditioning if you really need to.
- Turn off electrical equipment, such as heated rear windscreen, demister blowers and headlights, when you don't need them.
- Stay within speed limits. Driving at 70mph uses up to 9% more fuel than at 60mph and up to 15% more than at 50mph. Cruising at 80mph can use up to 25% more fuel than at 70mph.

# Safe Speed



**When travelling at higher speeds, you have less time to identify and react to what is happening around you. It takes longer to stop. And if there is a crash, it is more severe, causing greater injury to you, your passengers and any pedestrian or rider hit.**

- Higher speeds also magnify other errors, such as close-following or fatigue or distraction, thus multiplying the chances of causing a crash.
- Drivers who 'speed' crash more often than those who don't.



## Speed Limits

Always stay within speed limits (including variable limits and temporary limits at roadworks) even if you think the limit is too low.

Speed limits set the maximum speed for that road. But, there are many circumstances when it is not safe to drive at that speed (for example, around schools at opening and closing times, on busy, narrow roads, on rural roads or where visibility is restricted).

Make sure you know the speed limit of the roads you are using. Speed limit signs tend to be at junctions because this is often where the limit changes. However, junctions are also where you need to absorb a wide range of information (e.g., which way am I going, is that driver going to pull out), so it is easy to miss a speed limit sign. Check for speed limit signs at junctions, and look for repeater signs after the junction, especially if the nature of the road has changed. But be aware that the nature of the road may not indicate the speed limit. For example, dual carriageways can be 30 mph, 40 mph, 50 mph, 60 mph or 70 mph.

If you are not sure, assume the limit is lower until you see a sign.

On roads with street lights, assume the limit is 30 mph until you see a sign saying otherwise. But, remember the limit may be lower – 20 mph.

Also, make sure that you know the speed limits for the vehicle you are driving.

# Safe Speed

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## Give Yourself Time

Plan your journey to allow time to complete it (including rest breaks and foreseeable weather and traffic conditions) at safe speeds and without needing to exceed speed limits. Your journey time is determined much more by your average speed during the whole journey, than your maximum speed for part of it. This is especially true in urban areas, where you constantly have to slow down for junctions, traffic lights and other road users.

Knowing that you have plenty of time to complete your journey will help you to relax and avoid the temptation to push your speed.

## RoSPA's Top Ten Tips To Stay Within the Limit

Many car drivers unintentionally exceed the speed limit, often without realising it. Modern cars are so powerful and comfortable they give drivers little sensation of their speed. It is too easy to creep above the limit, and, many drivers believe it is difficult to drive a modern car at 30 mph or less on a road with a 30 mph limit.

There are some simple and practical tips to help you stay within speed limits.

1. Check your speedometer regularly, especially when leaving high speed roads
2. Know the limits – look for signs, especially at junctions
3. Assume lamp posts mean 30 mph, until signs say otherwise, but remember it could be 20 mph
4. Remember, speed limits are a maximum, not a target
5. 20's plenty when kids are about – and may even be too fast
6. Try no higher than 3rd gear in a 30 mph limit
7. Recognise what makes you speed - keeping up with traffic, overtaking or being tailgated
8. Concentrate – distracted drivers speed
9. Slow down when entering villages
10. Give yourself time – there's no need to speed and you won't get there quicker

● Even a small amount above the limit makes a big difference.

● Refresh your skills on a refresher driver training course

For more information see [www.rospa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/speed/top-ten-tips-to-stay-within-the-limit/](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/advice/drivers/speed/top-ten-tips-to-stay-within-the-limit/).

# Distractions



**Driving requires your full concentration all of the time. Trying to do something else while driving will distract you, slow your reactions and make a crash more likely.**

## Mobile Phones

Using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving is a significant distraction, and substantially increases the risk of crashing.

It is illegal to use a hand held mobile phone while driving (this includes holding the phone, dialing, texting, surfing the internet). It can also be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving. Depending upon the circumstances, drivers could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle', or careless or dangerous driving if they are distracted because they are using a hands-free phone or other device.



Hands-free devices do not significantly reduce the risks because of the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation or looking at the screen at the same time as driving.

## SatNavs

It is now very common for drivers to use SatNavs. They can, if used properly, make driving safer and easier, but they can also increase risk (e.g., by distracting you) if not used properly.



If your vehicle is provided with technology, such as SatNavs, ask your manager for training or guidance on how to use it safely. In particular, do not adjust or operate devices while actually driving. For example, set destinations in the SatNav before the journey starts. If you need to make adjustments or to input new information, only do so when stopped in a safe place.

## Eating, Drinking, Smoking, Tuning the Radio

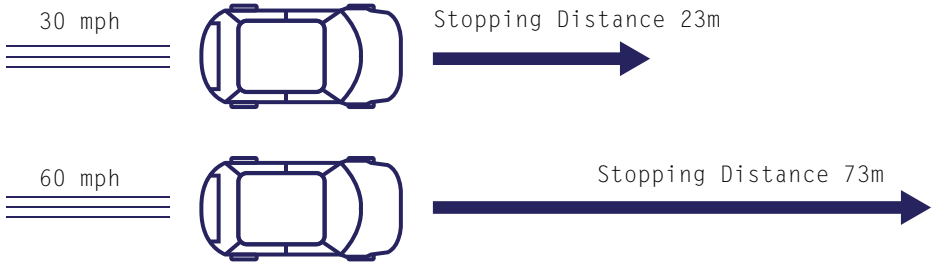
Many other things, that might seem simple and innocent, can be distracting when driving. Fatal crashes have occurred because a driver chose to unwrap a sweet, take a drink or light a cigarette while driving.

Safe driving needs concentration; avoid unnecessary distractions.

# Motorway Driving



**Motorways are the safest type of road, but also the least forgiving, due to their higher speeds. Dangerous situations develop quickly; vehicles travel much further before drivers even start to react. If you drive too close to the vehicle in front, or forget to use your mirrors before moving out, it could be disastrous.**



## Joining a Motorway

Unless you join the motorway at its start, you will normally join via a slip road. Use the slip road to adjust your speed to the traffic already on the motorway. Sometimes, you may have to slow down to merge safely.

## On the Motorway

Drive at a steady cruising speed in the left-hand lane (lane one), keeping a safe distance from the vehicle in front. Stay within the speed limit, even if other drivers are going faster.

Stay in lane one unless you need to overtake. Only overtake if you are sure you can move into the right hand lanes without interfering with other traffic. Check you mirrors first, and if it is safe (remembering that other vehicles are moving at high speed) signal and move out. When you have overtaken and have allowed plenty of distance for the vehicle you have overtaken (wait until you can see its front bumper in your interior mirror) move back into left hand lane.

# Motorway Driving



## Smart Motorways and Variable Speed Limits

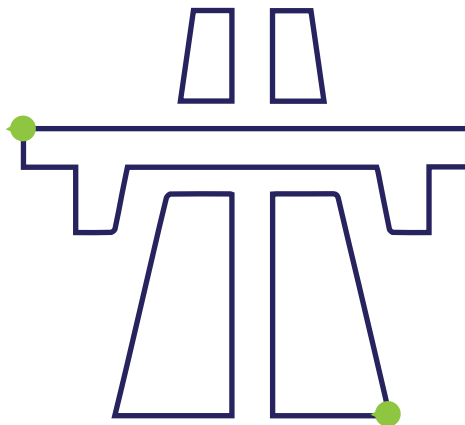
Many motorways have been converted to Smart Motorways. Typically, they have variable speed limits, with electronic signs on gantries above the motorway showing the maximum speed limit in force at the time, and whether any lanes are closed. The hard shoulder may be used as a running lane, either all the time or only in congested conditions when the electronic signs say so. Emergency refuges are provided next to the hard shoulder at intervals for vehicle breakdowns.

## Leaving the Motorway

You normally leave a motorway by moving onto a slip road and then onto a roundabout or a non-motorway road. Move into lane one in good time, and signal that you are exiting when you reach the 300 yard countdown marker. Do not slow down too soon – maintain your motorway speed, if traffic allows, until you have moved onto the slip road. Then decelerate steadily until you have reached an appropriate speed.

If two motorways are merging, or a motorway is dividing into separate ones, check the direction signs for the lane you need to be in, and get into that lane in good time to avoid last minute, sharp manoeuvres.

Once you have left the motorway, use your speedometer to check your speed – after high speed driving, 40mph may feel like 20mph, and remind yourself that you will now be facing oncoming traffic and the usual hazards for conventional roads.





# Motorway Driving

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## Motorway Breakdowns

Only use the hard shoulder in an emergency (except on Smart Motorways when the signs indicate the hard shoulder may be used as a running lane, in which case you need to use the emergency refuges next to the hard shoulder if you have an emergency).

If your vehicle breaks down or you become so unwell that you cannot drive, continue to a safe stopping point, pull over onto the hard shoulder, near an emergency telephone (or an emergency refuge) and keep as far left as possible.

Switch on your hazard warning lights.

You and any passengers should leave the vehicle by the nearside doors. Leave animals in the car. If possible lock all the doors except the front passenger door.

Stand as far away from the running motorway lane as possible – over the crash barrier and on the embankment is best.

Call for help on the emergency telephones rather than on your mobile. Emergency telephones are at approximately one mile intervals along the back of the hard shoulder, or in the emergency refuges on smart motorways.

If you have to walk to the nearest telephone, keep to the inside of the hard shoulder. Arrows on the marker posts at the back of the hard shoulder point to the nearest emergency telephone.

Tell the operator the number shown on the telephone box (this will pinpoint your exact location) and the details of your emergency. If you are a woman on your own, make this clear.

Return to the vicinity of your vehicle so that you can see help arrive. Wait on the embankment if possible. There is far greater risk of an accident on the hard shoulder than of being attacked, but if you feel threatened return to your car and lock all doors until any perceived danger has passed.

**DO NOT** attempt repairs, even changing a wheel, on the offside of your vehicle. Seek assistance.

**DO NOT** cross the carriageway in **ANY** circumstances.

# Driving at Night

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**Darkness reduces your ability to judge and estimate speed and distance and to assess accurately the position of oncoming traffic. Also, your body naturally slows down at night - especially if you are driving when you would normally be asleep.**

Remember that your eyes need time to adjust to darkness, especially when coming out of a brightly lit area, such as motorway service stations, or roads that have street lights.

Keep a particular look out for pedestrians and cyclists who will be harder to see.

Don't wear tinted glasses when driving at night.

## Vehicle Lights

Put your lights on before lighting-up time (dusk) and don't switch them off (at dawn) until you are sure it is safe to do so. Use them with dipped beam to avoid dazzling other road users.

Use dipped headlights in built up areas and watch out for pedestrians or cyclists who may be difficult to see. Approach pedestrian crossings more slowly, so you can stop safely if necessary.

Keep your headlights clean and check them before each night journey.

Keep your distance from the vehicle in front. The beam from your headlights should fall short of the rear of the vehicle in front. Any closer and you may dazzle the driver – and you will probably be too close.

## Noise

Be considerate.

Only use your horn to avoid an accident, not to rebuke another person or to announce your arrival or departure from an area. The law says that you must not use your horn between 11:30pm and 7:00am in a built up area.

Try to keep noise to a minimum at night. Avoid revving your engine and loud music. Open and close doors quietly and take care when setting and disarming vehicle alarms.

# Driving at Night

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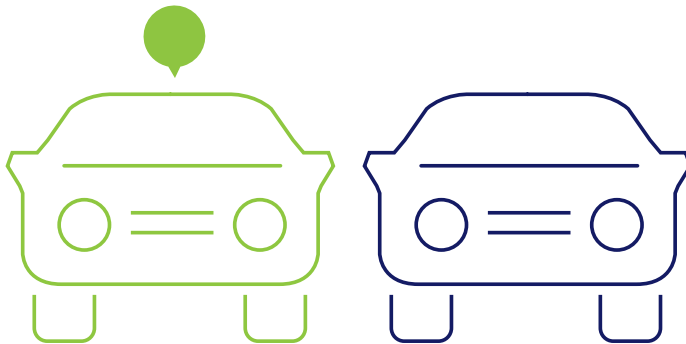


## Overtaking at Night

Be especially careful when overtaking at night. Be sure you can see the road ahead is clear enough for you to complete the manoeuvre safely – remembering that you can see much less and it's more difficult to judge speed and distance. Don't be caught out – if in doubt, hold back.

Don't use full beam in the face of oncoming drivers. Dip your headlights.

If you are being overtaken by another vehicle, dip your headlights as soon as the vehicle passes you.



# Driving in Poor Weather

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**The weather can cause all sorts of driving hazards, especially reduced visibility, slippery road surfaces and longer stopping distances. We need to adjust our driving accordingly.**

## Prepare for Winter

Poor weather occurs throughout the year, but it's a good idea to have your vehicle fully serviced before winter starts and have the anti freeze tested. Check that your lights are clean and working. Make sure your battery is fully charged. Always keep the windscreen and windows clean and the washer bottle filled with screen wash to the correct concentration to prevent the solution freezing.

## Before Setting Off in Adverse Weather

Listen to local/national weather broadcasts and travel bulletins. If conditions are very bad, avoid making your journey unless it is absolutely necessary. If you decide to travel, let someone know where you are going and what time you hope to arrive, so that they can raise the alarm if you get into difficulties.

Think about taking warm clothes, boots and a torch – it could be a long walk to a phone, if you don't have a mobile phone. Consider keeping a couple of long life energy bars in the glove box. Clear your windows and mirrors completely of snow and ice before you set off.

## Rain

Rain reduces your ability to see and greatly increases the distance required to slow down and stop. You will need about TWICE your normal braking distance. There is an increased risk of skidding and, in heavy rain, aquaplaning. Use windscreen wipers, washers and dipped headlights, and drive smoothly and plan your moves in plenty of time

## Aquaplaning

Aquaplaning is caused by driving too fast into surface water. When the tyre tread cannot channel away enough water, the tyre(s) lose contact with the road and your car will float on a wedge of water. Aquaplaning can be avoided by reducing speed in wet conditions. Having the correct tyre pressure and tyre tread depth will maximise your tyres' ability to maintain their road grip. If it happens, ease off the accelerator and brakes until your speed drops sufficiently for the car tyres to make contact with the road again.

# Driving in Poor Weather

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## Flooded roads

Avoid the deepest water – which is usually near the kerb. Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep. If you are not sure of the water's depth, look for an alternative route. If you decide to risk it, drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch – this will stop you from stalling. Be aware of the bow wave from approaching vehicles – operate an informal 'give way' with approaching vehicles.

**REMEMBER to test your brakes when you are through the flood.**

## Snow and Ice

Hail, heavy snow and rain all reduce visibility – use dipped headlights. Only travel at a speed at which you can stop within the distance you can see to be clear.

Keep your vehicle well ventilated. The car heater full on can quickly make you drowsy.

Always reduce your speed smoothly and in plenty of time on slippery surfaces. Avoid harsh braking and acceleration, or sharp steering.

Slow down in plenty of time before bends and corners.

To brake on ice and snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall and use your brakes gently.

Increase the gap between you and the vehicle in front. You may need up to TEN TIMES the normal distance for braking.

In snow, stop frequently to clean the windows, wheel arches, lights and number plates.

**Keep your speed down and give yourself time!**



# Driving in Poor Weather

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## Fog

### **Avoid driving in fog unless your journey is absolutely necessary**

If you must drive:

- Follow weather forecasts and general advice to drivers in the local and national media
- Allow plenty of extra time for your journey
- Check your car before you set off. Make sure everything is in good working order, especially the lights.

### **Reduce your speed and keep it down**

- Switch on headlights and fog lamps if visibility is reduced
- If you can see the vehicles to your rear, the drivers behind can see you – switch off your rear fog lamps to avoid dazzling them.
- Use the demister and windscreen wipers.
- Do not 'hang on' to the rear lights of the car in front as you will be too close to be able to brake safely
- Switch off distracting noises and open the window slightly so that you can listen for other traffic, especially at crossroads and junctions.
- Beware of speeding up immediately visibility improves slightly. In patchy fog you could find yourself 'driving blind' again only moments later.
- If you break down, inform the police and get the vehicle off the road as soon as possible. Never park on the road in fog and never leave it without warning lights of some kind if it is on the wrong side of the road.

# Driving in Poor Weather

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## Low Sunshine

In winter and spring the angle of the sun in the sky will frequently be too low for your visor to help. If blinded by glare reduce your speed. You can reduce the effect of glare by keeping both the inside and outside of your windscreen clean and grease free.

If you wear sunglasses (with prescription lenses if necessary) take them off whenever the sun goes in. They should not be worn in duller weather or at night as they seriously reduce the ability to see.

## Hot Weather

### Stay cool!

Wear cool, loose, comfortable clothing and keep your vehicle well ventilated. Carry wipes and cold drinks and take regular breaks to stretch your legs and get some fresh air.

Avoid even small amounts of alcohol on hot days as it will dehydrate you even more.

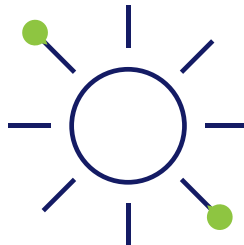
Use your visor as the first measure to combat dazzle. Dark glasses help but should be taken off when you can manage without them.

If the sun shines in your mirrors, adjust them to give you the best visibility with minimum glare.

Remember that other drivers will have similar problems and may not be able to see you. Keep your distance and lower your speed.

### Also remember:

Never leave children or animals shut up in your vehicle in hot weather. Animals need air and water. Children should never be left alone in a vehicle.



# Personal Safety

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A well maintained and regularly serviced vehicle is less likely to break down and leave you stranded.

Join a reliable breakdown organisation. Your employer may have done this for you.

Take a mobile phone with you for emergencies, but never use it while actually driving.

Don't pick up hitchhikers or offer lifts to people you do not know.

Keep valuables and bags out of sight and out of reach.

It is better not to keep the car doors locked while driving, except if you feel vulnerable in slow moving or stationary traffic. But, always lock the door when you are away from the vehicle – even when paying for fuel.

## Safe Parking

The golden rule is to ensure that others can see you. Bear in mind the time you will be returning to your vehicle – a safe place during daylight may be quite different at night.

## Car Parks

Choose a car park that is close to your final destination. Many car parks have won safety awards, having attendants, CCTV, and good lighting. Note what time the car park closes. Lock your doors and close the windows as you enter the car park.

### **If possible, choose a location that is:**

- Visible to other people
- In an open area, so that you have a good all round view
- Well lit
- Not close to bushes or dark corners

### **In multi-storey car parks choose a space that is:**

- Near the manned kiosk, if there is one
- Close to the exit level required

Reverse into your chosen space if possible, so you can pull away more easily.

To minimise the risk of damage to your vehicle, park next to a fixed object and consider the position of the vehicle on the other side of your intended space. Pull in your wing mirrors, but remember to pull them out again before driving off.



# Personal Safety

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## Leaving the Vehicle

Listen and look around before getting out.

Put all valuable items out of sight e.g. in the boot. Lock all doors, windows and the sunroof.

Note the name of the street and/or car park and the level you parked on.

## Returning to the Vehicle

If you are alone, try to follow a group.

Approach the vehicle with your keys in your hand so you can get in quickly if necessary.

Check the vehicle as you approach. If there are signs of it having been tampered with, do not get in – call the police.

If you have one, keep a personal attack alarm to hand – it's no good at the bottom of a bag!

## Road Rage

Avoid getting into conflict with another driver, even if they are behaving badly. "Competing" with another driver could lead to the incident becoming serious. Keep your mind focused on your driving.

Do not over-react to, or panic about, another driver's error, bad driving or poor attitude. They may be unaware of their actions. Try to stay away from them and concentrate on your driving.

Stay calm and think logically – when confronted by an irate driver don't engage in gestures, headlight flashing or sounding the horn as this will serve no purpose and may exacerbate the situation. It will also distract you. Concentrate on driving responsibly.

Refrain from eye contact with an angry or aggressive driver as this may make the situation worse.

If you are being followed (tailgated) by an impatient driver, do not allow yourself to be "pushed" along or intimidated into increasing your speed. Without actually pulling over or stopping, find a safe opportunity to allow that driver to pass. Going all the way around a roundabout so the tailgater can get past you will add a few seconds to your journey but significantly reduce your stress levels.

If you are being persistently followed by an aggressive driver, try to make your way to a public place, such as a petrol station (they usually have CCTV and staff), police station or a busy street and if necessary call the police. Do not allow an aggressive driver to follow you home.

# Personal Safety

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Under no circumstances get out of your car to confront an angry or aggressive driver. Stay in the car with the windows closed and door locked, and if necessary, call for help on a mobile phone (not while driving).

If you accidentally anger another driver, hold up your hand as a friendly acknowledgement of your mistake – this can diffuse the situation.

If your mood is affected by an incident during your journey, once you have moved away from any danger, find an opportunity to stop and take time out.

## **After Your Journey**

If you are able to recognise when you become stressed, angry or impatient while driving, you will be better equipped to deal with these emotions. Try to find time occasionally to reflect on your driving and think about how mood or stress has effected your actions.

# Accidents, Breakdowns and Emergencies

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Your employer should have procedures for emergencies, such as accidents or breakdowns. It is essential that you are familiar with, and follow, these procedures.

## **In the vehicle, keep copies of:**

- The emergency procedures
- Contact details for the person(s) to whom you should report emergencies
- Contact details of the breakdown firm your organisation uses and any reference numbers that you may need to quote
- Details of your motor insurance policy and contact details for your insurer

Make sure you have a fully charged mobile phone to summon help if necessary, but don't use it while driving.

A summary of the main points to remember is below, but always follow the procedures set down by your organisation.

## **Accidents**

- Stop. It is an offence not to stop, if your vehicle is involved and damage is caused to another vehicle or property or someone is injured
- Use hazard warning lights and switch off your engine
- Do not move someone who is injured unless they are in immediate danger of further injury from other vehicles or from fire or explosion
- Call the emergency services immediately; provide them with information about the situation, any special circumstances (for example, if carrying oxygen bottles) and if any passengers have special needs
- If child passengers are present, ensure an adult remains with them
- Give first aid if required and if you are competent to do so
- If the emergency services are called, stay at the scene until they allow you to leave
- Obtain the names and addresses of all independent witnesses (if possible)
- Ensure the vehicle is roadworthy before continuing the journey
- If there is any injury or the names of people involved are not exchanged, you must report the accident to the Police as soon as possible or in any case within 24 hours

# Accidents, Breakdowns and Emergencies

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## Record and Report the Accident

If you are involved in a collision, sketch the scene (or take photos), if you can do so safely.

Report the accident to your employer. You may need to discuss the details with your line manager at the next appropriate moment to ensure that lessons are learned to avoid it happening again, and if necessary, any risk assessments are updated.

## Breakdowns

- Move the vehicle off the carriageway (onto the hard shoulder or emergency refuge on a motorway) and switch on the hazard warning lights
- If this is not possible, move it as far away from moving traffic as you can
- Move passengers out of the nearside of the vehicle and as far away from it and other traffic as possible. No one should stand between the vehicle and oncoming traffic
- On motorways or other busy roads, passengers should be taken onto the embankment or grass margin and as far from the traffic as is practicable
- Keep passengers together, and children under constant supervision
- Telephone the emergency services, or breakdown firm, giving them accurate details of the vehicle's location, and whether children or passengers with mobility problems are being carried
- Telephone your nominated contact person to tell them what has happened
- On a motorway, use the roadside emergency telephone as this will enable the Police to pinpoint your location.

# Refresher Driver Training

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**Refresher Training will help you to:**

## **Enjoy Your Driving**

You'll enjoy driving more and feel much less stressed. Your passengers will prefer being driven by you, and children who suffer from motion sickness will be less likely to feel ill, because the drive will be so much smoother and safer.

## **Improve Your Confidence**

You'll feel much more confident, both in your own driving and in your ability to deal with the behaviour of other drivers.

## **Reduce Your Crash Risk**

It will help you to avoid making mistakes and mis-judgements that lead to crashes, and help you cope with the mistakes of other road users.

## **Save Money**

You'll spend less money on fuel, and cause less harm to the environment, because your driving will be smoother and more systematic, with less sharp acceleration and braking and better use of gears. You may be able insurance discounts – tell your insurer what extra training you've taken. At the very least, it will help you keep your no claims bonus intact.

## **Reduce Wear and Tear on Your Vehicle**

Your car (possibly the second most expensive item you own) will last longer and may have a higher resale value.

## **Improve Career Prospects**

Many jobs involve driving, and having extra driver training qualifications can improve your CV and help to distinguish you from other applicants.

## **Meet People**

By joining a driving group, you can meet other like-minded people.

Ask your employer if they can provide some refresher driver training. This can take many forms, ranging from classroom sessions to in-vehicle training.

## **Become an Advanced Driver**

RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders helps people to improve their driving and motorcycling. For details of your nearest Group, call 0121 248 2127 or go to [www.roadar.org](http://www.roadar.org)

# Useful Websites

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**RoSPA Safer Driving Advice**

[www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/employers/)  
[www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/drivers/](http://www.rospa.com/road-safety/resources/free/drivers/)

**RoSPA Fleet Safety**

[www.rospa.com/drivertraining](http://www.rospa.com/drivertraining)

**RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders**

[www.roadar.org.uk](http://www.roadar.org.uk)

**Occupational Road Safety Alliance**

[www.orsa.org.uk](http://www.orsa.org.uk)

**Scottish Occupational Road Safety Alliance**

[www.scorsa.org.uk](http://www.scorsa.org.uk)

**Driving for Better Business**

[www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/](http://www.drivingforbetterbusiness.com/)

**The Highway Code**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code>

**Think Road Safety**

<http://think.direct.gov.uk/>

**Department for Transport**

[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)

**Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-standards-agency>

**Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**

[www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)

**Road Safety GB**

[www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/](http://www.roadsafetygb.org.uk/)

**Transport for London**

[www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

**Road Safety Scotland**

[www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk/](http://www.roadsafetyscotland.org.uk/)

**Road Safety Wales**

[www.roadsafetywales.co.uk/](http://www.roadsafetywales.co.uk/)



accidents don't have to happen

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The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents,  
RoSPA House, 28 Calthorpe Road, Edgbaston,  
Birmingham, B15 1RP  
Registered Charity No. 207823  
Tel: 0121 248 2000 email: [help@rospa.com](mailto:help@rospa.com)  
[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)