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Rules and Responsibilities

Rules and responsibilities



There is more to driving than just knowing the road rules. However, knowing the basic road rules is essential.

Important

In the diagrams shown in this section, the vehicles are coloured green and red. In all cases, the red vehicle B must give way to the green vehicle A.

The rules listed here are only a summary of the road rules motorists must know. For more information visit vicroads.vic.gov.au

You can also purchase a copy of *Road Safety Road Rules 2009*, or view the relevant Acts and Regulations online (see Resources to help you on pages 166-167).

Alcohol

Learner and probationary drivers must not drive with any alcohol in their blood.

Zero Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) also applies to all restricted motorcycle licence holders, drivers of taxis, buses and other large vehicles, professional driving instructors and some full licence holders who have previously had a drink driving conviction.

All other full licence holders (including supervising drivers) must have a **BAC** of less than .05.

In nearly 30% of Victorian driver fatalities, the driver had a BAC of .05 or more.

Definition

Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) is a measure of the amount of alcohol you have in your blood. It is measured by the number of grams of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood.

For example, a BAC of .05 means .05 grams or 50 milligrams of alcohol in every 100 millilitres of blood.

It is also illegal to drink alcohol while driving a motor vehicle or supervising a learner driver.



Victoria Police

Rules and responsibilities

The effects of alcohol on driving

Alcohol affected drivers:

- feel overconfident and take risks
- are often unaware of the level of their driving impairment
- have slower reflexes and poorer co-ordination making it less likely that they will be able to stop or swerve in an emergency
- are less able to process information and make appropriate decisions as their vision, hearing and brain are all affected.

A driver who has been drinking struggles to judge speeds and distances accurately and will often fail to respond to potential dangers in the traffic environment.

The ability to cope with more than one thing at a time is greatly reduced (for example, steer a course within a lane, respond to traffic signals and avoid a pedestrian who steps onto the road).

What are the risks?

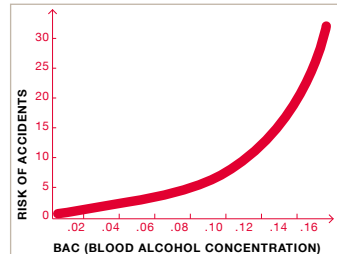


fig 9.

Relative chance of crashing as your BAC increases

The risk of being involved in a crash increases dramatically if the driver has been drinking alcohol. The graph shows the average relationship between the risk of having a crash and the amount of alcohol in the blood. For inexperienced drivers the risk at any BAC level above zero will be even higher.

Factors affecting BAC

Alcohol affects different people in different ways and can even affect the same person on different occasions in different ways. You can drink the same amount of alcohol on different days and have different BAC readings each time.

Some of the factors that affect BAC include:

- gender – a woman drinking the same amount of alcohol as a man of a similar size will have a higher BAC
- body size – a person of small build will have a higher BAC than a larger person drinking the same amount of alcohol
- food consumption – food slows down the absorption of alcohol so, if you have not had a substantial meal before drinking, you will reach a higher BAC more quickly

- rate of drinking and the types of alcohol consumed – the quicker you drink and the greater the alcoholic content of the drink, the sooner you will reach a higher BAC.
- general health – if you are in poor health, your liver is less able to process the alcohol you drink
- use of other drugs – combining alcohol with drugs increases the risk of motor vehicle crashes even if you only drink a small amount of alcohol.

The effect of alcohol can also exaggerate the mood you are in, and make you more tired if you are already tired.

Only time reduces your BAC level

Your body takes time to get rid of alcohol. No amount of coffee, exercise, cold showers, fresh air or vomiting will help reduce your BAC. Whilst these may make you feel more alert, they don't change the amount of alcohol in your bloodstream or speed up the processing of the alcohol by your liver. The liver does this in its own time.

Tip

It is important to remember that if you have a lot to drink the night before, you are likely to have alcohol in your blood the next morning.

How to avoid drink driving

- Plan ahead. It is more difficult to plan how to get home if you have had alcohol to drink, as your judgement will be impaired. Work out your travel arrangements before you go out and start drinking.
- Planning ahead is especially important for P1 drivers who need to comply with the peer passenger restriction.
- Share a taxi with friends.
- Take public transport.
- Organise transport with a friend and agree that whoever is driving will not drink alcohol.
- Organise to stay the night.
- Arrange to be picked up by a relative or friend who hasn't been drinking.

Rules and responsibilities

You can measure your BAC level by using a public breath tester. These are located in some hotels, clubs and restaurants, and are useful to determine your BAC level.

You could do this a number of times to get an idea of what BAC your usual pattern of drinking leads to, and how long it takes for your BAC to return to zero.

Tip

If you drive after drinking your driving will suffer. So remember, the safest BAC is zero even when you have a full licence.

Breath testing procedures

Police can request the driver of a vehicle to undergo a breath test at any time. There are many breath testing stations or booze buses on Victorian roads.

You may also be stopped by police in other vehicles and asked to undergo a breath test. Thousands of drivers are randomly tested every week.

You will be asked to blow into a small device. It will give an indication of the alcohol in your blood – if any. If you haven't been drinking there is no problem. If you have a positive result, you will be asked to do a second test on another breath testing instrument. This reading will be used as evidence if you are over the legal limit.

Drivers admitted to hospital after any kind of road crash are required to provide a breath test and when requested to provide a blood sample.

Penalties

The penalties for drink driving are tough. From 1 October 2014, anyone whose licence and/or learner permit is cancelled for a drink driving offence will be required to install an alcohol interlock device in any vehicle they drive after their disqualification period ends.

The interlock condition will apply for at least 6 months after relicensing (at least 12 months for repeat offenders).

Cancellation periods:

- Learner permit and/or probationary licence holder with a BAC between zero and less than .05 (first offence) - 3 months
- Learner permit and/or probationary licence holder with a BAC between .05 and less than .1 (first offence) - 6 months
- Full licence holder under the age of 26 with a BAC between .05 and less than .1 (first offence) - 6 months
- Learner permit, probationary or full licence holder with a BAC of .1 or more (first offence) - cancellation period and interlock condition will depend on the BAC
- Repeat offender (learner permit, probationary or full licence holder) - 12 months or more.

- Any repeat drink driving offence will result in a learner permit and/or licence cancellation of at least 12 months followed by a mandatory interlock condition of 12 months or more when relicensed.
- You will have to start again on your learner permit or probationary licence if your licence is cancelled.
- Heavy fines can also be imposed.
- You may have your vehicle impounded.

Fact

Refusing a breath test is an offence.

Your licence will be cancelled and you will be disqualified from driving for at least two years if convicted and will also have to fit an alcohol ignition interlock for at least six months when re-licensed.

Drugs, medicine and driving

Medicines and illegal drugs that can affect safe driving are detected in over 30% of Victorian driver fatalities. In Victoria it is an offence to drive a motor vehicle while impaired by a drug.

Illegal drugs

Illegal drugs such as ecstasy, cannabis (marijuana) and heroin can affect your ability to drive safely.

Drugs like speed or ecstasy can:

- make you feel as if you are a better driver
- have a negative effect on your ability to drive, so you will be more confident but less skillful
- lead to a strong need for sleep when their effects wear off that can increase your risk of crashing. You may have your vehicle impounded.

Cannabis can:

- stop you responding quickly to what other drivers are doing
- reduce your ability to concentrate and maintain attention, make decisions and to react to unexpected events
- make you miss important road signs
- reduce your ability to avoid potential hazards.

Combining even small amounts of cannabis and alcohol causes much greater impairment than either one on its own.

Police have the power to undertake roadside saliva testing of drivers and riders, to detect the presence of speed (methamphetamine), THC (the active ingredient of cannabis, which indicates recent cannabis use), and ecstasy (MDMA). Driving with these drugs in the blood or saliva is an offence and penalties (including licence loss) will apply.

Rules and responsibilities

Conditions that affect safe driving

There are many medical conditions, or a combination of conditions, that can affect your ability to drive safely. The law states that you must report any long-term or permanent medical condition that could affect your driving. If you have a medical condition, or if an existing condition deteriorates, you must:

- contact VicRoads to report your condition
- talk to a doctor about how it might affect your driving.

Reporting a medically unfit driver

If you are genuinely concerned about someone's ability to drive safely, write us a letter with their details (eg. name, address) and the reasons for your concern. Under Victorian law, we must investigate this information.

Medicines

Many prescription medicines and some medicines bought over the counter from a pharmacist can impair your driving ability and increase the risk of crashes by affecting you:

- mood
- concentration
- co-ordination
- reaction time.

Examples of prescription medications that can affect driving are:

- sleeping tablets
- muscle relaxants
- sedatives
- some antihistamines (such as in hay fever or cold and flu medicines)
- some strong painkillers.

Not everyone will experience the effects of a drug in the same way. When you start using a new medicine, it is best to ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice on how it may affect your driving.

You can reduce the risk of a crash when on medication by:

- not using alcohol with your medicines
- keeping to the prescribed doses
- not treating yourself with additional medicines or other remedies. Always check with your doctor or pharmacist
- not using other people's medicines
- reading and following the advice on the labels on all your medicines. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if the label on your medicine states that the medicine may cause drowsiness.

Tip

If you are worried about the effect that your medicine has on your driving, stop your driving – not your medicine!

Stop driving and contact your doctor or pharmacist if your medicine:

- affects your reflexes
- affects your ability to concentrate
- makes you sleepy or drowsy
- gives you blurred or double vision.

Plan to use alternative transport such as taxis or public transport or ask a friend to drive you.

Seatbelts

Wearing a seatbelt is the most effective measure for reducing serious injury in a crash. All drivers and passengers must wear a seatbelt or appropriate restraint. This includes children and pregnant women.

Drivers are responsible for the restraint of all passengers. The penalties for unrestrained or improperly restrained passengers include:

- fines and demerit points for the driver, and
- fines for passengers aged 16 years and over.

Tip

Buckling up takes seconds – serious crashes take lives.

Seatbelts must be securely fastened and properly adjusted, and there must be only one person for each seating position and one seatbelt for each person.

Seatbelts are not designed to protect small bodies in a crash. Children need restraints that specifically fit their size.

Children

Drivers must ensure that children are restrained in:

- a properly fastened and adjusted rearward facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness if they are less than six months old
- a properly fastened and adjusted approved rearward facing OR forward facing child restraint with inbuilt harness if they are more than six months and less than four years old

Rules and responsibilities

- a properly fastened and adjusted approved forward facing child restraint with in-built harness OR a properly positioned approved booster seat and fastened and adjusted seatbelt if they are more than four years but less than seven years old. The type of restraint will depend on the child's size.
- either a booster seat or an adult seatbelt if they are seven years to less than 16 years. It is recommended that children continue to use a booster seat until they are at least 145cm tall.

Children under four years old must not be seated in the front seat (in vehicles with two or more rows of seats). Children four years to less than seven years old can only be seated in the front if all other seats in the row(s) behind are occupied by other passengers less than seven years old.

Tip

Restraint Fitting Stations can help you fit a child restraint or booster seat to your vehicle.

Call 1300 360 745 for the nearest location.

Child restraints, booster seats and airbags

A rearward facing child restraint cannot be used in the front seat when there is a passenger airbag.

Children using forward facing child restraints or booster seats in the front seat of a vehicle should do so with the seat pushed as far back from the dashboard as possible.

It is safer for children to travel in the back seat.

If a vehicle has airbags in other positions, consult the vehicle owner's manual for advice on positioning child restraints.

More information about child restraints, booster seats and Restraint Fitting Stations is available at: **vicroads.vic.gov.au** and VicRoads Customer Service Centres.

Taxis and children

Although there is an exemption for taxi drivers from mandatory child restraint requirements for children under seven years old, taxis are required to have anchorage points and parents are encouraged to provide their own child restraint or booster seat when transporting a child under seven years old in a taxi.

If there is no restraint available for use in a taxi, children under one year must not travel in the front seat and children one year and over must be restrained in a seatbelt.

Pregnant women

Seatbelts protect pregnant women and their unborn babies, as long as the seatbelt is properly fastened and adjusted with the lap part of the belt across the hips and below the baby.

Tip

An unborn baby is more at risk in a crash if a seatbelt is not worn.

Travelling with animals

You must not drive with an animal on your lap.

Animals carried in a trailer or on the tray of a utility or truck (other than dogs engaged in moving stock) must be tethered in a way that prevents them from falling off or being injured by the movement of the vehicle.

Speed limits

Speed limit signs tell you the maximum speed at which you can drive in good conditions. You must always obey the speed limit. Speed limits are set according to the characteristics of the road and the level of use by vulnerable road users.

Built-up areas

The speed limit in a **built-up area** is 50 kilometres per hour (km/h) unless signed otherwise.

Definition

A **built-up area** is where there are buildings and/or houses next to the road or there is street lighting at intervals not over 100 metres apart for a distance of 500 metres or more.

Speed limited areas

There are other signs which designate speed limits for whole areas (networks of roads) which have a sign on each road into the area. These reduced speed limits are to improve safety and like all speed limits must be obeyed.



Area speed limit sign

Rules and responsibilities

Freeways and country roads

The speed limit on freeways and outside built-up areas in Victoria is 100 km/h unless signs tell you otherwise. Some main streets in rural town centres have 50 km/h speed limits and, many rural railway level crossings have 80 km/h speed limits.

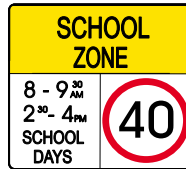
School speed limits

Children need to be protected from fast travelling vehicles. Children are easily distracted and can forget to look for dangers on the road. They also have trouble judging the speed of approaching vehicles. For these reasons, there are lower speed limits outside all Victorian schools. Static or electronic variable signs are used to alert drivers to lower speed limits, such as:



permanent 40 km/h speed limits outside schools on most 50 km/h roads.

Permanent speed sign



time based 40 km/h speed limits outside schools on 60 km/h and 70 km/h roads.

Time based speed sign



40 km/h and 60 km/h time based limits apply on roads where the speed limit is 80 km/h or above.

Electronic speed sign

Shared zones

A pedestrian struck by a vehicle travelling at 40 km/h or more is unlikely to survive. Shared zones have been created to protect pedestrians.



Shared zones have a speed limit of 10 km/h or as indicated on the Shared zone sign. In a shared zone, drivers must give way to pedestrians.

Shared zone sign

Safe speeds for different needs

Speed limit signs tell you the maximum speed at which you can travel. You have to decide on a safe speed under the specified limit.

Here are some factors you should consider.

Light or heavy traffic

If there is a lot of traffic, slow down to the average speed of everyone else and watch out for hazards. Pedestrians often weave through cars stuck in peak hour.

Shops, parked cars and people

Where there are shops, there are people and cars. Electronic variable signs at selected strip shopping centres indicate reduced speed limits at high risk times. Be alert. Pedestrians can step out from between parked cars, and parked cars can pull out from the kerb suddenly. Slow down and try to anticipate what others may do.

Green lights can change to red

A green light may turn amber or red before you enter an intersection, so drive at a speed that will allow you to stop safely.

The time of the day

It can be difficult to see the road ahead when you are driving into bright sunlight at dawn or dusk. You will need to slow down.

Wear sunglasses and use the sun visor in your car. You need to slow right down, or in some cases, pull over off the road and wait for the conditions to improve.

Weather conditions

Driving in heavy rain, frost or snow can be very dangerous – it may be difficult to see and roads may be slippery. You need to slow right down, or in some cases, pull over off the road and wait for the conditions to improve. You may need to use hazard warning lights or rear fog lights while parked (see Driving in dangerous conditions or situations on page 129).

Take care when mist or fog affects visibility.

Curving roads

Slow down before entering a curve or bend and accelerate gently as you drive out of the curve. It can be dangerous to brake on a curve or bend; you may lose control of your vehicle.

Road works

At road work sites the number of lanes is often reduced and the road layout changed to protect road workers. Temporary speed limit signs are erected to guide traffic through the work site at safe speeds. All drivers must slow down and obey the speed limits.

Unpredictable surfaces

The risk of losing control of a vehicle can increase on roads with potholes, wheel ruts or grooves, slippery surfaces and loose gravel. Always be aware of the road surface and adjust your driving and speed according to the conditions.

Rules and responsibilities

Country roads and animals

When you see animals – beware. They are unpredictable and can wander or dart onto the road. Farmers often move sheep or cattle and you need to **slow down** while you are passing (see Sharing the road with animals on page 144).

Slippery roads

Slippery roads can be caused by rain, mud, frost or ice. Not all areas that are slippery when wet are signposted. Rain makes all roads slippery. When it first starts to rain, oil and dirt are washed to the surface. Until further rain washes these away, skidding can occur. **Slow down** and always keep your distance from the vehicle in front in these conditions.

Unsealed roads

Dust from oncoming vehicles may conceal unexpected hazards, such as other vehicles, a dip or corner. Unsealed roads can become very slippery when wet or corrugated. Mud thrown onto windows can reduce visibility. **Slow down** and drive at a speed appropriate for conditions because road holding is reduced and stopping distances are greater.

Road edge

If you need to move a wheel off the bitumen, such as when passing an oncoming vehicle on a narrow road, don't panic. Pulling the wheel quickly to get back on the road may lead to over-correction and potential loss of control. **Slow down**, brake gently if needed, take your time and steer normally back onto the bitumen when safe to do so.

How quickly do you think you can stop?

Speed makes a big difference to your ability to stop. If you double your speed, you cover almost four times the distance before you stop.

Fact

At **60 km/h** you may cover up to **67 metres** before you can stop.

At **100 km/h** you may cover up to **142 metres** before you can stop.

This makes a significant difference to your chance of being involved in a crash.

Wet conditions

The road is wet, you have a modern vehicle with good brakes and tyres. A child runs onto the road 45 m ahead of you while you are travelling in a 60 km/h zone. You brake hard.

Will you stop in time?

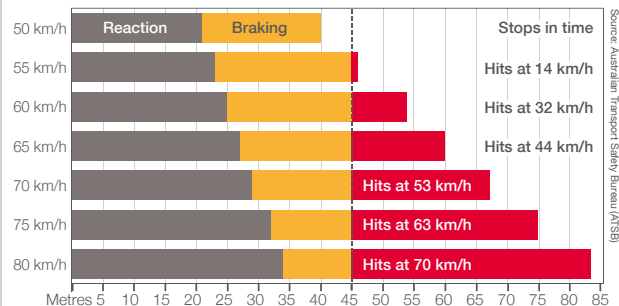


fig 10.

Dry conditions

The road is dry, you have a modern vehicle with good brakes and tyres. A child runs onto the road 45 m ahead of you while you are travelling in a 60 km/h zone. You brake hard.

Will you stop in time?

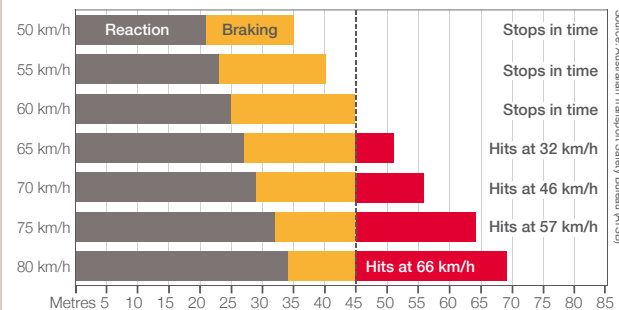


fig 11.

Rules and responsibilities

Road signs

Road signs provide information to help keep you and others safe on the road.

Regulatory signs

These signs tell you what you must or must not do. You are committing an offence if you disobey these signs. They are usually black and white, sometimes with red indicating danger or a restriction.



Keep left sign

However, some regulatory signs are black and yellow:



Safety zone sign and Pedestrians crossing sign

Obey these traffic signs

These are signs showing which direction you must, or must not take.



No left turn



No entry sign



Left turn only sign

Stop and Give Way signs

These signs enable drivers to get through intersections and other places safely (see Giving way to vehicles at intersections on page 102).



Stop sign



Give way sign

Hand-held signs

Hand-held signs are often used at work sites. They may also be found at school crossings. Be prepared to obey the sign.



Hand-held stop sign

Keep left unless overtaking

Where this sign is shown, or on multi-lane roads where the speed limit is over 80 km/h, you must not drive in the right lane unless overtaking another vehicle, turning right, making a U-turn, avoiding an obstruction, or traffic is congested.



Keep left unless overtaking sign

Rules and responsibilities

Warning signs

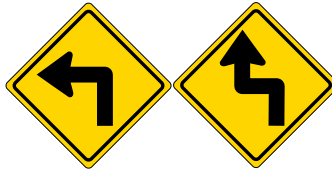
These signs alert you to possible danger ahead. They are usually yellow diamond shapes with black words or symbols. Take notice of the advice these signs give. It usually means slowing down.

Curves and bends signs

Curves and bends signs tell you what to expect – from simple curves, to winding sections and sharp bends.



Normal bend



Sharp bends



A winding section of road

Intersection warning signs

Intersection warning signs are used to warn you of the type of intersection ahead, particularly when the **intersection** is dangerous or difficult to see.

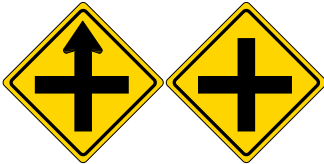
Definition

An **intersection** is where two or more roads meet and where vehicles travelling on different roads might collide.

There are many types of intersections.

Intersection control warning signs

Changing road layout



Cross-road intersection



Traffic lights ahead



End of divided road



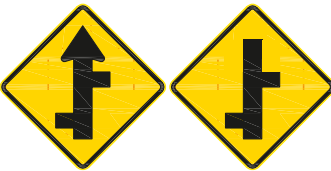
T-intersection



Stop sign ahead



Two lanes for oncoming traffic



Staggered side road junction



Roundabout ahead

Rules and responsibilities

Advisory speed signs

Advisory speed signs are sometimes used with other warning signs. The advisory speed sign shows the maximum speed that is safe to drive in good conditions.



Advisory speed sign used with curve warning sign

Changing conditions



Hollow/dip in the road sign



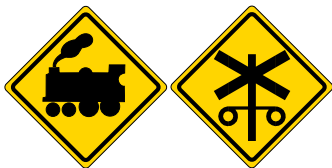
Gravel road sign



Slippery when wet sign

Railway level crossings

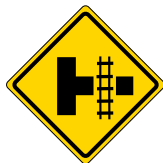
When approaching railway level crossings – slow down and be prepared to stop.



Rail crossing ahead sign



Uncontrolled crossing ahead sign



Uncontrolled rail crossing on side road sign

Pedestrian signs

These signs warn drivers of pedestrians crossing the road.



Pedestrians crossing sign



Children crossing sign

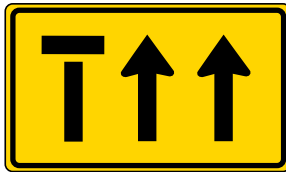
Rules and responsibilities

Road work signs

These are usually temporary signs warning drivers to slow down and drive carefully because there are road works ahead. Keep road workers and yourself safe when approaching road works. Remember, road workers may not be visible.



Workers on the road ahead sign



Left lane ends, prepare to move (merge) into another lane sign



Slow down and be prepared to stop sign



You may proceed slowly sign

Direction signs

These standard green signs with white lettering give information such as road names, destinations along a route and distances to the destinations.

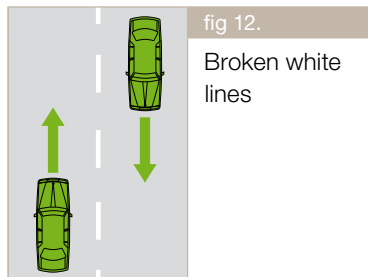


Road markings

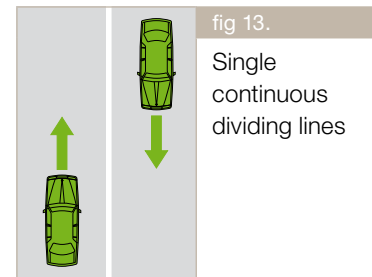
It is important to be able to 'read' the white or yellow markings on the road. Road markings can create regulatory requirements which you must obey and are there to provide a safer driving environment.

Dividing lines

Many roads are painted with broken white lines and single continuous lines in the centre of the road.

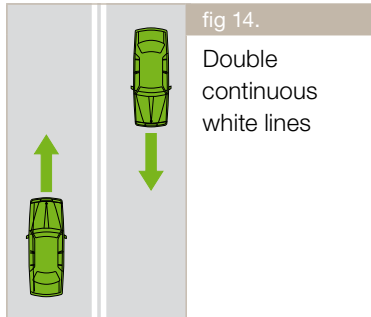


On a road with a broken white dividing line you must keep left of the lines and drive as close to the left side of the road as you can. You may cross these lines to enter or leave the road, but only overtake or U-turn if it is safe and if the road ahead is clear.

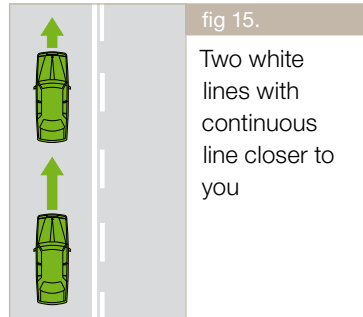


A single continuous dividing line means you can cross it to enter or leave the road, but you **must not overtake or U-turn**.

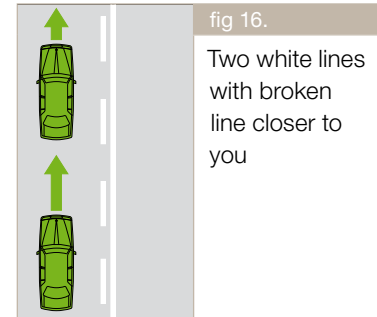
Rules and responsibilities



You must always keep left of these lines. Do not cross them for any reason. Do not cross them to overtake, to turn, or to enter or leave the road.



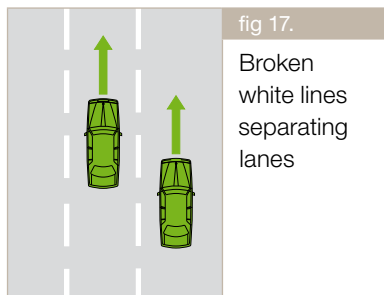
A single continuous line to the left of a broken line means you can cross it to enter or leave the road, but you must not overtake or make a U-turn.



You may cross these lines to overtake, or to enter or leave the road, but only overtake or U-turn if it is safe and the road ahead is clear.

You must not park on the same side of the road as a continuous white dividing line unless there is at least three metres of clearance between your vehicle and the dividing line or unless otherwise indicated on a parking sign. The green vehicles in Figures 13, 14 and 15 are driving alongside a continuous line, and must leave at least three metres clearance if they wish to park on the left side of the road.

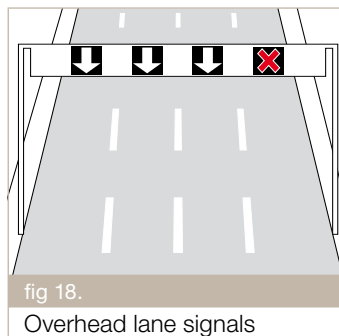
Lane markings



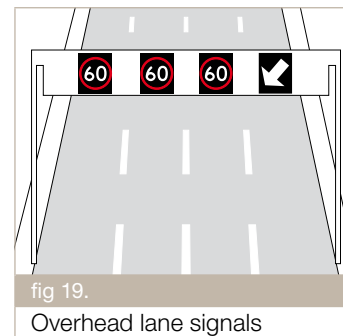
Broken white lines separate lanes of traffic going in the same direction. You may change lanes if you signal, and if it is safe to do so. Remember, you must give way to any vehicle already in that lane. You must drive with your vehicle completely within a lane.

A driver must not cross a continuous line separating lanes unless avoiding an obstruction, permitted by sign, or permitted to drive in a special purpose lane.

Overhead lane signals



If overhead lane signals are in use, travel in the lanes over which there is a speed limit sign, or a green or white arrow. You must stay out of lanes with a red X.



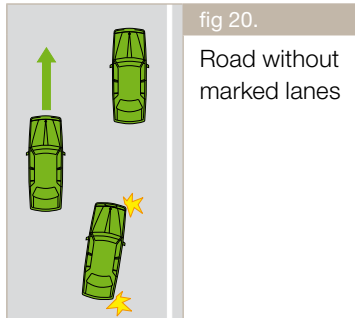
Sometimes the overhead lane signals can change.

If you are travelling in a lane and you then see a green or white arrow, indicating one or more directions, you must drive in that direction by safely changing lanes.

Rules and responsibilities

Roads without marked lanes

Where there are no lane markings and there are two or more lines of traffic travelling in the same direction, you may change from one line of traffic to another if you signal, and if it is safe to do so. However, you may only overtake another vehicle on the left side when it is turning right or if the vehicle is stationary and it is safe to do so.



Special purpose lanes

Special purpose lanes include bicycle lanes, bus lanes, transit lanes and tram lanes. Signs and/or road markings are used to set aside lanes for special vehicles. If specified on the signs other vehicles may use these lanes. Drivers must keep out of these lanes during the times marked on the signs or, if no time is specified, at all times. However, you may travel in these lanes for up to 100 metres (only up to 50 metres in a bicycle lane or tram lane), only when necessary to do so, to enter or leave the road, or to avoid an obstruction or turning vehicle.

Some examples of special purpose lanes are shown on pages 94-95.

Tram lanes

For trams and public buses only (see Sharing the road with trams on pages 138-140).

Bus lanes

For buses and other vehicles as specified on a sign (see Sharing the road with buses on page 141).

Bicycle lanes

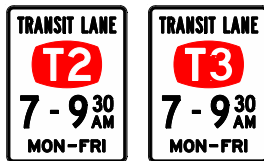
For cyclists only. Parking is allowed unless prohibited by signs. If you need to turn left from the road, you may drive along the bicycle lane for up to 50 metres only if it is necessary to do so. You should be courteous to cyclists. You must give way to cyclists in a bicycle lane, and only move into a bicycle lane when it is safe to do so.



Bicycle lane sign

Transit lanes

During times specified on the signs, transit lanes are for buses, taxis, motorcycles, trams and vehicles carrying two or more people (T2 sign), or three or more people (T3 sign).



Transit lane sign

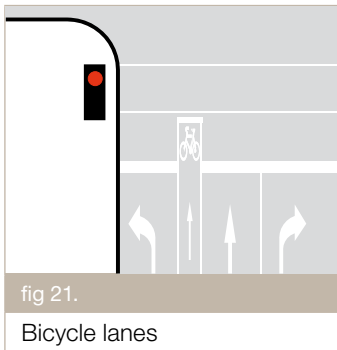
Fact

You may drive in a transit lane for up to 100 metres if it is necessary to make a turn.

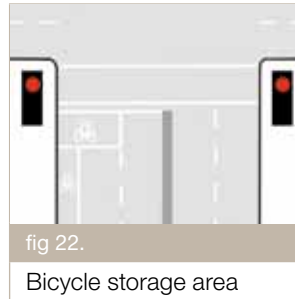
Rules and responsibilities

Traffic lane arrows

Arrows are painted on the road at some intersections. They tell you the direction traffic in each lane must go. If two directions are shown, you may go either way. You must not go in a direction other than that indicated by the arrows.



Arrows may also be applied to bicycle lanes.



A 'head start' bicycle area is sometimes provided so that cyclists can be seen by drivers when stopped at red traffic lights. This is called a bicycle storage area. A driver facing a red light at an intersection with a bicycle storage area must stop at the first stop line and not proceed into the area marked for bicycles until the light changes.

Painted traffic islands

Traffic islands are sometimes painted on the road before a right turning lane. You can drive over the painted island or

stop to wait on it, as long as there are no double lines outlining the island on the left, but you must give way to any vehicle in a turning lane or entering a turning lane from a marked lane.



You should not enter the painted island to turn right if the traffic is not banked up.

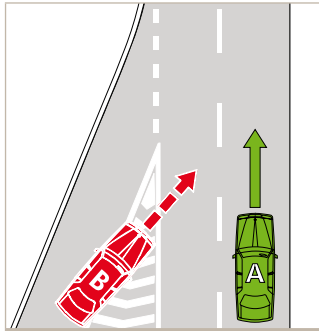


fig 24.

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A

Where a painted island with a continuous line separates traffic that is travelling in the same direction, such as at a freeway on-ramp, a driver must not drive on the painted island.

Give Way signs or lines

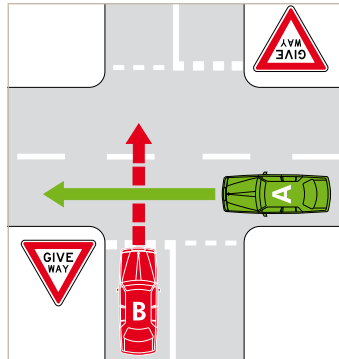


fig 25.

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A

See Giving way to vehicles at intersections on page 102.

Stop signs or lines

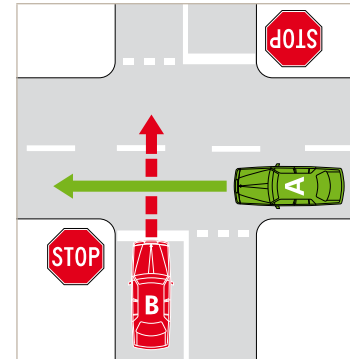


fig 26.

Red vehicle B must come to a complete stop and give way to green vehicle A.

See Giving way to vehicles at intersections on page 102.

Rules and responsibilities

Traffic controls at intersections

Traffic lights

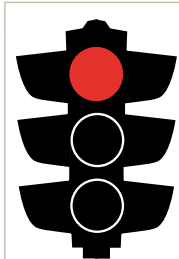


fig 27.

Red means you must STOP. Do **not** enter the intersection

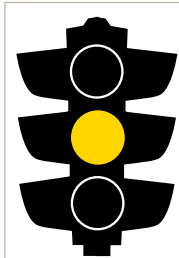


fig 28.

Yellow means STOP unless you are unable to do so safely



fig 29.

Green means you may enter the intersection, but only if you do not block the intersection

Traffic lights with arrows

Traffic lights with arrows make turns easier. If the arrow pointing in the direction you want to go is red, you must stop. If the arrow is green you may proceed in the direction it is pointing if it is safe to do so.

Tip

Half of all crashes happen at intersections. Stay alert and obey the intersection rules.

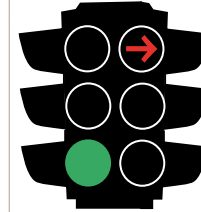


fig 30.

You must not turn right

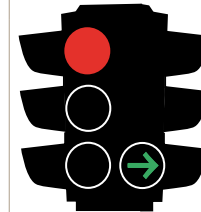


fig 31.

You may turn right

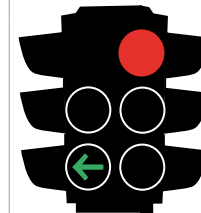


fig 32.

You may turn left

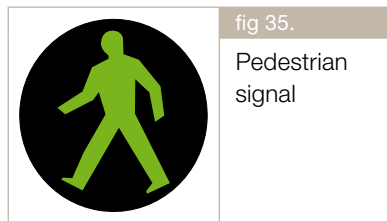
Traffic lights for trams, buses and bicycles

Some traffic lights signal a white T or B on a black background. These are used for trams and buses at some intersections. Some traffic lights may have red, yellow and green bicycle lights which apply to cyclists. Other road users must wait for the normal green light.



Pedestrian signals

Turning vehicles must always give way to pedestrians who are crossing the road they are turning into whether or not there is a green 'walking figure' facing the pedestrian.



Traffic control signs



Stop and Give Way signs are used for safety control at many intersections and other places.

See Giving way to vehicles at intersections on page 102.

Traffic lights not working

If the traffic lights are not working or flashing yellow you must give way as at any other uncontrolled intersection (see page 103).

Rules and responsibilities

Give way rules

There will be many times when you are driving when your path crosses that of other road users. When this happens, one or more of the people involved must give way in order to avoid a collision.

Definition

To **give way** means that if there is a danger that your vehicle could collide with another vehicle, person or animal you must slow down and stop if necessary to avoid a collision. If you are stationary, you must remain stationary until it is safe to proceed.

Here are some everyday driving situations when you will be required to give way.

Giving way to pedestrians

Pedestrians are vulnerable road users because they are not protected in a crash (unlike drivers and passengers protected within a vehicle). The road rules are designed to protect pedestrians on the road in many situations.

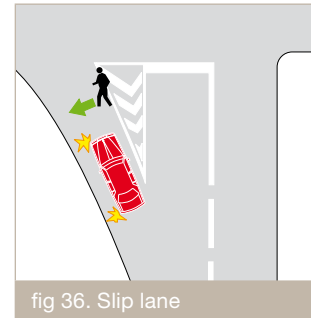
There are a number of driving situations when you must give way to pedestrians.

At pedestrian crossings

You must give way to any pedestrian on a pedestrian crossing, and you must not overtake another vehicle which has stopped at a pedestrian crossing. When approaching a pedestrian crossing, you must drive at a speed that would enable you to stop safely.

In slip lanes

You must give way to any pedestrian in a slip lane.



Definition

A **slip lane** is an area of road for vehicles turning left that is separated, at some point, from other parts of the road by a painted island or traffic island.

At intersections

When turning left or right at any intersection (except a roundabout), you must give way to any pedestrians crossing the road you are turning into.

At children's crossings

See Sharing the road with pedestrians on page 131.

On the footpath

When entering the road from a driveway or adjacent land, you must give way to pedestrians on any footpath, path or nature strip you cross to enter the road. You must also give way to bicycles and other vehicles on the footpath, path or nature strip.

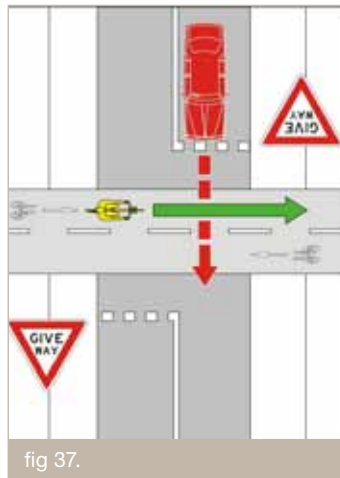
This also applies when leaving the road to enter a driveway or adjacent land.

In shared zones

In a shared zone shared by both vehicles and pedestrians, you must give way to pedestrians (see Speed limits on page 79).

At Stop or Give Way signs or lines not at intersections

You must give way not only to vehicles, but also to any pedestrian at or near the sign or line. This includes pedestrians as well as bicycles crossing in front of you on a shared or bicycle path.

**When making a U-turn**

You must give way to all pedestrians as well as vehicles when making a U-turn.

At tram stops

Before passing a stopped tram, you must stop at the rear of the tram, give way to any pedestrians crossing between the tram and the left side of the road and not proceed while the doors are open.

There are other requirements that drivers must comply with when passing stopped trams (see Sharing the road with trams pages 138-140).

Remember pedestrians can run onto the road at the last minute in order to catch a tram, so take extra care to look out for them.

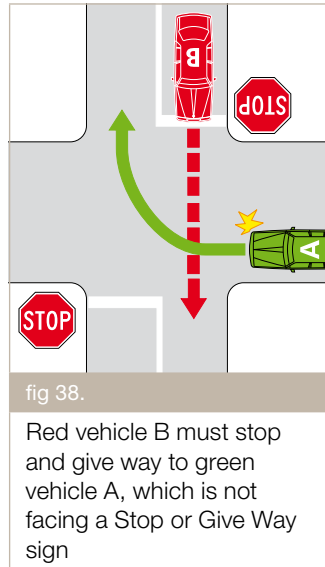
Rules and responsibilities

Giving way to vehicles at intersections

Stop or Give Way signs or lines at an intersection

A driver facing a Stop sign or line must come to a complete stop. After stopping at a Stop sign or line, or when facing a Give Way sign or line at an intersection, you must give way to any vehicle in, entering or approaching the intersection except:

- a vehicle making a U-turn
- a vehicle turning left using a slip lane
- an oncoming vehicle turning right if that vehicle is also facing a Stop or Give Way sign or line.



Fact

When the law refers to **vehicles**, this includes not only motor vehicles but also bicycles and horses being ridden.

The Give Way rules apply equally for these smaller vehicles.

You could be charged just the same for failing to give way to a bicycle or a horse being ridden as for failing to give way to a truck!

Giving way at intersections (except T-intersections or roundabouts)

If there are no traffic lights or signs or lines at an intersection, you must give way to any vehicle on your right.

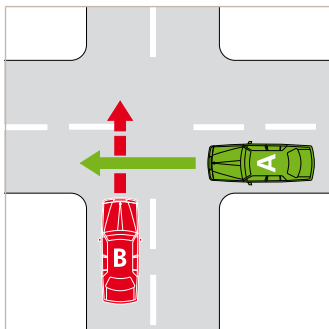


fig 39.

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A (on the right) that is going straight ahead

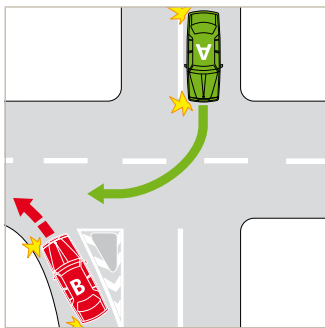


fig 40.

Red vehicle B using a slip lane must give way to green vehicle A (on the right)

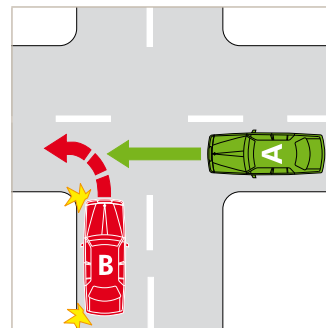


fig 41.

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A (on the right) that is going straight

The same requirements apply if the traffic lights are not working or flashing yellow.

Rules and responsibilities

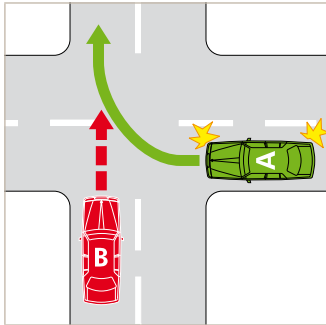


fig 42.

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A (on the right) that is turning right

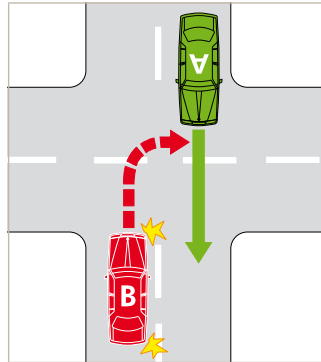


fig 43.

Red vehicle B turning right must give way to oncoming green vehicle A

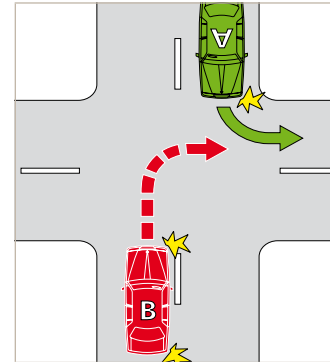


fig 44.

Red vehicle B turning right must give way to oncoming green vehicle A that is turning left

If you are turning right at an intersection without traffic lights or signs or lines, you must also give way to oncoming vehicles going straight ahead or turning left (except if they are turning in a slip lane) as well as any vehicle on your right.

Giving way at T-intersections

The Give Way rule is the same for all T-intersections. When you enter the continuing road from the road that ends, you must give way to vehicles travelling along the continuing road.

Definition

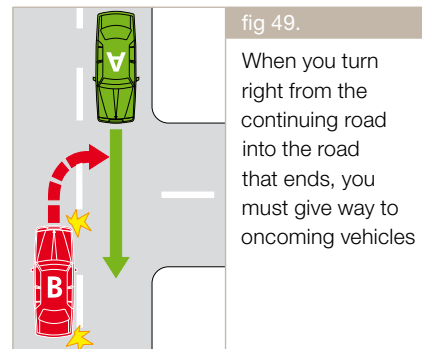
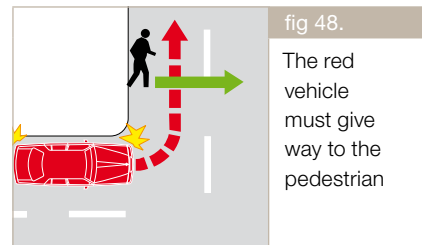
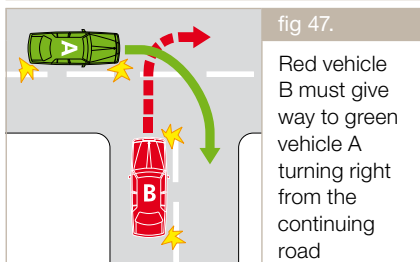
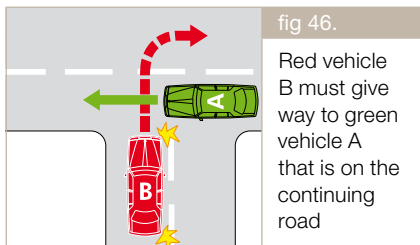
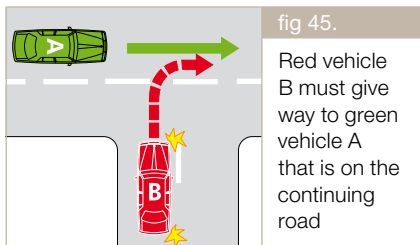
A **T-intersection** is where two roads meet and one of them ends.

T-intersections may not always form a regular T



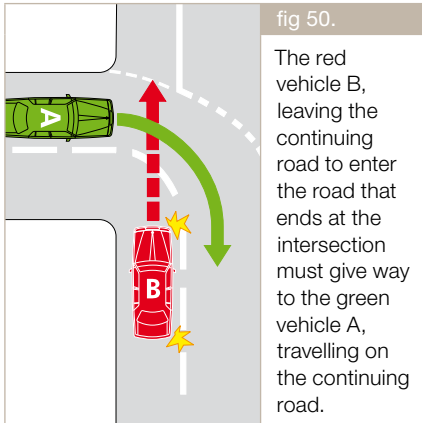
Differing T-intersections

These diagrams show how to give way at T-intersections without lights or signs, or when traffic lights have failed or are flashing yellow.



Rules and responsibilities

Some T-intersections are modified so that the continuing road goes round a corner. The road that ends is marked by a continuity line and Give Way or Stop lines or signs.



Giving way at roundabouts

When entering a **roundabout**, you must give way to:

- all vehicles already in the roundabout
- all trams entering, or approaching the roundabout.

Take care to look out for motorcyclists and cyclists already in the roundabout who may be harder to see.



Roundabout sign

Definition

A **roundabout** is an intersection with a roundabout sign at each entrance, a central island and one or more marked lanes, or lines of traffic, all of which have vehicles travelling in the same direction. You must always keep to the left of the central island.

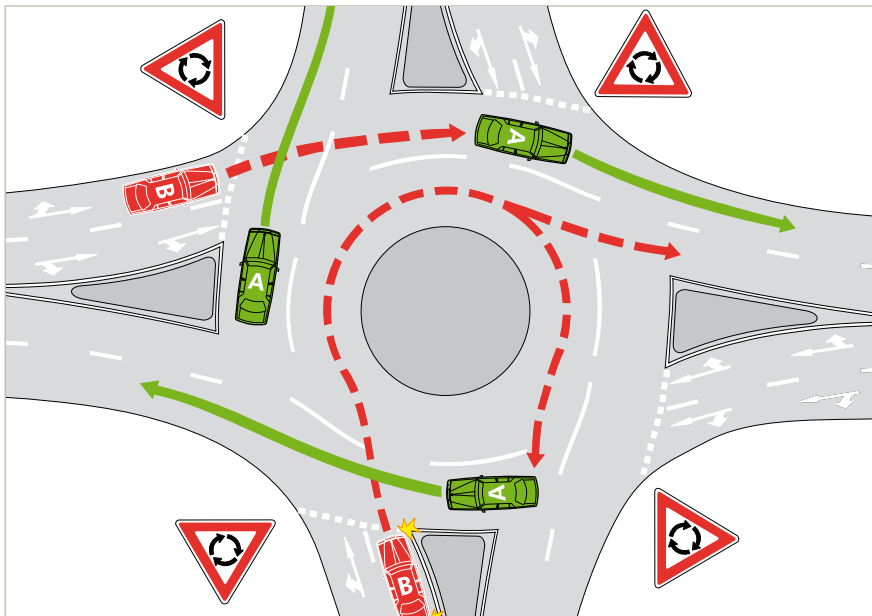


fig 51. Roundabout

Always give way to vehicles already in the roundabout. In this diagram, the red B vehicles must give way to the green A vehicles. Enter only when there is a safe gap in the traffic.

Rules and responsibilities

Cyclists and animal riders

In a roundabout, cyclists and animal riders have the option of turning right from the left lane, but they must give way to drivers exiting the roundabout.



Giving way on divided roads

When a two-way road is divided by a **median strip**, a Give Way or Stop sign applies to the whole of the intersection.

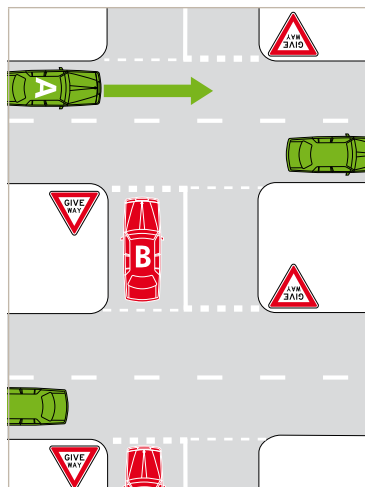


fig 52.

The red vehicle B must give way to the green vehicle A

Definition

A **median strip** is a dividing strip on the road designed to separate vehicles travelling in opposite directions.

Turning from a divided road

When turning from a divided road, you must obey the signs on the road you are turning from. Normally a vehicle in the same position as the red vehicle B could continue if it is safe to do so. However in Figure 53 the red vehicle B is facing a Stop Here On Red Signal sign, therefore it must stop until that signal is green. If there is no sign, you must give way to traffic when entering a road from a break in the median strip after turning.

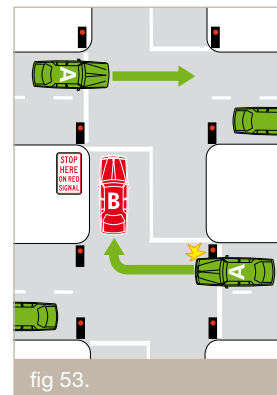


fig 53.

Other driving situations when you are required to give way

U-turn

When making a U-turn you must give way to all other vehicles and pedestrians.

Entering the road

Whenever you enter the road from a driveway or adjacent land, you must give way to all vehicles and pedestrians.

Rules and responsibilities

Entering the traffic stream

Whenever you enter the traffic stream from a parked position, or through a break in a median strip, you must give way to all vehicles travelling on the road.

Changing lanes

Whenever you change lanes from one marked lane or line of traffic to another, you must give way to vehicles already in that lane or line of traffic. This includes crossing over any broken line marked on the road which indicates that a lane ends, for example when merging into freeway traffic.

Tip

Make a head check whenever you are changing lanes or pulling out from the kerb, but don't take your eyes off the road ahead for more than a second.

Zip merging

If you are on a road where there are no lines marked and the road is such that two rows of vehicles must merge into one, you must give way to any vehicle which has any part of its vehicle ahead of yours. This is called zip merging.

Note: If you cross any lines marked on the road, then you are not zip merging but changing lanes and you must give way accordingly.

Definition

When two lanes of traffic merge into one and there are no lane markings, this is known as **zip merging**.

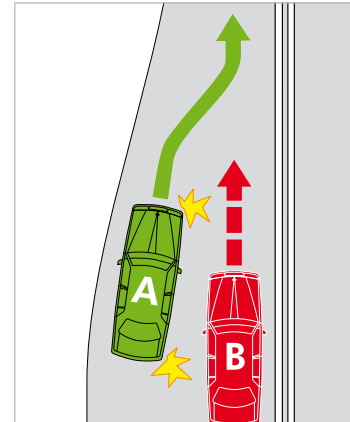


fig 54. Zip Merging

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A

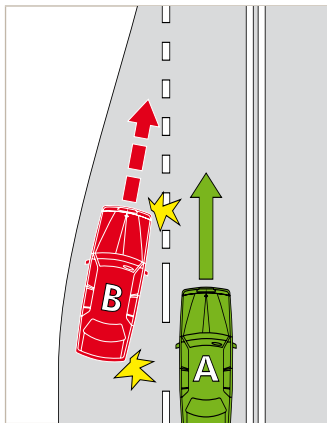


fig 55. Changing Lanes

Red vehicle B must give way to green vehicle A

Police direction

You **must** always follow instructions from the Police or any other authorised person.



Rules and responsibilities

Turning

Plan when you will turn well in advance. Move into the correct lane long before you need to turn. Use the indicators to give other road users plenty of warning.

Tip

Remember, road users can make mistakes about who should give way. Never assume the other driver has seen you or will give way to you. Make eye contact and always proceed carefully.

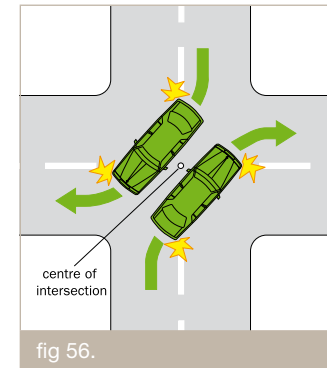
Making turns

Signalling your moves

Always use your indicators to let others know you are about to turn or change lanes.

The signal must be given for long enough to warn others that you are about to change lanes or direction. You must signal for at least five seconds when moving from a stationary position at the side of the road or from a median strip parking area.

Making right turns



To make a right turn you must:

- approach the intersection as close to the left of the centre of the road as possible
- turn just right of the centre of the intersection.

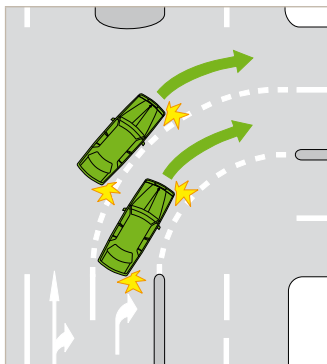


fig 57.

Right turns on multi-lane roads

On some multi-lane roads, arrows painted on the road will show you if right turns may also be made from other lanes.

If road markings indicate how a turn is to be made, you must make a turn as indicated by the road markings.

Making left turns

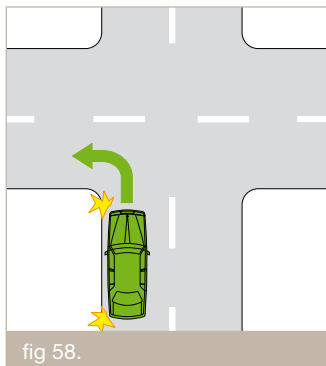


fig 58.

To make a left turn you **must** approach the intersection as close to the left side of the road as possible, but give way to bicycles when crossing into the bicycle lane (see page 95).

Where there is a slip lane, you must turn using the slip lane (see slip lane definition on page 100). But look out for cyclists on your left who may be going straight ahead.

Left turns on multi-lane roads

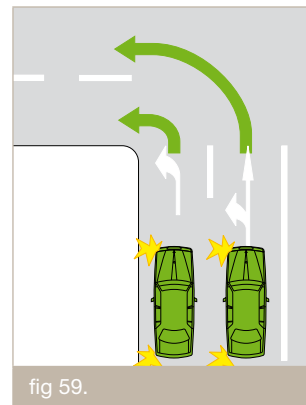


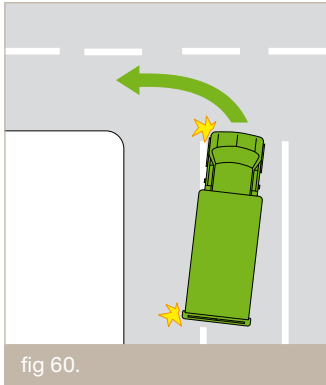
fig 59.

For a multi-lane road, arrows painted on the road will show you if left turns may also be made from other lanes.

If road markings allow turns from more than one lane, it is advisable that you stay in the same lane when you turn from one road into the other.

Rules and responsibilities

Exception to the turning rules



Trucks or vehicles over 7.5 metres long displaying a Do Not Overtake Turning Vehicle sign may use more than one lane to turn (see Sharing the road with trucks and other heavy vehicles on pages 141-143). Do not overtake these vehicles while turning if they display a 'Do not overtake turning vehicle' sign.

Hook turns



Hook Turn sign

A driver turning right at an intersection with traffic lights and a Hook Turn sign must turn right by making a hook turn as shown in Figure 61.

Fact

Hook Turn signs are found at some intersections in central Melbourne and South Melbourne. The signs may be at the side of the road or hung from overhead wires, so be alert in checking for these signs.

To make a hook turn, you must:

- 1 approach and enter the intersection from as near as possible to the left
- 2 move forward, keeping clear of any marked foot crossing, until your vehicle is as near as possible to the far side of the road that you are entering
- 3 remain at the position reached under Step 2 until **the traffic lights on the road you are entering have changed to green**
- 4 turn right into the road and continue straight ahead.

Fact

A cyclist may make a hook turn at any intersection – not just at hook turn intersections – unless there is a No hook turn by bicycles sign.

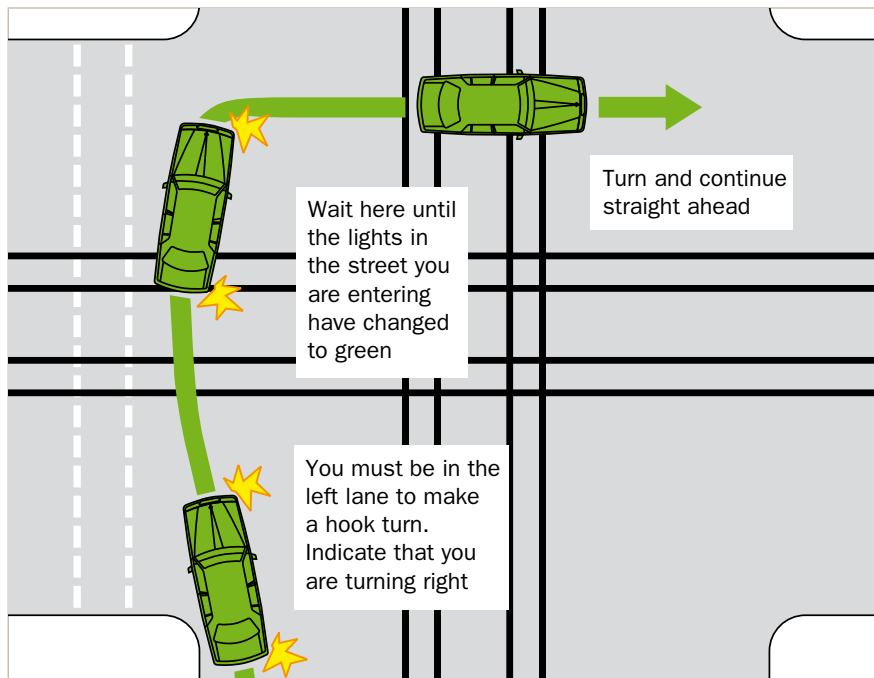


fig 61.

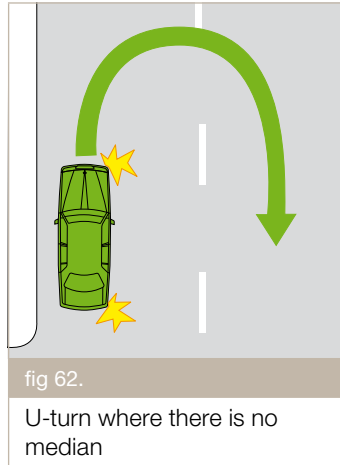
Doing a hook turn - turning right from the left lane

Rules and responsibilities

U-turns

When making a U-turn you must:

- have a clear view of traffic in either direction
- signal your intention for a reasonable time
- give way to all other vehicles and pedestrians
- safely complete your U-turn without disrupting other traffic.



Where there is no median, it is advisable that the U-turn be made from the left side of the road. Remember to watch out for traffic approaching from behind you.

You must not make a U-turn:

- over double continuous lines
- over a single continuous line
- where there is a No U-turn sign.

If the sign is not at an intersection continue on until you reach an intersection before you make a U-turn.

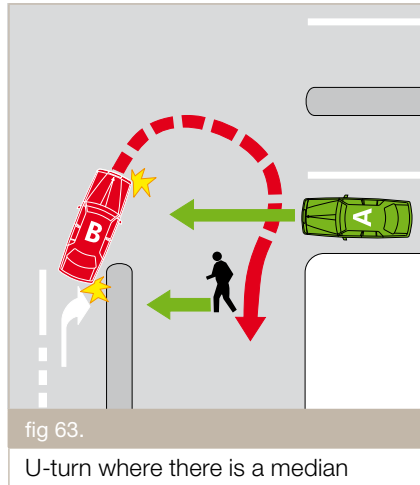


No U-turn sign



No Right Turn sign

- at a No Right Turn sign unless there is a U-turn Permitted sign.



Where there is a median, a U-turn must be made from the right lane.

Rules and responsibilities

Turning and one way roads

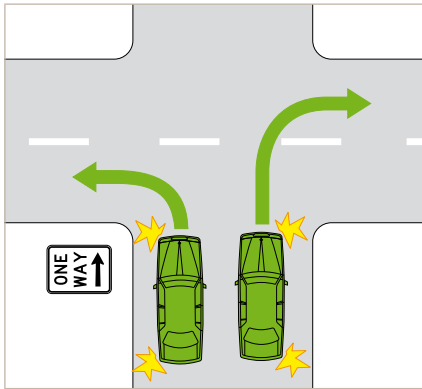


fig 64.

Turning from one-way roads

When turning left or right from a one-way road into a two-way road, you must turn from a position close to the side you are turning towards.

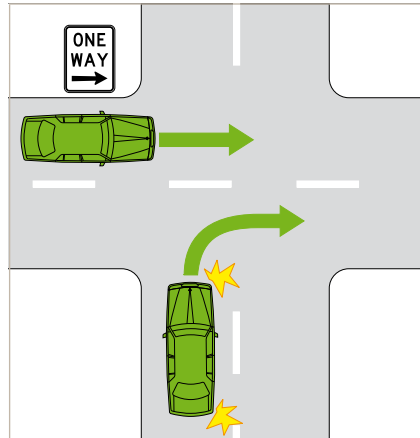


fig 65.

Turning into one-way roads

When turning left or right from a two-way road into a one-way road, it is advisable to turn into the nearest lane.

Making turns at roundabouts

A roundabout is considered to be a special type of intersection, so different rules apply. The Give Way rules on page 107 explain what you must do when entering the roundabout and who should give way.

Sometimes roundabouts have more than one lane. You need to follow these rules about turning left or right or going straight ahead.

Tip

Decide before you enter the roundabout if you are going to turn right, turn left or go straight ahead.

Turning left

Approach in the left lane and stay in that lane.

Signal a left turn on your approach to the roundabout and keep the signal on until you have left the roundabout.

Going straight ahead

Approach the roundabout in the left or right lane.

Drive in the same lane through the roundabout.

Do not signal on your approach to the roundabout, but if practicable, signal left as you exit.

Fact

Cyclists and animal riders may make a right turn from a left lane.

Rules and responsibilities

Turning right

Always approach the roundabout in the right lane.

Drive close to the centre of the roundabout and follow the right lane as you leave.

Signal a right turn on your approach, and signal left, if practicable, just before the exit you are turning into, keeping the signal on until you have left the roundabout.

Fact

Where arrow(s) are marked on the road before or in a roundabout you must drive in the direction of the arrow(s).

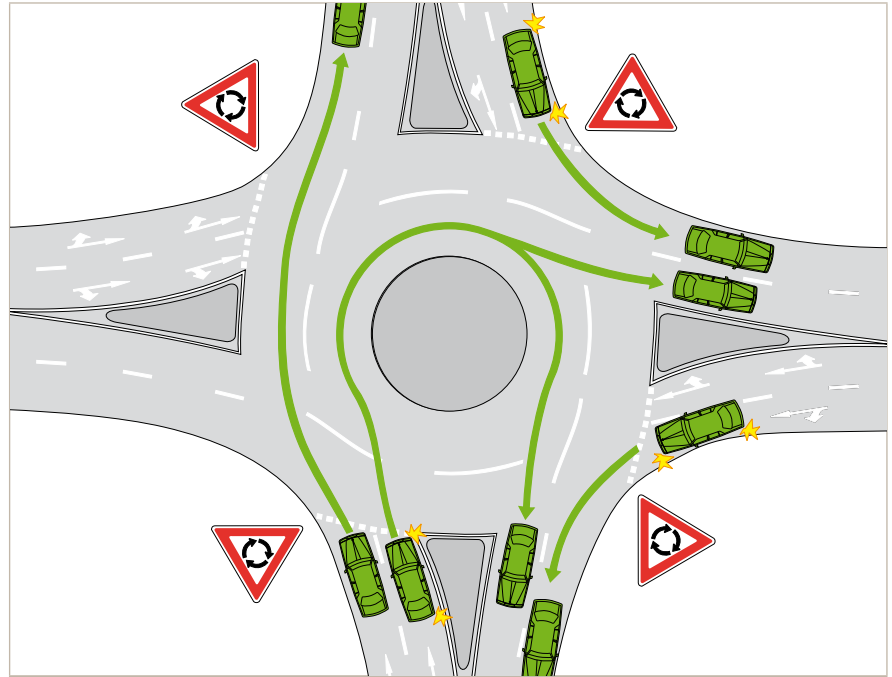


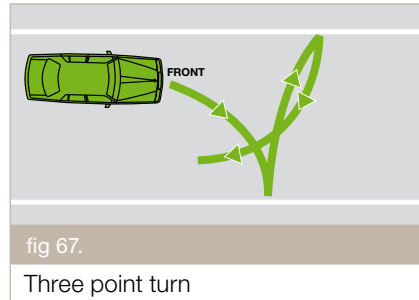
fig 66.

Turning at a roundabout

Three point turn

A three point turn is used to turn your car around on a road which is not as wide as your car's turning circle. When making a three point turn you must:

- put on your left signal before stopping at the kerb
- put on your right signal before leaving the kerb
- look in both directions before commencing the turn
- proceed across the road to the opposite kerb
- look in both directions along the road before reversing
- look in the direction of travel before and during reversing
- after reversing, look in both directions before moving off.



Rules and responsibilities

Freeways

There is special advice when driving on freeways as freeway speeds are often high and the traffic is heavy.

Entering a freeway

- Adjust your speed as you drive along the entry ramp to match that of the freeway traffic.
- Clearly indicate your intentions.
- Give way to traffic on the freeway.
- Where there is a large enough gap, merge smoothly with the freeway traffic.



Start Freeway sign

There are traffic lights at some freeway entrances to control the flow of vehicles onto the freeway when the traffic is heavy. Electronic advisory signs will let you know if these traffic lights are operating. When operating, the lights will change quickly, so that when the light is green only one vehicle will be able to enter the freeway.

Exiting a freeway

- Watch for signs that tell you that you are approaching an exit ramp. Exit lanes are usually on the left.
- Maintain your speed and signal your intention to exit well in advance.
- Adjust your speed once you have entered the exit ramp.

If you miss your exit, continue travelling on the freeway until you reach the next exit. Do not reverse on a freeway. Do not cross the median strip.



Warragul exit 2 km sign



Wrong way go back sign

Some freeway exits will have an exit number sign which you can use to help navigate and map your route. The freeway exit signs can also provide a location reference for emergency services in emergency situations.



Freeway number exit sign

Overtaking lanes

Be alert on freeways as traffic travels at high speed. You must not drive in the right lane unless overtaking or unless all lanes are congested. This rule also applies to the right lane used by all traffic, if the lane to the right of that is a **transit lane**.

More information on transit lanes can be found on page 95.

Stopping

You must not stop on a freeway except in an emergency. If you have to stop, use the emergency stopping lane only. Put on your hazard warning lights.

Fact

Buses and taxis can sometimes use the emergency stopping lane when signs allow it. So watch out for vehicles in the emergency stopping lane, especially when entering or exiting freeways.

Variable speed zones

Electronic variable signs on freeways indicate reduced speed limits at high risk times.



Electronic variable speed limit signs

Tollways

Fact

Tollways are sections of road which the driver must pay to use. Signs are displayed to advise drivers that they will soon be entering the tollway.



Start tollway sign

You are entering a tolled section of road.



Tollway entrance sign

You are about to enter the tollway from a non-tollway road. If you do not want to enter the tollway, take the next exit.

Rules and responsibilities

Driving safely in tunnels

When **driving in tunnels**:

- Remove sunglasses before entering a tunnel.
- Turn on your headlights, so that your vehicle is more visible.
- Tunnels usually have variable speed limits. Lower limits apply when traffic is congested or when an incident has occurred (e.g. a crash or broken down vehicle). Look for speed limit signs and stay within the limit in accordance with conditions.
- Check and obey variable message and lane control signs that provide important information about safety and traffic conditions.
- Stay out of closed lanes. Even if you can't see the problem, always obey signs and controller instructions.
- Keep a safe distance from other vehicles.

- Lane changing causes many crashes on busy arterial roads. Avoid lane changing and overtaking while travelling through tunnels.
- If you really need to overtake another vehicle (e.g. if it is broken down) make sure you are clear of all other traffic and it is safe. Always use your indicators to show your intention to merge or change lanes.
- Turn your car radio on. Tunnels have re-broadcast systems that convey safety and traffic information to drivers via their radio and the tunnel public announcement system.
- Do not stop in a tunnel except in an emergency or if directed by the tunnel controller. Try to drive out of a tunnel even if your vehicle is damaged or has a mechanical malfunction.
- Do not reverse in a tunnel.
- Do not enter a tunnel if your vehicle is very low on fuel or you think that you might break down.

If you **break down in a tunnel** you should:

- If possible, drive out of the tunnel; otherwise, try to stop in a right or left lane, not the centre lane.
- Switch on your hazard lights and the radio.
- Stay calm, an incident response unit will attend to you as quickly as possible.
- Remain in your vehicle, unless there's a fire or you are asked to evacuate by the control room.
- If you do have to get out, watch carefully for other traffic and move to either the walkway or in front of your vehicle. Never stand behind your vehicle.
- In an evacuation, look for the running man symbols and flashing lights for a safe exit point.

Sharing the road safely

As a driver you share the road with many other people:

- other drivers of cars, vans, trucks, buses and trams
- pedestrians
- motorcyclists
- cyclists.

Cooperative driving

We all have places to get to and want to arrive there safely. The best way to make this happen is to cooperate and help each other. It doesn't really hurt or waste any time to let somebody in from a side street, when the traffic is moving slowly.

You must not block intersections or crossings. If an intersection, crossing or road beyond an intersection or crossing is blocked you must not enter.

Cooperative strategies include:

- always using your signals when turning or changing lanes
- not following too closely
- smoothly controlling your speed rather than driving in a fast start/stop manner
- changing lanes correctly
- slowing down when approaching road work sites.

Remember that cooperation is for all road users. You also share the road with pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, trucks, buses and trams.

There are times and places when cooperation is essential. These include places where:

- two lanes have to merge
- the left lane ends
- extra lanes exist just before and after intersections

- overtaking lanes or divided roads end
- tram stops where a tram passenger unexpectedly alights from the tram some time after other patrons have alighted
- cars are parked and there is not enough room for two vehicles to pass.

Tip

Cooperative driving helps you to be a 'green driver'. There is a connection between your driving style and the impact your driving has on the environment. Drive smoothly and avoid fast start/stop driving – you'll save fuel, pollute less and save money as well. Even better leave the car at home and walk, ride your bike or use public transport!

Rules and responsibilities

Keeping your cool when driving

Road rage or aggressive driving is dangerous. It involves people losing their cool, perhaps in response to a mistake or action of another driver. You can avoid road rage easily.

- The fundamental rule is do not retaliate – it is never worth it!
- If you make a mistake while driving, acknowledge it.
- Don't take the mistakes of other drivers personally – remember it's a mistake not a personal attack.
- Keep your cool and keep your distance!
- Drive cooperatively and consider the other people on the road!

(For more information on strategies to keep your cool when driving, see pages 64-66.)

Sharing the road with other motorists

Keeping to the left

On multi-lane roads with a speed limit over 80 km/h, you must keep out of the right lane unless you are:

- overtaking
- turning right
- making a U-turn
- avoiding an obstruction
- driving in congested traffic.

You must also keep out of the right lane where a Keep Left Unless Overtaking sign applies.



Keep left unless overtaking sign

Signalling your moves

Before turning or changing lanes you must signal for long enough to give sufficient warning to other road users, including other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. In 60 km/h zones, it is best to signal for at least 30 metres or about the length of two houses and driveways before turning or changing lanes.

Tip

Check that your indicator is off after you have made your turn or lane change – it may not have turned off by itself. If it is left on, other drivers will think you intend to turn.

Before moving from a stationary position at the side of the road or a parking area in the middle of the road, you must signal for at least five seconds.

Here are some of the ways you can signal your intentions.

Using your indicators

You must use your indicators when:

- turning to the right or left
- changing lanes or line of traffic
- overtaking
- making U-turns
- pulling into and out of parking spots
- leaving a continuing road which curves to the left or right
- leaving a roundabout (if practicable)
- moving to the left or right from a stationary position
- diverging to the left or right.

Tip

Use indicators even if there is no-one else around – it's the driver you cannot see who can be the most dangerous.

Watch other vehicles' indicators and make sure they are doing what is indicated. Sometimes an indicator has not cancelled from the last turn, or has been put on too early. Make sure you indicate in such a way that your signal cannot be misleading.

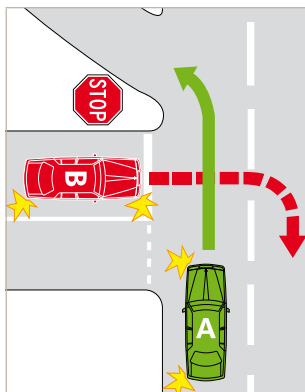


fig 68.

These vehicles are signalling their moves, but could be heading for trouble as vehicle A's signal could be misleading

Using your brake lights

Every time your foot touches the brake pedal, your brake lights glow, warning other drivers you are slowing down. Likewise, you will need to slow down when the brake lights on the vehicle in front of you are glowing red. So give lots of warning by braking early and slowing gradually.

Making eye contact

As well as watching out for indicators, you can get an idea of what another person might do by making eye contact. To make sure another driver knows you are there, try to make eye contact, especially at intersections.

Rules and responsibilities

Using your headlights and tail lights

Headlights help you to see at night. Headlights and tail lights help others to see you in poor light conditions. Your headlights and tail lights must be on between sunset and sunrise.

They must also be on in hazardous weather conditions where there is reduced visibility.

Tip

If the street lights are on, your lights should also be on.

High-beam headlights

Headlights on high-beam enable you to see further. However, headlights on high-beam may dazzle an oncoming driver, so you must 'dip' them to low-beam when another vehicle is within 200 metres. You must also dip your high-beam headlights when driving within 200 metres behind another vehicle.

Don't be dazzled by high-beam

Look to the left side of the road and drive towards the left of your lane if a car with high-beam headlights on is approaching. If dazzled by the lights, slow down and pull over until your eyes recover.

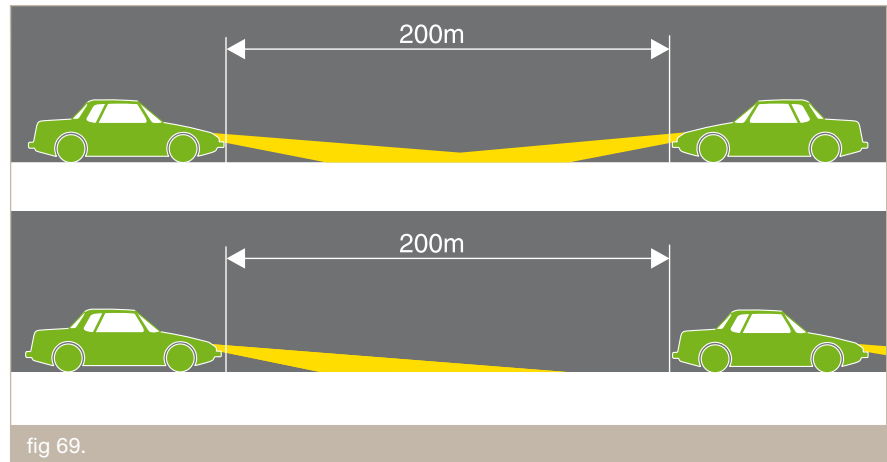


fig 69.

Using emergency signals

If your vehicle breaks down on the road

Make sure other drivers can see your vehicle and stop in time. If possible, pull out of the traffic flow. If you can't get completely off the road, try to stop where people have a clear view of you and your vehicle. Don't stop just over a hill or just around a curve.

Tip

Turn on your hazard warning lights to warn other drivers. If your vehicle doesn't have hazard warning lights use your left indicator instead. Lift your bonnet or boot lid to show other drivers you are in trouble.

Driving in dangerous conditions or situations

You may use hazard warning lights if you are driving in dangerous weather conditions, such as fog, smoke, or if you are driving slowly and likely to obstruct other vehicles or pedestrians. You must not operate front or rear fog lights unless driving in fog or hazardous weather conditions. They can dazzle other drivers if used in other weather conditions.

Warning others of your approach

You must only use your horn if it is necessary to warn other road users of the approach or position of your vehicle.

Rules and responsibilities

How to overtake safely

If someone is overtaking you, you must not increase your vehicle's speed.

Here are some tips to reduce your risk when overtaking:

Overtaking on a two way road

- Check the centre of the road markings (see Road markings, page 91). If there are double continuous white lines, two white lines with a continuous line closest to you or a single continuous line, you must not overtake.
- Make sure you have a clear view of any approaching traffic and that there is enough space to overtake safely. Remember that it is hard to estimate the speed of approaching vehicles.
- Check that the vehicle in front or behind is not also about to pull out to overtake.
- Do a head check.
- Use your right indicator to let others know you are about to overtake. A vehicle behind may want to overtake both you and the vehicle in front.
- If you are not sure you have enough time, just wait. A few seconds or minutes could save your life.
- Never overtake if the road is not wide enough for you to stay completely on the sealed part of the road, unless you can do so at a low speed.
- Judge the length of the vehicle you are overtaking, because some heavy vehicles are very long.
- When safe, accelerate and overtake the vehicle, then indicate left when safe to return to your lane. You must not exceed the speed limit at any time.

- You must keep a safe distance when overtaking and not return into the line of traffic until you are a sufficient distance past the vehicle you are overtaking.

Tip

One way to know if it is safe to return to your lane is when you see both headlights of the vehicle you have overtaken in your rear view mirror.

Overtaking where there are no lane markings

When a road has no lane markings, you must overtake a vehicle on its right side. You must not overtake a moving vehicle on the left, unless the vehicle is turning right, or making a U-turn from the centre of the road, and has its right indicator flashing.

Overtaking where lanes are marked

When a road has lane markings, you may overtake in the left lane but remember you are less visible to the driver of the vehicle you are going past if you overtake on the left.

Overtaking where there are oncoming vehicles

Never underestimate the space and time you will need to safely overtake when there are oncoming vehicles. It is hard to judge the speed at which they are travelling. If in doubt – don't pull out.

Overtaking where there are hills and curves

If your view is blocked, don't pull out. Remember, you must not overtake when there are double unbroken white lines, two white lines with a continuous line closest to you or a single continuous line.

Overtaking at intersections, rail crossings, shopping centre entrances and pedestrian crossings

These are never good places to overtake. Wait until you are on a clearer section of road. You must not overtake another vehicle stopped at a pedestrian or a children's crossing.

Sharing the road with pedestrians

Pedestrians don't always do what you expect. You should watch out for them at all times. Here are some places where you should take extra care. Drivers are obliged to try to avoid a collision even if the pedestrian is doing the wrong thing. More information on giving way to pedestrians can be found on page 100.

Tip

Pedestrians include not only people on foot but also those on wheeled devices such as skateboards, rollerblades, wheelchairs and motorised mobility devices. A person pushing a bicycle is also considered to be a pedestrian.

Rules and responsibilities

Tip

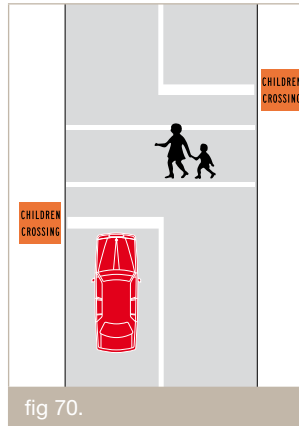
Remember whenever you are a pedestrian, you cannot rely solely on the speed limits and road rules to protect you. Always keep a look out for vehicles (including bicycles and motorcycles) because in a crash a pedestrian will come off second best.

At a children's crossing



Children's crossing flag

Always approach a children's crossing at a speed from which you can safely stop. You must stop at flagged children's crossings if a pedestrian is on or entering the crossing, even if there is no crossing supervisor present. You must not proceed until the pedestrian has left the crossing.



Hand-held stop sign

You must also stop if a hand-held Stop sign is displayed at the crossing.

At intersections and traffic lights

When turning, you must give way to pedestrians crossing the road you are entering. Elderly people may not cross the road in the time allowed by the lights. Be patient and wait for them to cross safely.

Pedestrian lights are often located away from intersections to enable pedestrians to cross roads safely. These traffic signals generally operate the same as lights at intersections. However, at some locations, drivers may proceed when the yellow light starts flashing, provided they give way to any pedestrians still on the crossing. These crossings have When Flashing Give Way To Pedestrians signs.



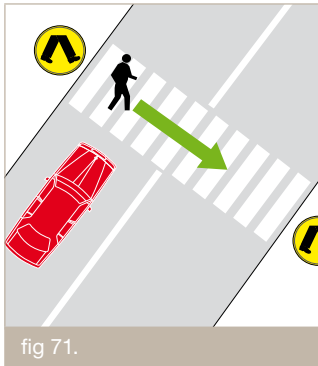
Pedestrian give way sign at a traffic light



Rules and responsibilities

At pedestrian crossings

Always approach pedestrian crossings at a speed from which you can safely stop. Not all pedestrians look before they step onto crossings, so take care. You must give way to any pedestrian on a pedestrian crossing.



At shared zones

Shared zones have a speed limit of 10 km/h or as indicated on the Shared Zone sign. In a shared zone, you must give way to pedestrians.

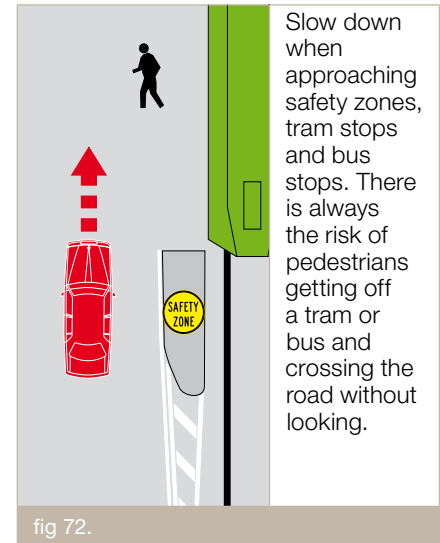
At safety zones, tram stops and bus stops

Definition

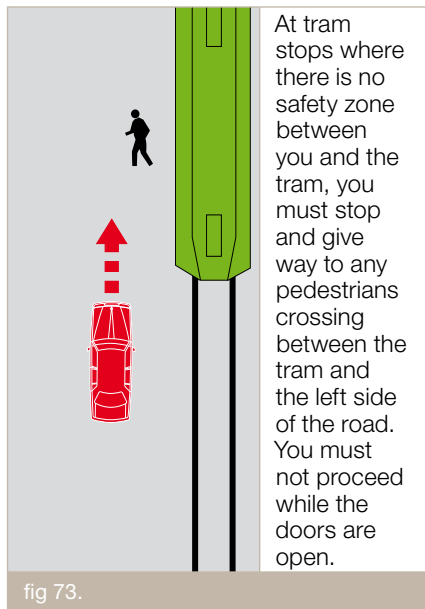
A **safety zone** is the area of the road at or near a tram stop with safety zone signs and a traffic island or dividing strip.

Slow down when approaching **safety zones**, tram stops and bus stops. There is always the risk of pedestrians getting off a tram or bus and crossing the road without looking. Pedestrians are often hard to see when stepping out suddenly from behind or in front of a bus or tram.

It is also a good idea when you are waiting to pick up a bus passenger to park on the same side of the road that the bus will be travelling. More information on sharing the road with trams can be found on pages 138-140.

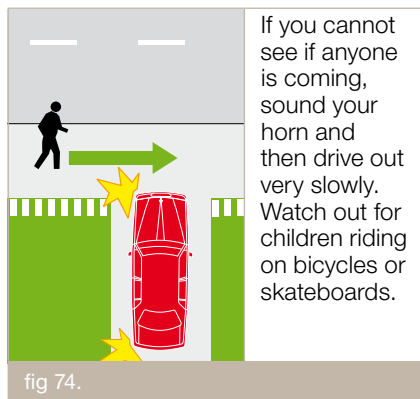


Slow down when approaching safety zones, tram stops and bus stops. There is always the risk of pedestrians getting off a tram or bus and crossing the road without looking.



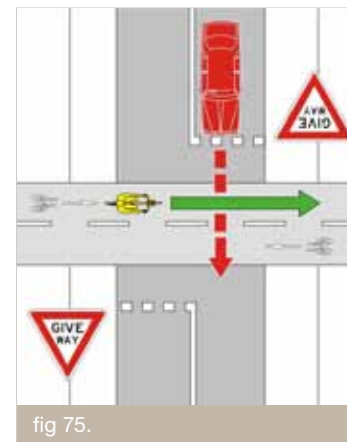
There are other requirements that drivers must comply with when passing stopped trams (see Sharing the road with trams on pages 138-140).

When coming out of driveways



You must give way to any bicycles or pedestrians when leaving any private property, such as homes, shopping centres, service stations and car parks.

Crossing on paths



You must give way to any vehicles or pedestrians on a shared or bicycle path which crosses the road if you are facing a Give Way or Stop sign.

Rules and responsibilities

At shopping centres and car parks

At shopping centres, car parks and other busy places there is a greater chance of pedestrians crossing the road unexpectedly or stepping out from behind or between vehicles without looking. Slow down and be alert.

Near schools

Take care when driving near schools especially at times when children are arriving or leaving. Watch out for 40 km/h or 60 km/h speed limits outside schools.

Where children are walking or playing

Beware of children darting out suddenly from between parked cars, near playgrounds, bus stops or anywhere you see children walking or playing.

Near libraries and senior citizens' clubs

Be alert and take extra care in areas where there are elderly people, such as libraries, senior citizens' clubs and homes for the elderly.

Tip

Beware of children suddenly coming out from between parked cars, near playgrounds or bus stops – they are often hard to see over the tops of cars.

Vision impaired

Be aware of pedestrians with poor or impaired vision who may be using a guide dog, a white cane or white walking stick. They may not see your vehicle clearly or be able to judge the speed of your vehicle.

Near hotels or nightclubs

Pedestrians who have been drinking may be impaired by alcohol. They may not pay attention to the traffic before crossing the road.

Wet weather

Pedestrians may hurry and take risks in the wet. Slow down and take extra care in these conditions.

At night

Pedestrians may be particularly difficult to see in the dark or near-dark conditions.

Motorised mobility devices

Motorised mobility devices include wheelchairs, scooters and buggies that are used by people who are unable to walk or have difficulty walking. People using motorised mobility devices must obey the same road rules as other pedestrians. Watch out for motorised mobility devices.

Sharing the road with cyclists and motorcyclists

You need to be especially alert for cyclists and motorcyclists as they are more at risk of injury than drivers. Give cyclists and motorcyclists space – they have the same rights and responsibilities as you. Drivers should leave at least one metre clearance when overtaking cyclists or motorcyclists and more clearance on higher speed roads.

Before you open your car door, use your mirrors and do a headcheck to look for cyclists and motorcyclists passing your car.

Tip

Doing a head check is easier if you open the car door with your left hand.

When passing a parked car, cyclists and motorcyclists should keep well clear in case a door is opened unexpectedly.

Tip

Many motorcycles can accelerate faster than a car. What looks like a safe gap in traffic, may not be if there is a motorcycle among the cars.

Cyclists and motorcyclists are entitled to ride two abreast (up to 1.5 metres apart); this makes them easier to see. Give cyclists and motorcyclists their own space.

Never share the lane with cyclists or motorcyclists if you cannot leave this clearance. Motorcyclists and cyclists should also keep a safe distance from other vehicles and not travel through small gaps between lines of traffic.

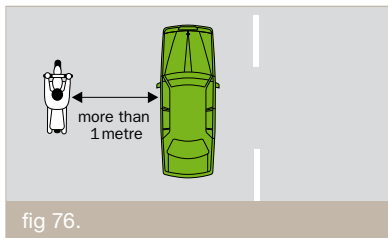


fig 76.

Watch out for cyclists and motorcyclists

Bicycles and motorcycles are smaller than cars and therefore harder to see and are more likely to be hidden in your blind spot. Keep a lookout for them, particularly before turning or entering an intersection or changing lanes. Intersections are where many motorcycle crashes occur because vehicles turning left or right cut across in front of the rider.

Riders can be hidden by large vehicles which are overtaking them, such as trucks and buses. Only move left or turn left from behind a large vehicle when you have a clear view and are sure that the road is clear.

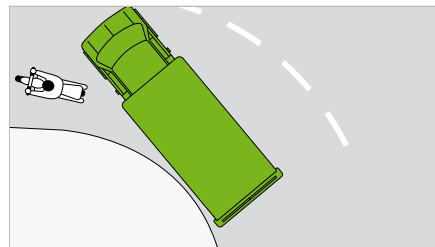


fig 77.

Watch out for cyclists and motorcycles. Riders can be hidden by large vehicles which are overtaking them, such as trucks and buses.

Fact

Over one third of motorcycle crashes happen at intersections. Remember: Always 'Look Bike'.

Rules and responsibilities

Sharing the road with trams

Young, inexperienced drivers are involved in more tram-pedestrian crashes than more experienced drivers.

Remember these general rules about sharing the road with trams.

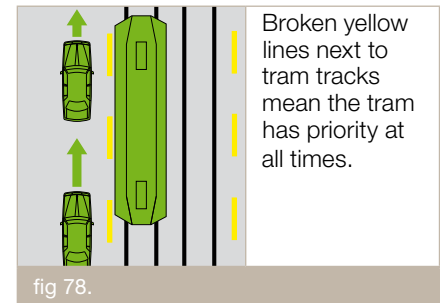
- Do not pass a tram stopped at a tram stop unless there is a safety zone. You must stop level with the rear of the tram, and not drive past while the tram doors are open.
 - You may only overtake a stopped tram if there are no pedestrians on the road and the tram doors are closed or if a uniformed tram employee signals you through.
- However, you must not exceed 10 km/h while passing the tram.

- You must give way to a tram moving into or across a roundabout.
- You must not pass on the right of a tram unless the tram tracks are at or near the far left side of the road.
- Buses travelling along tram tracks must be treated as trams.

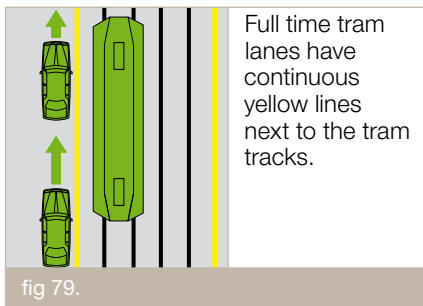
Broken yellow lines next to tram tracks

These lines on roads give trams priority at all times.

- You can cross a broken yellow line and drive on tram tracks at any time, however you must keep out of the path of trams.
- You must not delay a tram.
- If you want to turn right, allow the tram to pass you, or keep going and turn right further on.
- Do not pull out in front of a tram and do not delay a tram.



Full time tram lanes



These tram lanes are in operation at all times and the Tram Lane sign will not show any times of operation. You are not allowed to travel in **a tram lane**. You may drive in a tram lane for up to 50 metres to enter or leave the road. However, you must not delay a tram.



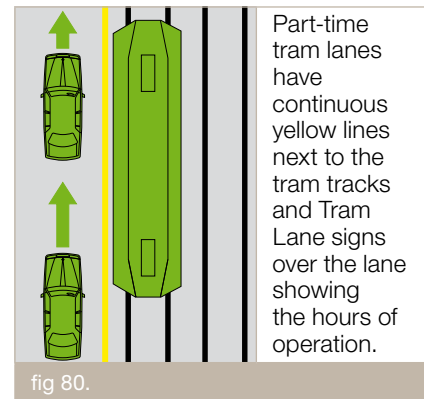
Tram lane sign

Part-time tram lanes

Part-time tram lanes have Tram Lane signs over the lane which indicate the hours of operation and a continuous yellow line to the left of the tracks. You are not allowed to travel in a part-time **tram lane** during the times it is in operation (as shown on the Tram Lane signs). You may drive in a part-time tram lane for up to 50 metres to enter or leave the road. However you must not delay trams even during the times when the tram lane is not operating.



Tram lane with hours of operations sign



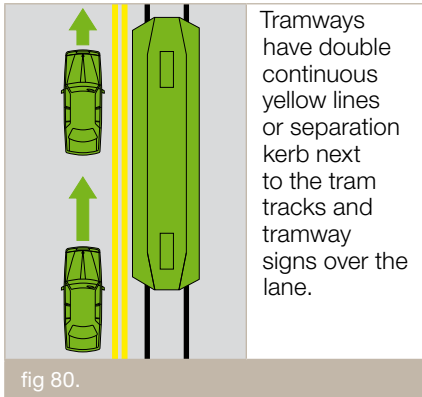
Definition

A **tram lane** is a part of the road with tram tracks that is marked along the left side of the tracks by a continuous yellow line, and is indicated by a Tram Lane sign.

Rules and responsibilities

Tramways

Tramways are in operation at all times. You must not drive in a tramway at any time unless you have to avoid an obstruction. Tramways are marked by a Tramway sign over the lane and double continuous yellow lines or physical structures to separate trams from other traffic. You may only cross where there are breaks designed to permit vehicles to cross the tramway.



Common sense and tramways

If a parked or double parked vehicle blocks your lane, you may not be able to avoid driving in a tramway. You won't be breaking the law, but move to your own lane as soon as possible to avoid delaying a tram.

Trams are longer and heavier than cars and it takes them longer to stop safely. So, when you are passing a tram or changing lanes, don't pull into the empty space immediately in front of a tram. This is their 'safety margin'. Be careful and leave plenty of room.



Tramway sign

Sharing the road with buses

On some roads, buses are given special lanes. Only public buses or other vehicles as specified on the sign may use these lanes. However, you may drive in a bus lane for up to 100 metres if it is necessary:

- to enter or leave the road
- to overtake a vehicle that is turning right or making a U-turn from the centre of the road.



Bus lane sign



Give Way to bus sign

Watch out for buses pulling out from the kerb. In a built-up area you must give way to a bus displaying a Give Way To Bus sign and signalling that it is about to pull out from the kerb into the left lane. More information on built-up areas can be found on page 79.

Sharing the road with police and emergency vehicles

You must get out of the way of a police or emergency, enforcement or escort vehicle when its siren is on or it is displaying red, blue or magenta flashing lights. Give way and stop if necessary (despite any other rules), even if you have a green traffic light. These vehicles have exemptions to break rules in the case of emergencies and may act unpredictably.

You must also stop if twin red lights are flashing on a road, for example, outside a Fire Station or Ambulance Station.

You should also take care when approaching or passing stationary emergency vehicles with flashing lights as they are attending an emergency – slow down and where possible give them a wide berth.

Sharing the road with trucks and other heavy vehicles

Here are some tips about sharing the road with trucks of any size.

Blind spots – be seen, be safe

All vehicles have blind spots where the driver loses sight of vehicles around them. The blind spot is larger for truck drivers. If you cannot see the truck's external mirrors, the truck driver can't see you. This should be a 'no stay spot'. Either accelerate to overtake if safe to do so or decrease speed and pull back to where you can be seen. More information on blind spots can be found on page 40.

Rules and responsibilities

Don't cut in

Trucks are longer and heavier than cars and it takes them longer to stop safely. So, when you are overtaking a truck or changing lanes, don't pull in to the empty space immediately in front of a truck. This is their 'safety margin'.

Tip

If you can't see the whole front of the truck in your rear vision mirror before you pull into the same lane, there may not be enough room for the truck to stop safely if the traffic suddenly stops; it may hit you or another vehicle. Be careful and leave yourself plenty of room when turning in the vicinity of a truck.

Trucks pick up and deliver goods

Be prepared for trucks that are entering or leaving driveways, roads or loading docks to pick up and deliver goods. Sometimes this will require extra patience and courtesy on your part to let them do so safely. Always be prepared to allow extra room for a truck to swing in or out of delivery points. If possible make eye contact with the driver to let them know you have seen them.

The nature of trucks

Trucks are bigger and heavier than cars and therefore take more time to accelerate especially when starting, merging into traffic or going uphill. You need to allow for this if you see a truck pulling into traffic ahead of you. Be prepared to overtake if it's safe, or to reduce speed if necessary.

Signs on trucks

An 'Oversize' sign, sometimes accompanied by flashing amber lights, is displayed on a truck that is longer or wider than usual. The load may even overhang into your lane. Take notice and watch what is different about it and adjust your driving to suit. Remember, yellow flashing lights always indicate caution is necessary. Some oversized trucks are supported by pilot vehicles and VicRoads Transport Safety Services vehicles. Pilot vehicles provide advance warning to other road users of the presence of 'Oversize' vehicles and staff in VicRoads vehicles manage traffic.



Oversize sign

A 'Long Vehicle' sign is displayed on a truck that is much longer than normal. It will take longer to overtake, and will need extra room to safely stop behind you. Make sure you can see the entire front of the truck and a little space around it in your rear vision mirror before you pull in after you overtake.



Pilot Vehicle



VicRoads Transport Safety Vehicle

A 'Do Not Overtake Turning Vehicle' sign tells you that the truck is at least 7.5 metres long and requires more turning room to negotiate corners, intersections or roundabouts. Trucks displaying this sign may need part or all of two lanes to turn and can legally do so (see page 114 for more information). This sign tells you that you must not overtake alongside a turning truck.

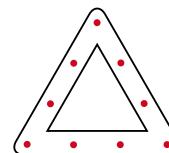


Do not overtake turning vehicle sign



Do not overtake turning vehicle sign

Reflective portable warning triangles warn drivers that there is a broken down truck or fallen load ahead. Slow down and drive past carefully when you see these on the road.



Button reflectors



Beaded reflection

Portable warning triangles

Tip

Blind spots are increased when the truck is turning and the chance of damage to your vehicle, injury or death is increased. Stay where you can be seen so you can be safe.

Rules and responsibilities

Sharing the road with animals

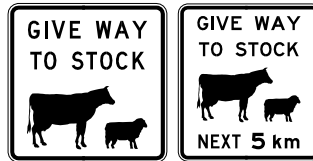
Each year there are a number of serious crashes involving kangaroos, horses and other farm animals.

Horses

Slow down and watch out for horses being led or ridden on the road – leave as much space as possible to allow for unexpected movements by the horse. Never use your car horn around horses – it may startle even the most placid horse and could cause it to bolt resulting in a crash.

Farm animals on roads

A Give Way To Stock sign may be displayed on country roads to enable stock such as cows or sheep to move across or along the road.



Give way to stock signs

Warning signs are also displayed on the approaches to permanent stock crossings. When a Give Way To Stock sign is displayed, you must travel at a safe speed that will enable you to slow down or stop to avoid a collision with an animal either at or near the sign or within the distance shown on the sign.



Stock crossing ahead warning sign

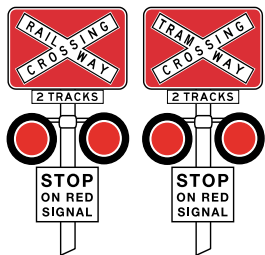
When a Stop sign is displayed at a stock crossing, you must stop before reaching the crossing and must not proceed until all animals have crossed the road.

Railway level crossings

Look and listen for trains when there is a crossing ahead. Even if you think you know when trains usually pass by, the train schedule can change at any time, without notice, so you need to always check for trains as you approach a railway level crossing. Drive slowly, at a speed which will allow you to stop if necessary. However, if there is a Stop sign, you must stop.

The following information also applies to tram level crossings. Obey the tram level crossing signs.

Gates, booms and flashing lights



Railway and tramway level crossings

Where there are gates, booms, or flashing lights at railway level crossings, you must not cross until signals have stopped flashing and the gates or booms are fully open.

Keep clear of the train tracks

If there is traffic stopped on the other side of the railway crossing, you must not enter the crossing unless there is room for your vehicle on the other side – otherwise you could be stuck on the tracks in the path of an oncoming train. At some level crossings Yellow Box Markings painted on the road define the crossing area. You must not stop on the painted area.

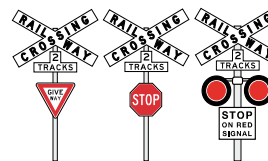
Trains need long stopping distances because they are heavy, so the train will be unable to stop in time regardless of what or who is stuck on the crossing.

Where there are no gates, booms or flashing lights

At some railway level crossings, particularly in the country, where there are no gates, booms or flashing lights,

take extra care. Slow down. Look and listen for trains in both directions. Usually there are warning signs placed well in advance of these crossings.

Following other signs or directions



Level crossing signs

There may be other signs you must obey at railway level crossings. These are usually either Give Way or Stop signs.

You **should** also stop if a railway employee signals you to stop.

Look both ways for trains

If you have stopped for a train, don't move off until you have checked that another train is not following or coming the other way.

Rules and responsibilities

Parking

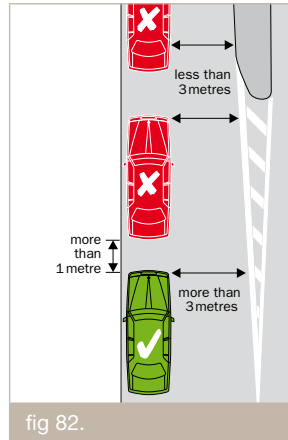
Parking is not as easy as it seems. So that you don't cause problems for others or risk parking fines, you need to observe and interpret many types of parking signs.

Fact

A person must not cause a hazard to any person or vehicle by opening a door of a vehicle, leaving a door of a vehicle open, or exiting a vehicle.

Parallel parking

Figure 82 is the usual way to park unless signs tell you otherwise. You must park completely within the parking bay, in line with and close to the kerb.

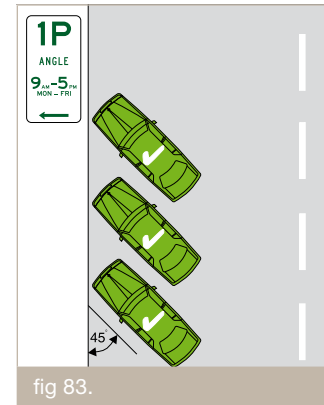


If parking bays are not marked, you must:

- leave one metre between you and the vehicles in front and behind
- park with your vehicle facing the direction of travel of vehicles next to where your vehicle is parked
- not unreasonably obstruct the path of other vehicles or pedestrians.

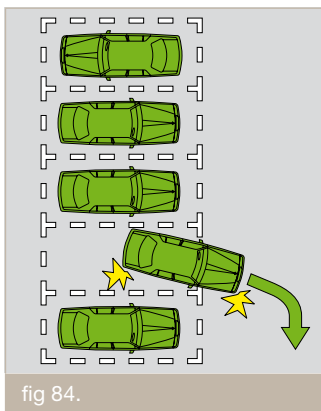
Angle parking

You must park at the angle indicated by the signs or marked bays. Where no angle is indicated by signs or marked bays, you must park at a 45° angle.



Centre of road parking

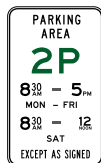
You must drive in forwards and drive out forwards. Do not reverse out of these spots, unless a sign indicates you may do so.



Parking control signs

Parking signs

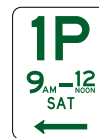
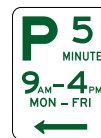
Parking signs tell you whether or not you can park, for how long, during which hours, and if you have to pay. Some parking signs provide more details than others. You must not park continuously in the area to which the sign applies, for longer than indicated on a sign.



General parking signs

General parking signs – arrows may indicate to which length of road the sign applies, or area parking signs may apply to the whole parking area.

A sign with only the letter 'P' means you can park without a time limit. Any number next to the 'P' indicates the amount of time you can park. For example, the sign below left indicates a five minute parking limit, whilst the sign on the right shows a one hour limit.



General parking signs

The parking limits apply during the periods shown on the sign. For example, the five minute parking sign on the left means that parking is allowed for a five minute period between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm from Monday to Friday. Outside that time period parking is allowed with no restrictions.

Rules and responsibilities

The 1P sign on the right indicates a one hour time limit during the hours of 9 am to 12 noon on Saturdays. At any other time you are free to park in that area with no restrictions.

Meter parking

An individual parking meter next to your vehicle means you must pay as instructed on the parking sign or meter.

A group meter for the parking area nearby means you must purchase a ticket. Follow the instructions on the meter or sign. Some group meters print out a ticket you must display on your dashboard.

Other group meters require your parking bay number (marked on the road) and electronically record your fee paid and time allowed.

All meters are checked regularly by parking inspectors.

Tip

When you park beside the road look out for cyclists before opening your car door. Look out for cyclists before you drive out of your parking space.

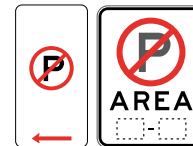
Parking for people with disabilities

Parking bays with this sign or ones that are indicated by a road marking have been set aside to allow disabled persons easy access to places such as shops, libraries or community centres. You must not park in these reserved parking spots without a valid disabled permit.



Disabled Parking sign

Where not to park



No Parking signs

No Parking signs

You are allowed two minutes in a 'No Parking' area only if you remain within three metres of the vehicle and you are picking up or dropping off passengers or goods. Otherwise, if you stop, you are considered to have parked, even if you stay in the vehicle.

No Stopping signs



No Stopping sign

These signs tell you that you must not stop at the kerb for any reason.

Yellow edge lines

Yellow edge lines are sometimes used instead of 'No Stopping' signs. A driver must not stop next to a continuous yellow edge line.

Clearways

Clearways help traffic move faster during peak times.



Clearway sign used at start of clearway



This sign is used within the clearway

On the signs the letter 'C' means clearway – you must not stop here for any reason during the hours and days noted on the sign.

Zone signs



Loading Zone sign

Unless another limit is specified on the sign, a loading zone is only for vehicles recorded by VicRoads as goods-carrying vehicles, signed delivery and courier vehicles, trucks while dropping off or picking up goods, and public passenger vehicles or taxis that are dropping off or picking up passengers (30 minute limit or as shown on the sign).

Other drivers must not stop in a loading zone (even if loading or unloading).

Rules and responsibilities



Truck Zone sign

A Truck Zone is only for trucks with a gross vehicle mass over 4.5 tonnes. No time limit is applied for a truck loading or unloading goods.



Permit Zone sign

Only for vehicles displaying a valid permit for that zone issued by the relevant authority.



Works Zone sign

Only for vehicles engaged in construction work in or near the zone.



Bus Zone sign

Only for public buses.



Taxi Zone sign

Only for taxis.

Fact

Stopping and parking regulations apply even if you have stopped or parked your car and have your hazard warning lights on. If signs say it is illegal for you to be stopping or parking at a place, having your hazard warning lights on will not change this.

Tow away zones

Typical use of Tow Away Zone signs



Typical use of Tow Away Zone signs

A tow away zone means your vehicle will be towed away if you park at this spot during the times specified. Not only do you pay a parking fine, you also need to pay a fee to reclaim your car.

General stopping and parking rules

You must not leave a vehicle stationary:

- double parked
- where there is a Keep Clear road marking
- within an intersection (except on the continuous side of a continuing road of a T-intersection)
- on freeways (except in an emergency stopping lane)
- across a lane or private driveway
- where you would leave less than three metres of road clear for traffic
- on the wrong side of the road, i.e. on the far right side of a two-way road
- on a footpath, nature strip, dividing strip or median strip (unless the vehicle is a motorcycle or bicycle)
- in a bus lane
- half in, half out of a No Parking or No Stopping area
- opposite a dividing strip, continuous single line, or any combination of continuous or broken double lines, unless there is at least three metres of clearance between your vehicle and the dividing line (unless otherwise indicated on a parking sign)
- on a curve or crest outside a built-up area unless visible for 100 metres from behind, or unless signs allow
- next to a continuous yellow edge line
- in a slip lane (unless permitted by a sign).
- within 20 metres (unless permitted by a sign) of:
 - both sides of an intersection with traffic lights
 - the approach side of a bus stop
 - the approach side of a children's crossing
 - both sides of a level crossing
 - the approach side of a pedestrian crossing that is not at an intersection
 - the approach side of a tram stop sign (unless permitted by a sign)

Rules and responsibilities

- within 10 metres (unless permitted by a sign) of:
 - an intersection without traffic lights
 - the departure side of a bus stop sign
 - both sides of a safety zone
 - the approach side of traffic lights not at an intersection
 - the departure side of a pedestrian crossing that is not at an intersection
 - the departure side of a children's crossing
- within three metres of an Australia Post mail box
- within three metres of the departure side of a crossing with traffic lights not at an intersection
- within one metre of a fire hydrant.

Penalties

All traffic offences will result in some type of penalty.

These include monetary fines, loss of your learner permit or licence, or you may be taken to court.

Many offences also attract demerit points.

In serious cases prison sentences may be imposed.

Remember that a good driving record is required to progress through the Graduated Licensing System. A good driving record means you avoid having your licence cancelled or suspended, as well as avoid any drink and/or drug driving offences. If you do not have a good driving record, your probationary period will be extended. If your licence is cancelled you will need to start your probationary period again.

A licence or learner permit may be suspended or cancelled as a result of:

- a court conviction
- a Traffic Infringement Notice
- accumulation of demerit points
- action taken by the Sheriff's Office
- action taken by VicRoads.

If a licence or learner permit is not held, a person may be disqualified from obtaining a licence or a learner permit for a specified period. A person is not permitted to drive if their licence or learner permit is suspended or cancelled by a court, a Traffic Infringement Notice, the Sheriff's Office or by VicRoads. Severe penalties exist if driving while suspended, unlicensed, or whilst disqualified – around \$600 or four months imprisonment for a first offence and mandatory imprisonment for up to two years for a second offence. For a second or subsequent offence of driving while disqualified, your vehicle can also be impounded.

The following provides a summary of the actions that may arise from a traffic offence. Contact VicRoads for further information.

Suspension

The licence or learner permit is withdrawn for a specified period. You cannot drive during this period. In most cases the original licence or learner permit is returned. However, if the suspension has resulted in a change to the conditions of the licence, a new licence will need to be issued (see Penalties for probationary licence holders on pages 154-155. Probationary drivers will have their probationary period extended).

Cancellation

A licence or learner permit that is cancelled is no longer valid. You cannot drive. Once the period of cancellation is over, you will need to apply to have your licence or learner permit reissued before you can start driving again.

Reissue of the licence or learner permit may require one or more of the following actions to be completed:

- knowledge of road law and/or practical driving test
- an order from a court to be relicensed
- an education course to be completed
- other requirements as specified by VicRoads (i.e. payment of licence fee or fitting of an alcohol interlock)
- start again on a probationary licence if the offence was committed whilst on a probationary licence.

Disqualification

Permission to apply for a licence or learner permit is withdrawn as a result of a cancellation or suspension.

Impoundment

Your vehicle may be impounded for serious traffic offences. These include dangerous driving, careless driving, failure to have proper control of the vehicle, burnouts, doughnuts and

causing the vehicle to make excessive noise or smoke. A vehicle may also be impounded for offences such as:

- speeding at 45 km/h or more over the limit
- street racing
- repeat offences of unlicensed, disqualified, drink or drug driving.

If you commit a vehicle impoundment offence, you may have your vehicle impounded for the following periods:

- first offence - 30 days by police
- second offence – 30 days by police, plus an additional 45 days to 3 months as imposed by the courts
- more serious offences such as driving 70 km/h or more over the limit, repeat disqualified, unlicensed, drink or drug driving – 30 days by police, plus an additional 45 days to 3 months as imposed by the courts
- third offence - 30 days by police, plus an additional 45 days to 3 months as imposed by the courts or possible vehicle forfeiture as imposed by the courts.

Rules and responsibilities

Imprisonment

In some cases, a court may impose a jail term as well as a monetary fine.

Infringements Court

The role of the Infringements Court is to administratively resolve unpaid infringement notices. These offences generally have fixed penalties and include parking offences and driving offences.

Sheriff's Office

The role of the Sheriff's Office is to enforce court orders, collect fines and civil debts. This may include the seizure and sale of assets, licence suspension or, as a final option, imprisonment.

Demerit points

Demerit points are one type of penalty that will be recorded against your driver licence or learner permit when you commit certain traffic offences anywhere in Australia. Demerit points range from one to ten depending on the severity of the offence.

Learner and probationary drivers who incur five or more demerit points in any twelve month period may have their licence suspended for at least three months.

If your licence is not suspended because you chose a twelve month good driving bond, any further demerit points would lead to at least six months licence suspension.

If you get 12 or more demerit points in any three year period, you may have your licence or learner permit suspended for at least three months. This gives drivers the opportunity to learn from their repeat mistakes, but makes licence loss a reality for persistent offenders. Further information and a full list of offences and demerit points can be found at VicRoads website: vicroads.vic.gov.au

Penalties for learner permit holders

If a learner permit is cancelled or suspended, it may affect the permit holder's eligibility to apply for a licence, as a learner permit must be held for a continuous period of 12 months immediately before applying for a licence, for those under 21 years of age. For those who are 21 but under 25 years the period is six months, and it is three months if you are 25 years or over.

Penalties for probationary licence holders

If your first probationary licence is suspended or cancelled during the P1 licence, your licence will be restricted. Restrictions may be imposed on carrying passengers in your vehicle for the balance of your P1 period. The probationary period (P1 or P2) will also be extended.

If your probationary licence is cancelled, your licence will be reissued as a probationary licence for a further three or four year term depending on your age.

Penalties for full licence holders

When a full licence is cancelled, a full licence will be reissued when all relicensing requirements have been met. If a court order is required to be produced due to an alcohol or drug driving offence, then a three year zero BAC restriction will be imposed on the licence when it is reissued – the inclusion of an alcohol ignition interlock may be a condition of the restrictions.

Legal responsibilities

As the holder of a licence or learner permit, there are a number of additional legal responsibilities you must fulfil.

Carry your licence

You must carry your probationary licence or licence receipt whenever you drive. If you are under 26 years of age you must carry your licence at all times when driving. All learner drivers must also carry their learner permit or learner permit receipt at all times when driving.

Change of name

You must notify VicRoads within 14 days when your name has changed. This can only be done in person at any VicRoads Customer Service Centre. It must be supported by original documents along with either a photo licence or documents that prove your identity.

The following documents are acceptable for a change of name:

- marriage certificate (issued by a Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages in Australia)
- divorce papers
- deed poll (pre 1 November 1986 in Victoria)
- change of name registration (after 1 November 1986 in Victoria)
- guardianship order
- adoption paper
- birth certificate (issued after 26 June 2000 in Victoria showing the change of name details on the back of the certificate). Commemorative birth certificates are not acceptable.

Rules and responsibilities

Change of address

You must notify VicRoads within 14 days when your residential or postal address has changed. You may notify your change of address in one of the following ways:

1 On the VicRoads website
vicroads.vic.gov.au

2 By calling VicRoads

Telephone numbers can be found on page 166.

3 By attending in person at any VicRoads Customer Service Centre. See the list on the inside back cover.

Notification of a medical condition or disability

You must notify VicRoads if you have any serious or chronic medical condition or disability that may affect your fitness to drive.

You will need to provide a current medical report from your treating medical practitioner that states that you meet the national medical standards for fitness to drive and provides details of your medical condition or disability.

Standard medical or eyesight report forms are available from any VicRoads Customer Service Centre or by calling VicRoads. These forms are also available on VicRoads website.

Replacing a lost or stolen card

Always be careful with your permit and licence information and keep the card secure. If your card is lost or stolen report it to VicRoads immediately and apply for a replacement. It is important that you do this as your lost or stolen card could be used to create a fraudulent identity.

If you want more information on preventing and responding to identity fraud this can be found at **crimeprevention.gov.au**

Air and noise pollution

You must ensure any vehicle you drive meets relevant air and noise emission standards. Drivers of offending vehicles may be fined or taken to court and the owner may be issued with a notice to repair the vehicle.

Hoon driving

Police can impound or immobilise motor vehicles for 30 days if used for offences such as excessive speeding, and for improper use of a motor vehicle, causing loss of traction or excessive noise or smoke. See impoundment page 153.

Fact

Registration and roadworthiness

You must not drive a motor vehicle that is unroadworthy or without current registration.

Breakdown safety

Before a long journey

Remember

- Check your fuel, oil, water and tyre pressures (including the spare) before a long journey.
- Carry a high-visibility vest, safety markers and a torch inside your vehicle.
- Breakdown lanes are only for breakdown situations.
- Use a rest area for making social phone calls, toilet stops or attending to children.

Tips for staying safe in a breakdown

1. Find a safe spot to pull over such as an emergency breakdown area.
2. Park your vehicle as far to the left as possible.
3. Always activate your hazard lights.
4. Activate your headlights in poor light.
5. Call roadside assistance on your mobile phone or use a roadside emergency phone.
6. When leaving your vehicle always check for traffic.
7. Leave your vehicle from the passenger side if possible.
8. Avoid crossing the road at all times.
9. Stand clear of the road. Move behind a safety barrier if possible.
10. Stay in your vehicle with your seatbelt on if it's not safe to leave.

Breakdown on a freeway or country road

If you breakdown on a freeway or country road you should also follow this advice:

- Do not change a tyre yourself, wait for roadside assistance.
- Stay calm, help may take longer to arrive on a country road.
- Let roadside assistance come to your vehicle and follow their instructions.

If you see a breakdown

- Slow down to about 30 km/h below the posted speed limit.
- Avoid crossing the road if you are helping someone.

(Text derived from Transport for NSW glove box 'Breakdown Safety Guide'.)

Rules and responsibilities

Crash responsibilities

If you are involved in a crash causing death or injury and do not stop and give assistance, you can be fined over \$140,000 and/or be imprisoned for up to 10 years. You will also lose your licence for at least two years. If you are involved in a crash there are certain things you must do immediately after the crash.

What you must do after a crash

- Stop immediately.
- Give assistance to any injured person.
- Provide your name, address, registration number details and the vehicle owner's name to the other parties involved in the crash, or their representative, and to the police (if in attendance).
- If anyone is injured and the police are not in attendance, you must report the crash to the nearest open police station.
- If there is any property damage and the owner (or Police) is not present, you must report the crash to the nearest open police station.

There are other things you should do at a crash scene to prevent other people getting hurt, and to help those people involved in the crash (see First aid after a crash on this page).

There are emergency phones on the side of the road on most freeways throughout Victoria. These are called VicRoads 'Help Phones' and can be used 24 hours a day for vehicle breakdowns or any other kind of emergency. The phones are directly linked to the VicRoads Traffic Management Centre.

Tip

To call an ambulance, police or fire brigade, phone 000. To call a tow truck, phone 13 11 76.

First aid after a crash

The following first aid information is based on current Red Cross teaching in line with Australian Resuscitation Council guidelines.

These guidelines are intended to provide basic principles to assist at a crash site and/or attempt resuscitation.

To learn basic first aid such as CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) you will need to undertake an appropriate course.

Applying first aid after a crash

Many of us may need treatment after a road crash at some stage of our lives. Whether or not we survive until trained help arrives may well depend on somebody's willingness to give first aid.

Three actions that could save a life

- 1. Keep a person's airway open and clear**
- 2. Make sure that they are breathing**
- 3. Stop heavy bleeding.**

Read these simple instructions now and keep this handbook in your car. Someone else may use it to help you in an accident.

If you are at a crash site, try to remain calm and...

- **act quickly**
- **if necessary, call for an ambulance, or send someone to call for one**
- **ask if there is anybody trained in first aid at the crash site and if not, and you are first on the crash scene, follow these steps.**

Fact

Four ways you can help casualties after a crash:

- 1. Survey the scene**
- 2. Make the crash scene safe and protect the area**
- 3. Check the casualties – check airway, breathing and signs of life**
- 4. Stop the heavy bleeding.**

1. Survey the scene

- Is the area safe for you to approach?
- Ask bystanders to help make the area safe.
- Count the number of people who are injured.
- Call an ambulance (dial 000) or send someone to call one.
- Ask if there is anybody trained in first aid at the crash site.

Rules and responsibilities

2. Make the crash scene safe and protect the area

- Position your car with its hazard lights flashing, to warn other motorists, or use headlights to light up the scene if necessary.
- Send someone down the road to warn approaching traffic, and turn off the ignition in damaged vehicles.

3. Check the casualties

Is the person conscious?

- **For conscious casualties:**
 - Talk to the casualty, tell them your name and reassure them.
 - Treat any injuries
 - Check for and control any heavy bleeding (see Stop heavy bleeding on page 161).

If the person seems to be unconscious:

- Gently touch the casualty on the shoulder, give a simple command e.g. 'squeeze my hands' to see if they can respond.

If they do not respond:

- **Check airway**
 - Open the casualty's mouth and check for any loose or obstructive objects e.g. loose dentures, vomit, blood etc., and clear from the airway.
 - If the airway is clear, open the airway by gently tilting the head back, and check for breathing.
- **Check breathing**
 - Look for the rise and fall of the chest.
 - Listen for breathing.
 - Feel for the casualty's breath on your cheek.

- Continue to maintain an open airway.
- If the casualty is not breathing begin cardiopulmonary resuscitation (see page 161).
- Check for signs of life (movement, breathing, colour, etc.)

For conscious, breathing casualties still in the vehicle:

- If you are certain that the vehicle and surrounds are safe, and the casualty is either conscious and/or breathing, they do not have to be unnecessarily removed until specialist help arrives, **unless circumstances arise**, i.e:
 - they stop breathing
 - their condition worsens
 - it is no longer safe for them to stay in the vehicle.

Fact

If a casualty inside or outside a vehicle must be moved to escape danger, or for you to give CPR, do so carefully and gently because of the risk of spinal injury or increased bleeding.

For unconscious, breathing casualties outside the vehicle:

- Keep a close eye on them to make sure their airway is clear and they are still breathing, whilst waiting for the ambulance to arrive.
- If the casualty is lying on the ground, it is vital to keep them on their side in a stable position with their head tilted back and face pointed down in order to maintain an open airway.

For casualties unconscious and NOT breathing:

Even if the casualty is injured, you will need to remove them from the vehicle to perform these steps.

Cardiopulmonary (CPR) resuscitation

With the casualty on their back, check the airway

1. Tilt the head back fully to open the airway
2. Cover the casualty's mouth with your mouth blocking their nose with your cheek
3. Breathe into the casualty until the chest begins to rise
4. Remove your mouth (make sure the chest falls)
5. Give another normal breath

6. Check to see if the casualty is now breathing by watching for chest rise and fall, whilst at the same time, checking for signs of life. If the casualty is still not breathing
7. Begin CPR and continue until Emergency Services arrive.

Fact

If performing CPR on children, use minimal head tilt and small breaths. For infants, give small puffs and do NOT use head tilt.

4. Stop heavy bleeding

Heavy bleeding of any type can be fatal. Heavy external bleeding requires quick action as follows: To stop external bleeding do the following tasks:

- Locate where the blood is coming from.

Rules and responsibilities

- Apply firm pressure where the blood is coming from, using whatever clean cloth is available, e.g. an item of clothing, to make a pad.
- If possible tie the pad firmly in place.
- If possible, raise the injured area. This may reduce or help to stop the bleeding.

In an emergency, when gloves are not available and you have to control bleeding:

- Ask the casualty to help by applying pressure or by placing a dressing or other clean dry cloth between your hands and the wound.

Fact

Always give first aid care in ways which protect you and the casualty from disease transmission.

- **Use protective barriers (for example disposable gloves or face mask) which are appropriate to the emergency.**
- **When gloves are not available and you have to control bleeding, ask the casualty to help you by applying pressure, or placing a dressing or other clean dry cloth between your hands and the wound.**
- **Wash your hands thoroughly as soon as possible after giving first aid.**
- **Avoid touching or being splashed by body fluids where possible.**

Assisting victims following motorcycle crashes

The incidence of spinal injuries, multiple fractures and loss of skin are much higher for motorcyclists than those in other motor vehicle crashes.

Helmets should only be removed if absolutely necessary.

If a helmet is worn then this should only be removed when the victim is unconscious, the airway is blocked, or airway clearance is uncertain and likely to be compromised.

This will enable resuscitation to be given.

Wherever possible, **two people should undertake helmet removal** – one to steady the head and neck, and the other to gently remove the helmet.

The procedure should only be carried out by a single person if no-one is available to assist.

Resources

Test yourself questions

The questions you will find in this section are examples of the type of questions you will be asked. The actual test questions are not the ones asked in this handbook.

(The answers to Test Yourself Questions are upside down at the bottom of the next page).

Q1 In good conditions, a safe following distance is:

- A** at least 1 second behind the car in front
- B** at least two seconds behind the car in front
- C** at least two car lengths from the car in front

Q2 If the police stop you at a random breath test station, you must take a breath test:

- A** when you are asked to do so
- B** only if you have been drinking
- C** only if you have been speeding

Q3 Driving can best be described as:

- A** an easy task that just about everyone can do
- B** a task which most people can learn after a few lessons over several weeks
- C** a complicated task

Q4 Supervised learner drivers:

- A** are more at risk of being involved in a crash causing injury than probationary drivers
- B** have the same risk of being involved in a crash causing injury as do probationary drivers
- C** are amongst the safest drivers on the road

Q5 Are your responsibilities the same for a school crossing as for a pedestrian crossing?

- A** Yes, in both cases you may drive on after giving way to pedestrians
- B** No, at a children's crossing you must stop and remain stopped until the crossing is completely clear of pedestrians
- C** No, at a children's crossing you have to give way only to children

Q6 A head check is:

- A** making eye contact with other road users so that you know they have seen you
- B** looking quickly over your shoulder to look out the side windows
- C** a place behind the driver that can't be seen by using the mirrors

Q7 In the early stages of learning to drive, it is best to take:

- A** frequent, short drives in light traffic with your supervising driver
- B** the occasional long drive with your supervising driver
- C** regular drives with your supervising driver in heavy traffic

Q8 The likelihood of a crash is almost halved after:

- A** 6-8 months of solo driving experience
- B** 1 year of solo driving experience
- C** 2-3 years of solo driving experience

Q9 What is the best way to check the crashworthiness of a new or used car?

- A** check the car safety rating at howsafeisyourcar.com.au or in the Australasian New Car Assessment Program or the Buyers Guide to Used Car Safety Rating brochures
- B** ask your parents or a friend
- C** ask the person you're buying the car from

Answers: Q1 B, Q2 A, Q3 C, Q4 C, Q5 B, Q6 B, Q7 A, Q8 A, Q9 A

Resources

Resources to help you

VicRoads telephone enquiries

All registration and licensing enquiries and test bookings.

Monday to Friday 8.30 am – 5.00 pm
Saturday 8.30 am – 2.00 pm

Tel: 13 11 71

International calls: +61 3 9854 7763
(registration and licensing)
+61 3 9854 2666 (general enquiries)

TTY: 13 36 77

Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727

VicRoads website

VicRoads website provides many online services and information about VicRoads services, products and strategies. vicroads.vic.gov.au

Legislation

The Road Safety Act, the Road Safety Road Rules 2009 and associated Regulations can be viewed at legislation.vic.gov.au

The Road Rules - Victoria can be viewed on VicRoads website.

Victoria Police

For information and assistance with road law issues. Tel: (03) 9247 5779 or visit police.vic.gov.au

VicRoads Traffic Management Centre

This Centre provides information about:

- emergency road conditions
- freeway breakdowns
- traffic accident reports
- traffic light faults.

Tel: 13 11 70

Personal Property Securities Register

If you are thinking about buying a second hand vehicle privately, you should check whether:

- there is money owing on the vehicle
- the vehicle is recorded as stolen.

For a small fee, you can also obtain a Personal Property Securities Search certificate at ppsr.gov.au which includes these details.

Tel: 1300 007 777

Vehicle Registration Enquiry Service

You can check registration status for free at vicroads.vic.gov.au/vre

CityLink

CityLink is Melbourne's fully electronic toll way. To use CityLink, you'll need an e-TAG, Day Pass or Tulla Pass. Call CityLink to arrange your e-TAG or Day Pass, or visit the website at **citylink.com.au** or call 13 26 29.

EastLink

EastLink (M3) is the 39 km fully electronic tollway from the end of the Eastern Freeway at Mitcham to Frankston. To use EastLink, you need a tag, non-tag account or EastLink trip pass. If you already have a tag it will work. To open a Breeze account or buy a trip pass, visit **breeze.com.au** or call 13 LINK (13 54 65).

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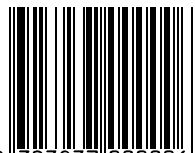
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Customer Service Centres

For VicRoads Customer Service Centre locations and further information please visit vicroads.vic.gov.au or call **13 11 71**



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