

# DRIVER EDUCATION & TRAINING

Tips For Learner Drivers



## E-BOOK

A1 Driving School | Auckland

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# 1.0 DRIVING PREPARATION

## 1.1 FIVE ESSENTIALS TO ALWAYS HAVE IN YOUR CAR

You never know what could go wrong when you're out on the road, that is why it's necessary to be prepared for any eventuality in order to keep yourself safe or get yourself out of a fix when you need to. Having these five items in your vehicle at all times will help you when faced with most of the common problems you could encounter when driving.

- ✓ **First aid kit.** Even when it's not the result of a crash, injuries can happen when you're out driving. A first aid kit will help you treat injuries on the go or stabilise them until you can get professional assistance.
- ✓ **Reflective triangle.** A reflective triangle will come in handy in case your car breaks down on or dangerously close to the road. Placing it a few metres back warns other drivers of an oncoming hazard thus preventing a collision.
- ✓ **Jumper cable.** Car batteries often fail without warning. A jumper cable will help you use another car's battery to start your car in case yours is drained.
- ✓ **Spare tyre/tyre repair kit.** A flat tyre can leave you stranded in the middle of nowhere, make sure you always carry a spare or a tyre repair kit at the minimum. Also, make sure to carry the tools needed to change the tyre i.e. jack and wheel brace.
- ✓ **Fire extinguisher.** Fires are not uncommon in motor vehicles, having a fire extinguisher with you will help you put them out before they get out of hand.

## 1.2 CHECKING YOUR TYRES BEFORE A TRIP

Your tyres are some of the most important components of your vehicle and play an integral role in keeping you safe when driving. As such, you need to check them regularly and before long trips to ensure they're in good condition.

### Things to look for when checking your tyres:

- ✓ **Tire pressure.** Check your vehicles owner's manual for the manufacturer's recommended tyre pressure. Make sure to check the pressure when the tyres are cold – i.e. the car hasn't been driven for at least 3 hours or has been driven for less than 2km at low speed.
- ✓ **Tread depth.** Your car's tyres have a tread depth of about 8mm when new. It's recommended that you get them changed when the treads wear to a depth of 2mm, but the legal limit is 1.5mm. Use a tread depth checker to find out whether your tires are safe. Also check that the tyres are wearing evenly, if not, you might have misaligned wheels.
- ✓ **Visible damage.** Check your tyres for bruises, bumps, bulges, cracks, splits and cracks on the sidewalls and tread area. If any, get the tire checked by a professional.



## 2.0 CAR OPERATION

*In Chapter 2, learn about the basics of car operation including the use of seatbelts, car seats, mirrors, the steering wheel and headlights as well as using the controls in an automatic car and what to do when the car is stalled.*

### 2.1 HOW TO USE YOUR SEAT BELT

Your seat belt is arguably the most important safety feature in your vehicle. Its job is to secure you in place during the abrupt movements that result from a crash. For your seat belt to work as it should, however, it needs to be used correctly.

#### Here're a few tips for using your seat belt:

- ✓ Make it a habit to put on your seat belt first every time you get into the car with the intention to drive.
- ✓ Check to see whether your seat belt's height is adjustable (this is usually done at the point where the belt attaches to the vehicle over your right shoulder). Adjust the height so that the belt goes across your right shoulder and over the centre of your chest.
- ✓ Put your seat in an upright position – as close to a 90-degree angle as you can. The belt won't work as well when the seat is reclined.
- ✓ Listen for a click when you insert the belt into the latching device and tug on it to ensure it's secure.



### 2.2 HOW TO ADJUST YOUR CAR SEAT

It's important that you're both comfortable and in the right position when you're driving. Sitting too far from the steering wheel means that you'll have to reach out while driving (which will cause fatigue) while sitting too close to the wheel is not only awkward but dangerous as the airbag could injure you in the event of a crash.

#### Tips for adjusting your seat

- ✓ Slide your seat back and forth until you can push the left pedal all the way in while keeping your leg slightly bent at the knee.
- ✓ Make sure you can touch the steering wheel with your wrists when you stretch out your arms. If only your hands reach the wheel, then you're too far. If your forearms can reach the wheel, then you're too close.



- ✓ You can adjust the steering wheel by unlocking the adjustment lever beneath the steering column if you need to.
- ✓ Adjust your seat's angle or the steering wheel's height if necessary so that you are comfortable and can see the road well.

## 2.3 UNDERSTANDING YOUR CAR'S MIRRORS

Your vehicle's mirrors are important because they enable you to see most of what is going on around your vehicle. Although they do help you see a lot, they don't cover everything, and a few places around your vehicle remain invisible through the mirrors. These places are referred to as blind spots. As such, you need to adjust your mirrors correctly to ensure your blind spots are as small as possible.



### The function of each mirror

- ✓ The rear-view mirror is located at the top centre of your windscreen and is used to see what is behind you through the rear window. You should adjust this mirror so that you are able to see as much of the road behind you as possible and as little of the back seat as you can.
- ✓ The side mirrors are located on the sides of your vehicle and show you what is behind you on your right and left. These should be adjusted so that they are pointing back at the road to let you see what is behind you. They shouldn't show your own vehicle or be angled up or down.

## 2.4 USING THE CONTROLS AROUND THE STEERING WHEEL

In addition to the controls you have at your feet, your car also has another set of controls around the steering wheel. These are used to control other important functions of the car such as lights, wipers etc.

### Tips for using your hand controls

- ✓ The indicator lever is usually located on the right side of your car's steering wheel. Pushing it up turns on your left indicator while pulling it down switches on your right indicator. Simply put, pushing or pulling the indicator lever in the direction you want to turn your steering wheel will correctly turn on your indicator.



- ✓ On the indicator stick is where you'll normally find your headlight controls. Twisting the stick will turn them on while pushing the stick away from you switches on the high beam.
- ✓ Your windscreen wiper controls are usually on the left stick of your steering wheel. You can push it down in different stages to turn on the wipers and set their speed or push it up from the "off" position for a single wipe/ to remove mist. Twisting the stick towards you controls the rear wiper.

Newer cars have controls on the steering wheel to control the car's infotainment system. Directions on how to use these will be in the user's manual of the vehicle.

## 2.5 HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE YOUR HEADLIGHTS

Your vehicle's headlights can be adjusted to suit the environment you are driving in. Although switching on the headlights is pretty straightforward, it's using them to see what is on the road in front of you that's somewhat challenging.

### Here're some tips to help you use your headlights effectively:

- ✓ Switch your headlights to low whenever you're following another vehicle or when there's another vehicle moving towards you on the other side of the road.
- ✓ If a vehicle shines their full beam lights at you, don't look towards their headlights or centreline, instead, use the white line on your left to guide you.
- ✓ You can prevent being blinded by headlights through your rearview mirror by flicking the knob underneath it forward.
- ✓ Always switch on your headlights as soon as it starts to get dark, it's better to have them on earlier than later.
- ✓ Switch on your headlights if you're driving at least 30 minutes after sunset and until 30 minutes before sunrise.



You also need to have your headlights on whenever you can't see objects that are at least 100 metres away.

## 2.6 HOW TO USE YOUR CAR'S CONTROLS (AUTOMATIC)

### **There are two main controls in a vehicle:**

#### **1. The pedals**

These are two in an automatic vehicle – an accelerator for going and the brake for stopping. The accelerator is on the right and closest to the door while the brake is to the left of the accelerator.

#### **How to use the pedals**

- ✓ Control both pedals with only your right foot.
- ✓ Your left foot should not be used to control the pedals and should be placed on the foot rest on the left.
- ✓ Push the pedals with your foot's ball (not just the toes) with your heel always on the floor.



#### **2. The Gear shift**

Gears are not used as much in an automatic car, but you still need to know what each is used for. The gears in an automatic are:

- ✓ D for Drive
- ✓ P for Park
- ✓ N for Neutral
- ✓ R for Reverse
- ✓ 2 and L are the lower gears used on steep hills or when you are towing a heavy load.

#### **Changing gears**

- ✓ Push the button on the gear lever when changing gears (except when changing between Drive and the lower gears).
- ✓ Changing between Drive, Reverse, Neutral and Park should only be done when the car is stationary.
- ✓ You can shift to the lower gears when you are moving at a slow speed (below 50km/h).

## 2.7 WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU STALL THE CAR

A manual car will usually stall as a result of two things; either you let out the clutch too quickly, or the engine's revolutions per minute (RPM) dropped too low causing the engine to stop.

You can avoid stalling your vehicle by ensuring that your clutch release is always done slowly. Don't fully release the clutch until you feel the car 'bite' i.e. when you hear the engine engage and the car's front slightly lifts.

If you happen to stall the car, the key thing is to remain calm and not panic. Stalling a manual is quite common for learners and even experienced drivers will occasionally have this problem.

**If you do stall, follow this procedure:**

- ✓ Press the brake.
- ✓ Press the clutch all the way in.
- ✓ Shift to neutral.
- ✓ Start the engine.
- ✓ Put the car in first gear.

Make sure to check your mirrors and blind spots before you take off. Practice this before you start taking lessons on the road to ensure you can quickly and confidently restart the car if it stalls.



## 3.0 DRIVER SAFETY

In Chapter 3, learn about how to improve driver safety on the road by dealing with blind spots, scanning for hazards, utilising the 12 second rule and deciding on the best time to overtake other vehicles on the road.

### 3.1 DEALING WITH BLIND SPOTS



Blind spots are large areas around your car that can't be seen by simply looking forward or checking your mirrors when driving. For a car, the main blind spots are located slightly behind the driver along either side of the car. Of course, there could be others.

Blind spots can be large enough that cars and motorcycles could completely disappear into them. The good thing is that a quick shoulder check can help you identify hazards in these areas. A shoulder check is done by quickly turning your head (not your whole body) to look either right or left through your side windows.

#### When to check your blind spots

Always check your blind spots before:

- ✓ Pulling out from the kerb
- ✓ Parallel parking or leaving a park
- ✓ Making U-turns or three point turns
- ✓ Merging with traffic
- ✓ Changing lanes or overtaking
- ✓ Changing position on the road eg before moving into a flush median.

In addition to checking your own blind spots, avoid getting into other driver's blind spots too when driving. Drive ahead or drop back to create some distance when driving alongside another vehicle.

### 3.2 SCANNING FOR HAZARDS

A hazard is anything that will require you to react when driving to avoid danger. There're two types of hazards – visible and hidden hazards. Visible hazards are easy to spot such as potholes and cyclists on narrow roads, while hidden hazards can't be seen straight away such as parked vehicles that could pull out without warning.

While experienced drivers can identify these hazards effortlessly, newer drivers need to put some



conscious effort to identify them – more so the hidden ones.

### **Tips for spotting hazards**

- ✓ Scan about 12 seconds ahead. Don't just stare at the road ahead but scan the adjacent areas to get the big picture.
- ✓ Always keep an eye out for both visible and hidden hazards.
- ✓ Always keep track of hazards until they are no longer a risk to you.
- ✓ For the best reaction to hazards, think ahead on what you'd do to avoid hazards in case you encounter them. This prevents panic and helps you deal with the situation more capably.

### **3.3 WHAT IS THE 12 SECOND RULE?**



With many accidents happening as a result of motorists not looking far enough up the road, the 12-second rule works to ensure that drivers have enough room/time to notice and appropriately react to hazards in front of them. The rule maintains that drivers should always aim to scan the road at least 12 seconds ahead when driving.

While this might seem like a pretty long distance, knowing what is happening up the road is the best way of avoiding trouble when driving – which makes looking ahead when driving a good habit to develop.

#### **Judging how far 12 seconds actually is:**

- ✓ Pull over to the side of a reasonably straight road.
- ✓ Start counting to twelve as soon as a car moves past you.
- ✓ Note the distance between your vehicle and the car when you get to 12 seconds. That is how far ahead you should scan when driving.

You will need to look further than 12 seconds ahead when driving faster as the distance you cover within that time will be significantly more.

### 3.4 DRIVING IN TRAFFIC – PLANNING AHEAD AND STAYING ALERT

You need to plan your route in advance before driving on busy roads.

Planning ahead before you drive in a busy area means you have one less thing to worry about when driving. You also need to be aware of the traffic around you at all times when driving on busy roads for safety.



#### Do the following when driving in busy traffic:

- ✓ Check your mirrors regularly.
- ✓ Check your blind spots especially when you want to change lanes.
- ✓ Keep on the lookout for motorcyclists and cyclists who might come through between lanes or on your left.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for drivers making abrupt lane changes without signalling or pulling into small gaps in traffic.
- ✓ Try to predict the actions of other drivers on the road so that you have more time to react if need be. Look for clues such as the direction drivers are looking, the direction their wheels are pointing to or small forward movements from side streets.
- ✓ By doing these things, you'll be able to identify and predict hazards so that you can take action to avoid an accident.

### 3.5 DECIDING WHEN ITS SAFE TO OVERTAKE

The most important aspect of overtaking is deciding when it's safe to pass another vehicle and when it's not.

There are a couple of things you need to consider before you decide whether it is safe to overtake or not.



These are:

- ✓ **Your current speed.** If you are already travelling at a speed that is equal or above the prescribed speed limit, then it's not only unnecessary to overtake, but also illegal. The need to pass another vehicle does not exempt you from speed limits.
- ✓ **The traffic ahead.** Look ahead (at least 12 seconds away) to determine whether there is enough clear road for you to pass and pull in safely in front of the vehicle you have just passed. If there isn't, don't overtake.
- ✓ **The markings on the road.** A dashed white line on your side of the road means you can overtake if it's safe to do so. A single yellow line or two yellow lines, on the other hand, mean that you are not allowed to overtake.

Remember, you don't have to overtake. If for any reason you're not sure, don't pass.

## 4.0 GENERAL DRIVING

### 4.1 HOW TO DRIVE ON SEALED ROADS WITHOUT THE CENTRELINE

Sealed roads that don't have a centreline are usually more winding and narrower than those that have a centreline. This significantly increases the risk of a head-on crash, as the lack of a centreline makes it harder for drivers to judge the position of their vehicle on the road.



#### Here are some tips for driving on sealed roads without a centreline:

- ✓ When driving on roads that don't have a centreline, you might need to stop in half the distance of the visible road in front of you to avoid a collision. So, make sure to maintain a speed that will enable you to do this.
- ✓ Be on the lookout for driveways and intersections as they're often hard to spot on country roads.
- ✓ Position your car as far to the left as you safely can when driving.
- ✓ Keep an eye out for pedestrians and cyclists as these roads usually lack designated paths for them.
- ✓ Look out for other road users including farm vehicles such as tractors, quad bikes and even animals. Look as far as you can and be ready to stop.
- ✓ Slow down when approaching bridges as they are only one way and you might be required to give way.

### 4.2 DRIVING ON UNSEALED ROADS

An unsealed road in simple terms is a road made of loose materials such as gravel or dirt. This kind of road is usually found in the country. You need to be calm and patient when driving on them so as to maintain full control of your vehicle.

#### Here are the things you should do to maintain control of your vehicle when driving on an unsealed road:

- ✓ Keep your movements smooth and gradual i.e. do not make sudden movements when accelerating, braking or steering.



- ✓ If a car approaches you, slow right down and steer your car as far to the left as you safely can. This will reduce your dust cloud and reduce the likelihood of loose stones chipping your windscreen.
- ✓ Don't pull over to the side of the road too quickly as gravel along the sides is often deeper and looser and can make it difficult to brake or steer.
- ✓ If you happen to find yourself in deeper gravel, slow right down and steer the car out slowly. Don't jack the wheel quickly as this could flip your car.
- ✓ Make sure to increase the following distance as dust thrown up by another car can make it difficult to see ahead.

### 4.3 HOW TO DEAL WITH SPECIAL VEHICLE LANES

There are different types of special vehicle lanes on the road; they include transit, bus and cycle lanes. These special lanes are differentiated from regular lanes by road markings or signs. You are not allowed to use these lanes if your vehicle does not meet the conditions set for driving on them.

You **can**, however, drive on a special vehicle lane if you are:

- ✓ Turning, or
- ✓ Driving to a vehicle entrance or parking space



#### **Follow these steps when merging into a special lane:**

- ✓ Perform a mirror check.
- ✓ Indicate for a minimum of 3 seconds.
- ✓ Perform a blind-spot check.
- ✓ Give way to all vehicles on the lane including cyclists.
- ✓ Smoothly steer into the lane.
- ✓ Once on the special lane, keep in mind that you are not allowed to drive on it for more than 50 metres while performing your manoeuvre

While some special vehicle lanes are in operation 24/7, others operate during a specific time. Make sure to check and follow the rules for using any special vehicle lane.

## 5.0 DRIVING SKILLS

### 5.1 STEERING A CAR

Proper hand positioning is very important when steering a car. Your hands should firmly hold the steering wheel in the quarter to three position every time you're driving. This is a safety precaution that ensures your hands don't get in the way of the airbag in case of an accident.



#### **When steering, always remember to:**

- ✓ Keep each hand on its side of the steering wheel; don't cross them over when turning.
- ✓ Pass the wheel from one hand to the other when turning so that your arms do not cross over the wheel.
- ✓ Hold the wheel firmly (not so much as to strangle it) with your thumbs up and not locked around the wheel.

#### **How to steer**

When steering, you should:

- ✓ Slow down to a safe speed before turning.
- ✓ Make smooth adjustments to the car's speed going in and out of turns.
- ✓ Control the car out of turns – don't let the car do it.
- ✓ Look 12 seconds ahead to where you want to go instead of focusing on the road immediately in front.

Remember, steering takes practice so try it out in an empty space before you go out on the road.

### 5.2 WHEN TO INDICATE

Signalling or indicating is a simple safety and courtesy task that drivers are required to do when driving. It lets other road users know what you intend to do so that they can react accordingly.

You need to give adequate warning of your intention to allow other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians time to react to your signal. The minimum indicating time is 3 seconds.



#### **You are required to indicate in the following situations:**

- ✓ When turning right or left.

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- ✓ When changing lanes or any other time you cross the centre line.
- ✓ Whenever you have to move left or right by the width of your car or more.
- ✓ When pulling out or into a kerb.
- ✓ When entering or leaving a park.
- ✓ When merging after your lane comes to an end such as when joining a motorway from a feeder lane.
- ✓ At roundabouts.

Remember to always turn off your indicator (if it doesn't do so automatically) after making your turn to avoid confusing other road users.

### 5.3 URBAN DRIVING – HOW TO DEAL WITH TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Traffic lights are a major part of driving in urban areas. Their job is to control the flow of traffic at busy intersections where many vehicles might want to pass at the same time.

Here is how you should approach and drive through intersections controlled by traffic lights:

#### **Prepare to stop as you approach the intersection**

If the green light turns yellow, you are required to stop if it's safe to do so.

You should be aware of where the 'point of no return' is. This is the area where you won't be able to stop safely. If the light switches to yellow when you are beyond this point, don't change your mind and jam on the brakes as it will already be too late.

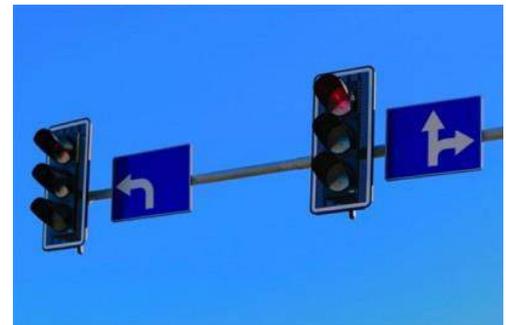
#### **Keep the blocking rule in mind**

Ensure there is a big enough space on the other side of the intersection before you enter – otherwise, you will get stuck in the middle once the lights change.

#### **You can use the intersection as you wait to turn**

If you want to turn right, there isn't a right-turning arrow, and nobody else is already waiting in the intersection, you're allowed to drive into it and wait for a gap in the traffic flowing straight through.

Turn right when it's safe to go, even when the lights change to yellow or red – but ensure straight-through traffic has stopped before turning in front of them.



## 5.4 TIPS FOR DRIVING ON SUBURBAN STREETS

Driving on suburban streets is actually more hazardous than you might assume. There're a few things you need to keep in mind to ensure both your safety and that of other people using the road.

### Here are some tips for driving on suburban roads:

- ✓ Always stay alert when you are driving near cars parked on the side of the street – pedestrians and children can be difficult to spot if they stand behind the parked vehicles when crossing the road.
- ✓ Be extra careful when you are driving in areas where children could be present such as playgrounds and schools.
- ✓ Watch out for give-way and stop signs, as well as unmarked intersections as these are potential risk areas.
- ✓ Always drive below the speed of 50km/h unless there's a road sign with different instructions. This makes it easier for you to react to any unforeseen hazards.



## 5.5 CHANGING GEARS IN A MANUAL CAR

Driving a manual car is a bit more involving than driving an automatic. You will need to shift gears as your car's speed increases or decreases. It takes a bit of practise, but you'll be ok if you follow the steps below.

### Starting the vehicle and putting it into gear

#### Before you start the car:

- ✓ Ensure the handbrake is on
- ✓ Press the clutch all the way in
- ✓ Check the car is in neutral. The lever should be in the middle space between gears



#### Now, with the clutch still pressed in:

- ✓ Ignite the engine
- ✓ Shift to the 1st or reverse gear depending on the direction you want to go
- ✓ Prepare to set off

### **Shifting gears when driving**

To change gears when driving:

1. Swiftly press in the clutch.
2. Shift into the next gear down or up – depending on whether you are increasing or decreasing speed.
3. Slowly let out the clutch.

Keep your eyes fixed on the road when changing gears, not looking down at the gear lever. Do some practice with the engine off to get comfortable shifting without looking before you hit the road.

## **5.6 STARTING AND STOPPING SMOOTHLY**

An important skill as teens [learn how to drive a car](#) is starting and stopping smoothly.

Sudden starts or stops can be dangerous. You may lose control of your car or other vehicles may hit you. Learning how to drive a car is also learning how to interact with other cars so you don't hit them and they don't hit you.

Sudden acceleration may hit the car in front of you. Sudden stops may cause the car behind to crash into you.

Driving a car involves many starts and stops and you need to practice doing them properly.

### **Starting and Stopping Smoothly**

Before you start the car: Locate the accelerator and the brake pedal. Put your foot in position with your heel on the floor so you can swivel back and forth between the accelerator and the brake comfortably.

Make sure the car is in PARK. Now start the car. With your foot on the brake, put the car in 'Drive'. Slowly lift your foot off the brake. Do not give the car any gas. The car will move forward slowly.

This will be all the speed you need for some manoeuvres. Hover your foot over the brake in case you need to stop suddenly. Lift it slowly off the brake to start moving again. You can practice as you learn to drive.

Repeat the same manoeuvre in 'Reverse.' This slow speed is all the speed you'll need for backing up in many cases. Don't forget to walk around behind the vehicle before you back up.

### **Braking Smoothly**

It's important to be able to stop smoothly when driving a car. When you brake, you use your right foot. That's the same foot you use for the gas. Your heel should be on the floor so you can swivel your foot easily between the gas and the brake.

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## Continue Practicing

To be able to learn how to drive a car safely you need to practice starting and stopping until you get the feel for the accelerator and brake pedals and can apply pressure evenly. Then give the car a little gas and watch the speedometer to see how fast you're moving.

Practice on a quiet street or an empty car park. Make this a part of your Learn to Drive checklist.

When you're driving, your eyes will be moving constantly between your mirrors and the road ahead. You'll also need to keep an eye on how fast you are going so get in the habit of glancing at your speedometer often.

Continue to increase your speed until you can stop and start smoothly at low speeds. This is the kind of starting and stopping you'll be doing most of the time – smooth and controlled. But sometimes you'll need to stop suddenly and that takes additional skill and generally forms part of a defensive driving course.

## 5.7 HOW TO USE FLUSH MEDIANS

Flush medians are diagonally painted stripes found in the middle of the road. They are useful when you want to turn right – onto or off the main road. They provide a safe place to stop and await a safe gap in the traffic without holding up other vehicles. Other than for this purpose, flush medians are generally not meant to be driven on.

### Using a flush median to turn off or onto the main road

#### Follow these steps when using a flush median to get off or onto the main road:

- ✓ Plan your approach in advance by thinking of where you want the car to be on the flush median.
- ✓ Get into the right lane if you are using a multilane highway.
- ✓ Check your mirrors and blindspot; signal; check your course; brake and shift down (for manuals).
- ✓ Turn onto the flush median and stop if you need to.
- ✓ Find a gap you are comfortable with and join the traffic when it's safe to go.
- ✓ Accelerate to match the speed of other vehicles.



## 5.8 DRIVING AT HIGHER SPEEDS – WHERE TO LOOK

Driving fast means that you have less time to react to hazards and the car responds differently than it would at lower speeds. These two factors significantly increase your chances of having a crash. Therefore, you need to use your eyes more to know exactly what is going on behind you, ahead of you, and around you.



### Here are some tips on where to look when driving at higher speeds:

- ✓ Look 12 seconds ahead or more for any possible hazards and regularly scan between your car and the point 12 seconds ahead. Remember that 12 seconds is a lot further when you're travelling at 100km/h than when you are travelling at 40km/h.
- ✓ Keep your eyes on side roads, other lanes and merge lanes to know what is happening around your vehicle.
- ✓ Keep checking your mirrors regularly especially when slowing down. How often you need to check your mirrors depends on the speed you are travelling at, the amount of traffic on the road, as well as the road conditions.

## 5.9 DRIVING AT HIGHER SPEEDS – CAR POSITIONING AND FOLLOWING DISTANCE

Because things happen a lot faster when you are driving at a higher speed – which gives you less time to react –, the best way to stay safe is to leave a large enough space buffer around your vehicle.

This can be done by counting the distance in terms of time from the car ahead of you.



### Always remember to allow:

- ✓ At least a 2-second buffer in good conditions.
- ✓ A 3-second buffer when you're still learning to drive
- ✓ A 4-second buffer when the weather is bad or at night.
- ✓ When driving on roads with multiple lanes, keep left unless you are overtaking or turning right and ensure your vehicle is in the middle of the lane you are driving in.

## 5.10 DRIVING AROUND CURVES – SPEED CONTROL

Driving around curves at higher speeds takes both skill and a cool head. That's because you will have less time to react and your vehicle will handle differently.

Controlling your speed is essential to ensuring you negotiate curves safely.

### Here are some tips on how to control your speed:

- ✓ Check and use the recommended speed on a turn if there is a sign.
- ✓ Reduce your car's speed before reaching the curve for more control.
- ✓ Slow down further for sharp curves and when the conditions are not good.
- ✓ Avoid braking during the curve as this reduces the grip and stability of your car.
- ✓ Shift down before the curve if it's necessary.
- ✓ If you are driving through a series of downhill bends, brake firmly when on the straight parts and more gently on the curves.
- ✓ Maintain uniform speed around the curve unless you entered too fast or the curve gets tighter.
- ✓ Accelerate back to your cruising speed when the road ahead starts straightening.



## 5.11 DRIVING AROUND CURVES (AT HIGHER SPEEDS) – CAR POSITIONING

To be able to take a curve safely while travelling at high speed, you'll need to position your car correctly – both during the approach and while moving through the curve.

### Here are some tips for positioning your car properly when driving around a curve at high speeds:

- ✓ Reposition your vehicle before the curve to get a straighter course through the curve and a better view. Your car should be positioned more to the right for left-hand curves and more to the left for right-hand curves.
- ✓ Maintain a safe distance from any roadside hazards and oncoming traffic.
- ✓ Ensure you do not cross the centreline (keep your vehicle on the left side of the line) as this is not only illegal but dangerous as well.



## 5.12 HOW TO OVERTAKE

If you are stuck behind another vehicle and you decide it is safe to overtake, the next step you need to take is to pass the vehicle safely and smoothly.

### Follow these steps when overtaking another vehicle:

1. Maintain a distance of at least 2 seconds behind the vehicle in front of you just in case they suddenly brake. Stay further behind if it's a larger vehicle so that you can see in front of it.
2. Shift to a gear that will let you accelerate quickly as you pass if you are driving a manual car.
3. Follow this three step routine to get ready for overtaking:
  - ✓ Check your mirrors and do a shoulder check.
  - ✓ Indicate for at least 3 seconds before you make a move.
  - ✓ Check again if there is enough space to comfortably overtake and then check over your shoulder and your mirrors once more.
4. If it is safe to pass:
  - ✓ Accelerate and quickly move to the right and overtake the vehicle.
  - ✓ Start signalling left as you pass and prepare to pull in in front of the vehicle you have overtaken when you can see it in your rear mirror.
  - ✓ Do a shoulder check and pull back into the left lane.
  - ✓ Be ready to stop overtaking in case you feel uncomfortable about the gap.



## 5.13 HOW TO DO A THREE POINT TURN

Three point turns are done when you want to turn the car completely around, but there isn't enough space to make a U-turn. A three point turn is best done in an area that has no obstructions such as lampposts and parked cars with at least 50m visibility in both directions.

### Once you find a good spot to make the turn, follow these steps:

- ✓ Indicate left for a minimum of three seconds before pulling over.
- ✓ Then indicate right for a minimum of three seconds and start turning.
- ✓ Start moving forward, if it's safe, ensuring that your steering wheel is turned all the way to the right.
- ✓ Get to about 1 metre from the opposite kerb then quickly start turning the wheel to the left before bringing the car to a halt as close to the kerb as you can without touching it.



- ✓ Looking over your shoulder, reverse, while turning the wheel to the extreme left if you hadn't already.
- ✓ When you're back enough to complete the turn, start steering to the right before stopping the car.
- ✓ Move forward to complete the turn, ensuring you're in the proper place on the road.

Three point turns should be done at walking speed, all the while you constantly check around you for hazards.

## 5.14 HOW TO SET UP YOUR TRAILER

Before setting off with your trailer in tow, there're a few steps that you need to follow to ensure that the trailer is properly attached to your vehicle and ready to go.

### Here're the things you need to do before taking a trailer onto the road:

- ✓ Make sure that the trailer is securely locked onto your vehicle's towbar.
- ✓ Ensure that the safety chain is correctly attached.
- ✓ Hook up the electrical connection and test to see if everything is working as it should. (You might require someone to help you check this as the controls have to be engaged for the brake lights and indicators to come on).
- ✓ Make sure the load you're transporting is centred as much as possible and that it's securely fastened to the trailer.
- ✓ Check and adjust your mirrors to ensure you can see behind you.



## 5.15 HOW TO REVERSE WITH A TRAILER

The **most difficult** part about reversing with a trailer is steering correctly. Because the trailer swivels on your vehicle's tow bar, you'll need to get the trailer to start moving in the direction you want before steering your vehicle through the turn to follow the trailer.

### Here're some tips to help you steer your trailer in reverse:

- ✓ Look beyond the trailer in your rearview mirror to where you want your trailer to end up.
- ✓ Steer to the opposite side you want the trailer to go, i.e. steer right to move the trailer left and vice versa. A simple way to do this



is to hold your steering wheel at the bottom and then move your hand to the direction you want the trailer to go.

- ✓ Once the trailer starts moving in the direction you want, straighten your car's wheels again.
- ✓ To make your car follow the trailer, move the steering wheel in the opposite direction to how you'd moved it when pointing the trailer to the target spot. Keeping your wheels straight as you reverse will make the angle between your car and trailer too tight making it impossible for your vehicle to push the trailer back.
- ✓ Keep making small, smooth and regular movements with your steering wheel to move your trailer into place.

## 6.0 DRIVING CONDITIONS

### 6.1 TIPS FOR DRIVING SAFELY AT NIGHT

Even roads that you're familiar with during the day can feel quite different when you're driving on them in the dark. The reduced ability to see warning signs and road markings, and the risk of encountering new hazards make driving at night more challenging.



**Here are a few tips to help you reduce the risk when driving at night:**

- ✓ **Prepare your car.** Clean your windscreen before you take your car out in the dark as it will help reduce glare from streetlights and headlights making it easier to see.
- ✓ **Increase your stopping distance.** Drive more slowly and increase your following distance to allow yourself more time to react to hazards if need be.
- ✓ **Do a lot of practice.** Get at least 10 hours experience of night driving starting with roads that are less busy at night.
- ✓ **Don't forget the risks.** Pedestrians, cyclists and animals will be harder to see at night so be keen to spot them early. Unfortunately, there'll also be more drunk drivers on the road at night, so keep a large enough following distance and reduce your speed so that you're ready to react when another driver does something dangerous.

## 6.2 DRIVING SAFELY IN WET WEATHER

Wet weather makes the road slippery and also makes it hard to see ahead clearly. This significantly increases the risk of having an accident which means that you have to be extra careful to remain safe.

**Here are some tips to help you drive safely in wet weather:**

- ✓ Reduce your speed and increase your following distance to at least four seconds.
- ✓ Look at least 12 seconds ahead for big puddles as these can cause your car to lose its grip if you drive into them at high speed. You should also keep an eye out for sprays from other vehicles especially larger ones. Maintain a bigger following distance or drive more to the left if vehicles from the other side of the road are spraying you.
- ✓ Be more careful if it is raining after a dry spell as the dirt and grease build-up will make the road more slippery.
- ✓ Try driving in the tracks of the vehicle in front of you as this part of the road will be slightly drier.
- ✓ Be extra careful when driving at night in wet conditions as the glare from streetlights could make it difficult to see road markings.



## 6.3 DRIVING SAFELY IN THE FOG

Because visibility is drastically reduced, driving in the fog can be quite dangerous.

**Here are some tips you can follow to keep safe when you're driving in foggy conditions:**

- ✓ **Slow down.** The poor visibility makes it difficult to identify hazards early enough for you to react. Drive slower than you would in normal conditions and use the speedometer to regulate your speed – rather than relying on visual indicators which could also be obscured by the fog.
- ✓ **Use your headlights in low beam.** Turn on your headlights to low beam as a high beam will reflect off the fog and dazzle you instead of providing illumination.
- ✓ **Use your fog lights.** If your car has fog lights, turn them on as they will not only help you see the road but they'll also help other drivers see you.
- ✓ **Position your car as far left as possible.** Don't hug the centreline when driving in foggy conditions. Instead drive as close to the white line on your left as possible to keep away from oncoming traffic.



- ✓ **Don't stop on the road.** If you need to stop, find a place far from traffic to pull over. Turn off your car's lights as they may cause other motorists to assume your taillights are indicative of the line of travel – this could result in a collision.

## 6.4 MOUNTAIN ROAD DRIVING – HOW TO DO IT SAFELY

Driving on mountain roads is often an exhilarating experience, but it can also be quite unsafe when done wrong.

### Here are some tips to make any mountain road drive safer:

- ✓ Make sure that your vehicle's brakes, windshield wipers, defogger and exhaust systems are in good condition before starting your journey; a failure in any of these systems could make the drive unsafe.
- ✓ Drive as fast down the mountain road as you would when driving up by shifting to a lower gear. This way you won't have to rely on your brakes to hold your speed downhill.
- ✓ For steep upgrades, shift to a lower gear and watch your car's temperature gauge to avoid overheating the engine. Pull off to the side of the road at a safe place and keep your vehicle at fast idle if you need to cool off the engine.
- ✓ Do not drive too close to the centerline especially around curves.
- ✓ Always remember that vehicles going uphill should be given the right of way when driving down a one-lane mountain road.



## 7.0 EMERGENCY DRIVING

### 7.1 STEERING OUT OF TROUBLE

It's usually a better idea to steer to avoid a hazard than to attempt to stop your car by braking, more so when you're at speeds above 40 km/h. This is because your swerving reaction time will be faster than your braking reaction time.

However, you'll need to have good steering skills to manoeuvre out of sticky situations while maintaining control of your vehicle.



#### Tips for steering out of an emergency

- ✓ Always keep both your hands on the wheel at the 9 and 3 o'clock position or the 8 and 4 o'clock position. Also, maintain a firm grip on the wheel (not strangling firm) as this will help you turn quicker and also keep you safe in case your airbag is set off.
- ✓ Don't apply the brake while turning as it is easier to lock your wheels when you do both at once. This could make you lose control of the vehicle.
- ✓ Don't turn any more than necessary to clear the obstacle as sharp turns could cause your car to skid or rollover.
- ✓ Be ready to counter steer, i.e. to turn the steering wheel back in the other direction once you've cleared the obstacle to keep your car on the road.

### 7.2 WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF BRAKE FAILURE

Newer vehicles have a split braking system which makes it less likely to have a total brake failure. If the brake warning light turns on, you might still have braking in two of the car's wheels, probably one rear and one front wheel. It won't work as fast, but the partial braking system will allow you to stop your vehicle and call for help. Be aware that stopping distance will increase significantly.



#### If your brakes completely fail, you should:

- ✓ Shift to a low gear while you scan for a safe place to stop.
- ✓ Try Pumping the brakes several times in quick succession as this might build adequate brake pressure to slow your car.

- ✓ If pumping the brakes doesn't work, apply the emergency/parking brake slowly. If your rear wheels lock up and start skidding, let off the emergency brake until the skidding stops.
- ✓ Warn other road users by switching on your headlights and hazard lights and sounding your horn
- ✓ Keep your eyes on the road and steer your vehicle to a safe place off the road or steer into a road that's going uphill.
- ✓ If you are travelling downhill and the vehicle is starting to lose control, try to scrape against something on the side of the road, such as a safety rail, a bank or the kerb.

**Once your vehicle stops, call for assistance. Don't drive it again until it's fixed.**

### **7.3 WHAT TO DO IN CASE YOUR ACCELERATOR GETS STUCK**

It does not happen often, but when your accelerator pedal malfunctions or sticks, the situation can be quite frightening and dangerous. When the accelerator pedal sticks, your car will keep increasing speed while your braking efforts become unresponsive.



**If you find yourself in this situation, keep calm and do the following:**

- ✓ Keep your hands on the steering wheel and remain focused on the road ahead.
- ✓ Tap the pedal a couple of times and try to lift it with your toes to see if it will come loose.
- ✓ If the accelerator pedal remains stuck, shift gears to neutral and then start braking. Your engine will race, but because your gear is in neutral, no power will be transferred to your wheels.
- ✓ Steer your vehicle off the road and bring it to a stop.
- ✓ Switch off the engine and put on your hazard lights.
- ✓ If your car does not shift into neutral, turn your ignition off as the last resort but don't put it into "LOCK" as this will lock up your steering wheel. Then apply the brakes to stop.

**Once the car stops, call for help so that a professional can fix it before you drive it again.**

## 7.4 HOW TO DEAL WITH A TYRE BLOWOUT

A tyre blowout can be dangerous, more so if you're driving at high speed, as it could cause your vehicle to lose control. A burst front tyre will usually cause your vehicle to "pull" to the side of the blown-out tyre while a burst rear tyre usually causes your vehicle to sway side to side.

**If you happen to get a tyre burst while driving, keep calm and do the following:**

- ✓ Hold the steering wheel with both hands and maintain the correct driving posture.
- ✓ Avoid making sudden movements on the steering wheel as this could destabilise the car. Instead, try to keep your car on its path with mild steering movements.
- ✓ Remove your foot slowly from the accelerator while keeping off the brake pedal.
- ✓ Once the car has slowed down considerably, you can begin applying the brakes ever so slightly.
- ✓ Indicate and steer your vehicle to the side of the road. Drive on the bare metal wheel if you need to, but don't stop in the middle of the road.
- ✓ Put on your hazard lights once your car comes to a halt.

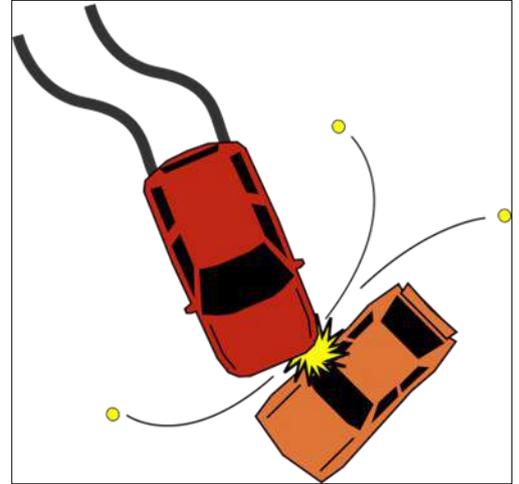


## 7.5 MAKING AN EMERGENCY STOP WITH ANTI-LOCK BRAKES (ABS) – AUTOMATIC CAR

When stopping abruptly, it's crucial that you keep the car from skidding as this will allow you to maintain control of the vehicle. ABS helps prevent the wheels from locking – which causes the car to skid – but some skill is still required in some situations to ensure it doesn't happen.

### Tips for making an emergency stop with ABS:

- ✓ Since it's an emergency, there isn't enough time to follow safety procedures like checking your mirrors and blind spots. You should, therefore, brake immediately and keep your hands on the wheel to maintain control of the vehicle.
- ✓ In all weather and road conditions, apply the brake firmly and keep your foot pressed firmly and consistently on the pedal. The ABS should help keep your car from skidding as it slows. **Never pump the brakes in an emergency.** Keep the pedal pressed down hard and steer out of trouble. Don't become over-confident in your driving just because your vehicle has ABS brakes.
- ✓ Once you've stopped, put your car in park and engage the handbrake if you need to stop for a while. Otherwise drive on if the hazard is no longer present.



## 8.0 CROSSINGS

*In Chapter 8, read up on crossings from pedestrian crossings to school crossings and level crossings.*

### 8.1 DRIVING THROUGH PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS

Pedestrian crossings are designated places for pedestrians to cross the road. They're sometimes referred to as "Zebra crossings" because of the striped black and white pattern the markings create on the road. These crossings are pretty common in areas where there are a lot of people such as around shops, schools and on urban roads.



#### **Tips for driving through a pedestrian crossing**

- ✓ Identify the crossing early by looking out for warning signs and markings on the road (a white diamond).
- ✓ Watch out for pedestrians around the crossing (some may be distracted and not see you coming).
- ✓ Slow down as you come up to the crossing and be prepared to stop.
- ✓ Give way to anybody on the crossing or anybody who is obviously waiting to cross. Do this by stopping behind the white limit line.
- ✓ Do not drive off until the pedestrian has crossed in front of you and is actually clear of your vehicle.

### 8.2 DRIVING THROUGH SCHOOL CROSSINGS

School crossings usually operate before and after school and can be recognised by the signs that are displayed near them. The crossings also often have two school patrol members who'll display a stop sign on each side of traffic whenever drivers are required to stop. The school patrol members will allow the children to cross once the traffic has stopped. A school crossing that is at an existing pedestrian crossing will revert back to a normal pedestrian crossing during non-patrol hours.

#### **Tips for driving through school crossings:**

- ✓ Identify the crossings early by looking out for signs.
- ✓ Be on high alert when these crossings are operating as they can get very busy.
- ✓ Watch out for buses and cars dropping off or picking up children.
- ✓ Some crossings are also inside school zones that have speed limits. Stay within the limit.
- ✓ Slow down and be ready to stop when approaching a crossing.
- ✓ Stop behind the limit line if a school patrol member is extending a stop sign out onto the road and remain stationary until the sign is withdrawn.
- ✓ Watch out for kids anywhere around the crossing as they could suddenly run out in front of you.



### **8.3 LEVEL CROSSINGS – USING SIGNS AND DEVICES ON CROSSINGS**

A level crossing is any place where the road and ground-level railway intersect. Railway crossings can have a number of warning devices and signs, these include:

- ✓ **Stop sign.** Bring your car to a complete halt behind the yellow 'limit line' (or at least five meters from the track if there isn't one) when you come across this sign at a level crossing. Check right and left along the track for an oncoming train before proceeding.
- ✓ **Lights, bells and/or barriers.** If the devices are not warning you of an oncoming train (i.e. the barrier arm is up, the bells are not ringing, and the lights are not flashing) slow



down and be prepared to stop as you check both sides of the track. If all is clear, then you can proceed.

If the devices are activated (i.e. the barrier arm is down, lights are flashing and bells ringing) you will need to stop and wait until the devices stop before crossing.

Although rare, there are some crossings with no signs or devices – usually on private land. For these make sure you slow your vehicle to a crawl and check both sides of the railway before crossing.

## 9.0 MERGING & LANE CHANGES

### 9.1 HOW TO SAFELY PULL OUT FROM THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

The most important thing to remember when moving off from the side of the road is to be patient. Take your time to ensure it's safe before you start to move into traffic.

**The process for pulling out from the roadside is as follows:**

- ✓ Check your side and rearview mirrors to see what is going on around the car.
- ✓ If there are no hazards, put on your right indicator for a minimum of 3 seconds before you start moving.
- ✓ Put your car in gear and get ready to pull out.
- ✓ Do another mirror check.
- ✓ Look over your shoulder for cyclists, other vehicles, and pedestrians.
- ✓ If it is safe to go, start moving forward slowly while turning your steering wheel away from the kerb.
- ✓ Smoothly accelerate away from the kerb.
- ✓ Steer to position your car properly in your lane.
- ✓ Check your mirrors once more after you have joined the traffic.
- ✓ Ensure your indicator is off if it doesn't switch off automatically.



### 9.2 CHANGING LANES ON A MULTI-LANE ROAD

It might seem like a straight forward manoeuvre but changing lanes can be quite tricky. There're a number of things you need to think about while at the same time evaluating the spaces around your car carefully.

**Here're the steps for changing lanes safely:**

- ✓ Look ahead to see if there're hazards such as traffic that has slowed or stopped or cyclists and pedestrians that could make changing lanes dangerous.
- ✓ Check your mirrors, indicate, and do a shoulder check.
- ✓ Scan the road in front once more and check your mirrors and blind spots again.
- ✓ If you are comfortable with the gap, steer your vehicle smoothly and decisively into the next lane.



- ✓ Adjust your speed appropriately to match the flow of the traffic in that lane.
- ✓ Perform another mirror check once you have changed lanes.

### 9.3 MERGING FROM A FEEDER LANE WHEN DRIVING

A feeder lane does the work of allowing vehicles moving at a slower speed to speed up before merging with the traffic on a high-speed road. A common example is a motorway on-ramp. When merging into traffic on a high-speed road, the most important thing to remember is to get your vehicle moving at a speed similar to that of the faster traffic before merging.

You want your vehicle to be travelling at almost the same speed as the traffic you'll be merging with as this will make the merge both easier and safer.



#### **Here are the steps for merging into higher-speed traffic:**

- ✓ Signal, check your mirrors, look around and check your blind spots as well.
- ✓ Check the traffic for a safe gap that you can aim for.
- ✓ Use the feeder lane to accelerate your vehicle to the speed of the traffic you're about to join.
- ✓ Merge with the high-speed traffic.
- ✓ Turn off your indicator once you have merged.
- ✓ Adjust your speed accordingly to match the flow of the traffic

## 10.0 INTERSECTIONS

### 10.1 INTERSECTIONS – HOW TO APPROACH THEM

When driving up to an intersection, it's necessary to plan where you are going in advance so that you can position your car correctly on the road. Be on the lookout for where the turning lanes are marked so that you choose the right one.

There're several steps you need to remember each time you are approaching an intersection. They are; mirrors, signal, course, brake, gear, and assess.

You can use the mnemonic

**"My Safety Cannot Be Given Away"** to remember.



**You should apply these steps in the following way:**

- ✓ Mirrors: Check your mirrors constantly as you approach the intersection.
- ✓ Signal: Indicate the direction you are going if you are turning.
- ✓ Course: Plan on how you will get to where you want to go.
- ✓ Brake: Slow down to about 15-20 km/h to enable you to stop if you need to.
- ✓ Gear: Shift to at least 2<sup>nd</sup> gear if driving a manual vehicle.
- ✓ Assess: Is it safe to go or not? Decide and act accordingly.
- ✓ Remember to:
- ✓ Keep an eye out for any cyclists and pedestrians on the road.
- ✓ Be ready to give way even when you are not meant to as other drivers can make mistakes.

### 10.2 TURNING LEFT

Turning left at intersections is easier than turning right. That's because you don't need to cross over a lane of traffic and the number of vehicles you need to give way to are fewer. However, you'll have to give way if the car opposite yours is at a Give Way sign and you are at a Stop Sign – even if they are turning right.

When approaching the intersection follow these steps: check your mirrors; signal left; plan your course; slow down; change to the appropriate gear (for manual vehicles); and assess your surrounding keenly.

**Once you've followed all these steps, do another quick check before turning:**



- ✓ Check your blind spot and mirrors for cyclists on your inside.
- ✓ Check again for approaching traffic on your right as there could be a bike or car that you missed. If you are not sure, wait until you are.
- ✓ Check around the corner you're taking to ensure it's clear.
- ✓ Once you take the turn, increase your speed smoothly to match that of the cars around you.

### 10.3 TURNING RIGHT

Turning right is quite similar to turning left at intersections, but there're several more things that you'll need to think about as you'll have to cross a lane of traffic when making the turn.

As you approach the intersection, go through the pre-turn routine that involves: checking your mirrors, signalling the direction you're going, planning your course, slowing down, shifting to the appropriate gear (for manuals), and assessing your surroundings.



#### Completing a right turn

Once you've completed the turn routine, follow these steps to complete the turn:

- ✓ If you are at a Give Way, Stop or an uncontrolled intersection, look at both sides of the road (right and left) and ahead (if necessary.)
- ✓ Look right and left once more to ensure it's completely safe.
- ✓ Perform the last check as you begin to move just in case you missed something.
- ✓ Check whether it's clear where your car will be once you make the turn for course planning.
- ✓ Once you make the turn, increase your speed smoothly to match that of other vehicles around you.

Remember to always give yourself some room (enough space that you can see some road over your bonnet) when behind another car at an intersection.

# 11.0 TURNING

## 11.1 TURNING LEFT INTO A MULTI-LANE ROAD

It's a bit simpler to turn left into a multi-lane highway than it is to turn right. That's because you'll not need to cross over traffic lanes to make the turn. However it is still important to ensure that you get the basics right.

Look ahead to the intersection so as to be able to plan your course as well as position your car correctly for the turn.

While coming up to the turn, make sure you go through the following steps: **Check mirrors** → **Signal direction** → **Check your course** → **Brake** → **Shift down gears** → **Assess your surroundings**.



- ✓ Angle your vehicle slightly to the left as you pull up at the intersection to ready yourself for the turn.
- ✓ Look for a gap (look to the right and ahead at least twice before you move off).
- ✓ If all is clear, turn into the closest lane and accelerate to the appropriate speed.

## 11.2 TURNING RIGHT INTO A MULTI-LANE ROAD

Turning right into a road with multiple lanes is very similar to turning right into a single-lane road. The only difference is that there is more traffic for you to watch out for.

Look well ahead as you approach the intersection so that you can plan where to position your vehicle for the turn. Remember to check your mirrors, indicate, choose your course, brake, shift to a lower gear (for manuals) and assess your surrounding as you come up to the turn.

### Follow these steps to make the turn:

- Position your car near the centreline of the street you are on facing straight towards the intersection.
- Look for a gap in the traffic (look both ways and ahead a minimum of two times before pulling out).
- If all is clear, cross the lanes of traffic coming towards you from your right side and turn into the closest lane to the middle of the road.
- Speed up to match the flow of the traffic.

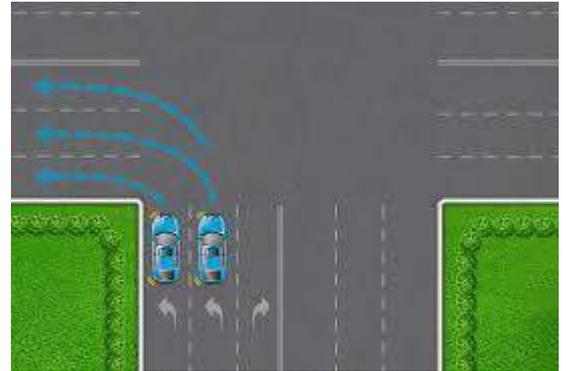


## 11.3 TURNING LEFT OFF A MULTI-LANE ROAD

While turning left off a multi-lane road is not as difficult as turning right off a similar road, there are still a couple of steps you need to take to ensure you do it safely.

### Here're the steps for turning left off a multi-lane road:

- ✓ Plan your route in advance and move into the left-most lane as you near the place where you want to make the left turn. Remember to allow yourself enough time to make lane changes safely before you get to the turn. Also, make sure to indicate and check your mirrors and blind spots whenever changing lanes.
- ✓ Indicate left and slow your car down as you approach the left turn. Shift down gears if you are driving a manual. Also, be prepared to bring your vehicle to a complete stop.
- ✓ Once you're at the turn, check the road you are turning into for pedestrians and/or cyclists crossing the road as well as other hazards.
- ✓ If the left turn is at an intersection, check right for vehicles that are coming straight across.
- ✓ If all is clear, accelerate smoothly and make the turn.
- ✓ Increase your speed to match with the rest of the traffic.



## 11.4 TURNING RIGHT OFF A MULTI-LANE ROAD

Similar to turning into a multi-lane road, there're a few steps that you need to follow when turning off multi-lane roads. The trick to turning right off a multi-lane road is selecting the right gap.

### Here are the steps to follow:

- ✓ Move to the right-hand lane as you approach the place where you'll be turning your vehicle. Make sure to start early enough so as not to rush the lane changes and risk making mistakes.
- ✓ Look for a flush median or right-turning bay at the place where you'll be turning as these will provide you with a place to wait for a safe gap.
- ✓ As you prepare to turn: Check your mirrors – signal – plan your course – brake – shift down gears (for manuals) – assess for hazards.
- ✓ If all is clear, then you can make the turn.
- ✓ When making a right turn off a multi-lane road, you will need to give way to at least two lanes of oncoming traffic. Ensure there's an adequate gap in all lanes before you make the turn.



## 11.5 PERFORMING A U-TURN

Sometimes when driving, you'll need to turn around and go back in the direction you came from. One of the easiest ways you can do this is by performing a U-turn.

**Here are the steps for performing a U-turn safely and successfully:**

- ✓ Check your mirrors, indicate left for at least three seconds and then pull into the kerb as close as possible without touching it.
- ✓ Check your mirrors and indicate right.
- ✓ Check for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists in your mirrors and blind spots.
- ✓ Turn your steering to the furthest right as you pull out slowly and drive smoothly to the other side of the road.
- ✓ Perform a mirror and shoulder check as you complete the turn to ensure no one has come up behind your car and is trying to pass, then accelerate back into your lane.
- ✓ The best place to perform a U-turn is on a wide street where there aren't vehicles parked in your way and where you have a good view of traffic up and down the street.



## 11.6 PERFORMING U-TURNS IN A CUL-DE-SAC

Although the word sounds quite fancy, a cul-de-sac basically refers to a reasonably short street that has a bulbous end. Because cul-de-sac streets do not connect to any other streets, it's very common to find people U-turning where they end.

When performing a U-turn at a cul-de-sac, the most important thing you need to remember is that all the **regular rules for performing U-turns still apply**. The rules are not any different for these dead-end streets.



**The rules for performing a U-turn in a cul-de-sac are:**

- ✓ **Mirrors and Blind Spot** - You'll still need to indicate and check your mirrors and blind spots even when you are performing the U-turn by following the road around the bulbous end of the cul-de-sac street. Checking your blind spots and mirrors helps you ensure that there aren't any hidden hazards that could cause an accident when you're making the turn.
- ✓ **Indicating** - Signalling right at the end of the street informs other drivers and road users that you'll not be turning into a driveway but rather driving around along the road.

## 11.7 HOW TO TURN INTO A ONE-WAY STREET

The most important thing to remember when you want to turn into a one-way street is to ensure that you turn into the lane that is closest to you. For left turns, turn into the left-hand lane, and into the right-hand lane for right turns.

There's an exception to this rule if the road has markings pointing you to the lane you should take.

Make sure to plan ahead so that you know how you're going to position your car. If you're on a road with multiple lanes, make sure you head to the one that matches the direction you want to turn.



Follow these steps when making the turn: **Check your mirrors – Signal – Choose your course – Brake – Shift to a lower gear (for manuals) – Assess your surroundings.**

If vehicles coming from the opposite direction are also turning into the one-way street, you can both go at the same time as you will be turning into different lanes. Just make sure to look out for oncoming traffic just in case someone veers into your lane. Also, keep an eye out for traffic going straight in case you need to give way.

## 12.0 ROUNDABOUTS

*In Chapter 12, learn all about roundabouts from the approach and picking a safe gap to safely using the roundabout.*

### 12.1 USING SIMPLE ROUNDABOUTS – THE APPROACH

When you are approaching a roundabout, make sure to always look well ahead to get a clear idea of how it's laid out and how busy it is. This will make working out your exit route and positioning your car to get on to the roundabout easier.

Once you are close enough to the roundabout, you'll need to follow a routine quite similar to that for approaching an intersection, which is as follows:

- ✓ Check your mirrors for traffic behind you as you start decelerating for the roundabout.
- ✓ Indicate early enough – right for right, left for left and no signal (yet) for straight through.
- ✓ Plan your course including the exit you want to take.
- ✓ Slow down as you approach the roundabout.
- ✓ Shift the gear to 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> if you'll need to stop.
- ✓ Find a gap in the flowing traffic.



### 12.2 USING SIMPLE ROUNDABOUTS – PICKING A SAFE GAP

It can take quite some time before you get used to picking safe gaps at roundabouts since vehicles will be travelling at different speeds, but with enough practice, it should become second to nature.

#### How to pick a gap at a roundabout

- ✓ You can tell the direction a car will be going based on how fast it is travelling. Cars that are travelling straight through will generally be travelling at a faster speed than those that will either turn left or right at the roundabout.
- ✓ Checking the direction the vehicles are signalling will also allow you to adjust your approach appropriately.
- ✓ You should also remember to look out for cyclists when picking a gap. They could be hidden from site by larger vehicles so keep this in mind to avoid any mishaps.



- ✓ Finally, if you are not sure whether you'll fit in a gap or not, wait until you're sure to ensure your safety and that of other road users.

### ***12.3 TIPS FOR USING MULTI-LANE ROUNDABOUTS***

As you would with any other kind of intersection, you'll need to look well ahead (about 12 seconds ahead) when you are approaching a multi-lane roundabout. This will help you work out the lane and the exit you will need to take to get where you want to go. Make sure to look for lane markings and signs ahead to help you do this.



#### **Important tips**

- ✓ Look out for large vehicles such as buses that could move out of their lane and let them go first.
- ✓ If you need to change lanes to get to your exit while travelling on the roundabout, follow the correct procedure for changing lanes.
- ✓ Practise on simple roundabouts to build your confidence before moving on to a multi-lane one.
- ✓ Stay alert at all times as some drivers can give signals that are misleading at roundabouts.

## 13.0 REVERSING AND PARKING

*In Chapter 13, learn all there is to know about reversing and parking in both manual and automatic cars along with parallel parking and parking in angled car parks.*

### 13.1 HOW TO MOVE IN REVERSE (AUTOMATIC)

The most challenging thing about moving in reverse is that you cannot see what is around you as easily as you can when moving forward. So, if you are reversing from a driveway where there're kids and pets present, go to the back of the car and check for obstructions before you start.

#### **When you are ready:**

- ✓ Press in the brake.
- ✓ Shift to the reverse gear.
- ✓ Check your mirrors and blind spots to see what is going on around the car.



If all is clear, turn to your left so that you are looking out through the rear window and then start reversing. Take things slow and keep checking your mirrors and blind spots constantly.

#### **Follow these steps to start reversing:**

- ✓ Gently release the brake; the car will start to move back.
- ✓ Press the accelerator gently if you require to move faster.
- ✓ Same as steering forward, look at the point you want to steer to and not immediately outside the back window.
- ✓ When you are about a car's length to your destination, release the accelerator and smoothly press down the brake to stop the car.

### 13.2 HOW TO MOVE IN REVERSE (MANUAL)

Not being able to easily see what is around you is the hardest thing about driving a car in reverse. Because of the limited visibility, make sure to check behind your vehicle for obstacles and hazards before you begin reversing.

#### **Once you are ready:**

1. Press the clutch all the way in.
2. Shift to the reverse gear.
3. Check your mirrors and blind spots to see what is happening around the car.

If all is clear, turn your body so that you are looking out through the rear window ready to start moving.

- ✓ Slowly let the clutch up until you feel the car 'bite', hold the clutch there to avoid bunny hopping or stalling.



- ✓ Gently press the accelerator as you release the clutch slowly.
- ✓ Look where you want to go instead of immediately behind the car as you steer.
- ✓ Keep checking your mirrors and blind spots as you move.
- ✓ Once you are about a car's length to your stopping point, press the clutch all the way in and smoothly press the brake.

Practice reversing in an empty lot before trying it out on the road.

### 13.3 HOW TO REVERSE PARALLEL PARK

The most important thing when reverse parallel parking is to position your car correctly before you begin. You should pull up your car a small distance in front of the car that is parked in front of the slot you want to get into; such that your front door is next to the car's front wheel and your car about half a metre away along its length.



**Once in position, check for hazards and then:**

- ✓ Put the car in reverse gear and turn on your left indicator if it's not still on.
- ✓ Reverse while checking your mirrors and blind spots.
- ✓ Turn your steering to the left (about one whole turn depending on your car) once the back wheel of your car is level with the front vehicle's rear bumper.
- ✓ When clear of the car in front, begin turning your steering to the right to put your car closer to the kerb.
- ✓ Reverse slowly until your vehicle is parallel to the kerb and about 30cm away.
- ✓ If you require to straighten up, move your car forward slightly.
- ✓ When in the correct spot, put your vehicle in Park (automatic) or Neutral (manual) and engage the handbrake.

Practice with cones first, then move to a park with only a car in front before progressing to single parking spaces. This will help build your confidence.

The most important thing when reverse parallel parking is to position your car correctly before you begin. You should indicate to the left and pull up your car a small distance in front of the car that is parked in front of the slot you want to get into; such that your front door is next to the car's front wheel and your car about half a metre away along its length.

## 13.4 PARKING IN AN ANGLED PARK

While its orientation makes it easier to drive into, it still does require some skill and technique to successfully get your car into an angled park.

### Here are the steps for parking your car in an angled park:

- ✓ Locate a vacant parking spot for your car and indicate to let other drivers know that you intend to park.
- ✓ Position your car in such a way that your side mirrors are aligned with the demarcation line that is closest to you. Move slowly so that you don't overshoot the spot.
- ✓ When your mirrors are aligned with the first line, start turning into the spot slowly and carefully.
- ✓ Adjust your vehicle's position as you slowly drive in so that you're not too close to the cars on either side.
- ✓ Keep adjusting your car's position as you move forward until your car lines up with those in adjacent parking slots. Be careful not to hit the kerb.
- ✓ Once you're in the angled park, switch off the indicator, shift your car into neutral (for manuals) or park (for automatics) and engage the handbrake.
- ✓ Turn off the engine if you need to. If you find you've parked too close to either of the cars on your sides, reverse out and drive into the angled park again.



## 13.5 REVERSING OUT OF AN ANGLED PARK

When reversing out of an angle park, it is important to scan your surrounding and check your mirrors constantly to know everything that is going on around you. You should also back out slowly to allow other drivers to notice what you are doing and make adjustments to their driving if they need to.

### Here's the process for backing out from an angle park:

- ✓ Check your mirrors to find out how wide the space between your car and the others on either side is.
- ✓ Put your car in reverse gear and start backing out slowly.
- ✓ Look out through the back and side windows to see behind you and keep checking your mirrors to ensure your car is still a safe distance from adjacent vehicles.
- ✓ Keep reversing until your car is further back than the car adjacent to you on your left then start turning the steering wheel right. Keep track of your front right corner to ensure it doesn't hit the car on your right.
- ✓ Keep checking behind for traffic.
- ✓ Once you've backed around and the car is facing the direction you want to go, straighten the steering.
- ✓ Stop the car and shift into 1<sup>st</sup> gear (manual) or into drive (automatic)
- ✓ Check your mirrors, signal right, check your blind spots and start moving.



## 14.0 HILL WORK

*In Chapter 14, learn about starting and stopping on hills in both manual and automatic cars.*

### 14.1 STOPPING ON HILLS (AUTOMATIC)

Driving up and down hills is essentially the same as driving on flat ground. However, you'll need to take some extra steps to ensure that your car does not get pulled or pushed into dangerous positions.

#### Stopping on hills

Follow these steps when you want to stop on a hill:

- ✓ Check your mirrors.
- ✓ Signal left.
- ✓ Look ahead at where you want to stop.
- ✓ Release the accelerator.
- ✓ Apply the brake gently.
- ✓ Keep the car in "Drive" until you completely stop, then put on the parking brake or handbrake.
- ✓ If you are parking the vehicle, put it into park and turn your front wheels so that they are angled towards the kerb i.e. turn your steering wheel right if you are facing up a hill or left if facing downhill.



### 14.2 HOW TO DRIVE AND STOP ON HILLS (MANUAL)

In a manual car, driving up a hill will require you to use a lower gear as well as use more accelerator than when driving on a flat surface at the same speed. Revs also need to be kept high enough when changing gears.

Driving downhill, on the other hand, means that braking takes longer to stop the car. It is also easier for the car to go faster than you intend, so keep an eye on your speed.

#### Stopping on hills

The procedure for stopping on hills is as follows:

- ✓ Check your mirrors.
- ✓ Signal left.
- ✓ Focus on where you want to stop.
- ✓ Remove your foot from the accelerator.



- ✓ Apply the brake gently.
- ✓ Press in the clutch when the car is about to stop.
- ✓ Engage the handbrake and leave the car in 1<sup>st</sup> gear if you're facing up the hill or in reverse when facing downhill.
- ✓ Angle your wheels so that they are facing the kerb.

### ***14.3 HILL STARTS FACING UPHILL (AUTOMATIC)***

For practising hill starts, make sure to choose a spot that does not slope too steeply and where there is adequate space behind you.

**Follow these steps when you are ready to go:**

- ✓ Pull up the handbrake and press the release button.
- ✓ Keep the handbrake engaged by holding it up.
- ✓ Press on the accelerator gently until you feel the vehicle pulling.
- ✓ Release the handbrake gently – if you start rolling back, pull up the handbrake again and repeat the procedure until you get the correct balance.
- ✓ When you have steady control of the car, indicate, check your mirrors, and do a shoulder check.
- ✓ If all's clear, push down the accelerator smoothly and pull away.



### ***14.4 HILL STARTS FACING DOWNHILL (AUTOMATIC)***

Hill starts are much easier when you are facing downhill because gravity is pulling you forward rather than backward. But even though it's easier, several steps still need to be followed to ensure your vehicle is not pulled into a dangerous position.

**These are the steps for a downhill hill start:**

- ✓ Press the footbrake down.
- ✓ Put the gear in drive.
- ✓ Release the parking brake or handbrake gently.
- ✓ Indicate, check your mirrors and do a shoulder check.
- ✓ Release the footbrake smoothly.



- ✓ Use as little or as much accelerator as you require to move at a safe speed. This will depend on the gradient of the slope and the type of vehicle you are driving.

### ***14.5 HILL STARTS FACING UPHILL (MANUAL)***

For practising hill starts, choose a gentle slope with ample space behind just in case the car rolls back.

**Follow these steps when you are ready to go:**

- ✓ Pull up the handbrake and press the release button.
- ✓ Hold it up to keep it engaged.
- ✓ Let the clutch up slowly until you feel the car 'bite', then slightly press it in to steady the vehicle.
- ✓ Gradually press in the accelerator – you'll need more of it than when driving on a flat surface.
- ✓ Release the handbrake slowly – if the car rolls back, pull up the handbrake and use the pedals to find steady control.
- ✓ Once you have steadied the car, indicate, do a shoulder check and check your mirrors.
- ✓ If it's clear, press the accelerator smoothly as you let out the clutch to slowly pull away.



Keep driving up the hill until you get into the 2<sup>nd</sup> gear – which you will need more accelerator to get to. Always ensure that you release the clutch slowly when shifting gears.

### ***14.6 HILL STARTS FACING DOWNHILL (MANUAL)***

It's much easier performing a hill start when facing downhill than uphill as gravity will help you out instead of working against you. You'll still need to follow a couple of steps to do it successfully and safely.

**Here are the steps for a downslope hill start:**

- ✓ Press the footbrake down.
- ✓ Put the car in the first gear.
- ✓ Release the handbrake.
- ✓ Indicate, check your mirrors and blind spot.
- ✓ Release the footbrake slightly while simultaneously releasing the clutch. You can give the car a bit of accelerator if you feel like it's about to stall.
- ✓ Use the accelerator if needed as you pull away at a safe speed – how much accelerator you need will depend on how steep the slope is and the type of car you are driving.



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## 15.0 OTHER ROAD USERS

*In Chapter 15, learn all about sharing the road with other road users such as cyclists.*

### 15.1 SHARING THE ROAD WITH OTHER ROAD USERS

One of the keys to being a good driver is learning how to share the road with other road users. You need to know how to drive safely around other road users that are more vulnerable like pedestrians, cyclists and moped riders.

It can be hard to spot these other road users as they are smaller and they mostly use a different part of the road, thus the need to be extra careful.



**Some of the places where you might find it difficult to spot other road users include:**

- ✓ Intersections
- ✓ Driveways
- ✓ Roundabouts
- ✓ Carparks

Always remember to check and double check your mirrors and blind spots when driving in these areas to avoid an accident.

**Other areas where you should be ready to slow down or stop, especially for pedestrians include:**

- ✓ Schools
- ✓ Shopping centres
- ✓ Bus stops
- ✓ Pedestrian crossings

## 15.2 TIPS FOR DRIVING AROUND CYCLISTS

Cyclists are the second most vulnerable road users after pedestrians, and as such, drivers need to take extra care to ensure they don't put cyclists in danger when they meet on the road.

### Here are a couple of tips for driving around cyclists safely:

- ✓ Cyclists may sometimes move faster than you anticipated, so make sure to check that you're clear of them before you move back to your lane after passing them.
- ✓ Allow at least 1.5 metres between you and the cyclist.
- ✓ At intersections, apply the same rules to cyclists that you would to any other vehicle on the road. Take care to indicate turns.
- ✓ If you are crossing a cycle lane, give way to cyclists before you cross.
- ✓ Although cyclists usually ride on the far-left side of the road, they do sometimes need to move to the middle of the lane. Reasons why they might need to include: 1) Avoiding hazards on the roadside 2) Making themselves visible as they approach intersections and 3) When the road is too narrow for vehicles to pass them safely.
- ✓ Be careful when opening the door after you stop your vehicle. Make sure to check your blind spots and mirrors before you open your door into traffic. You can ensure you always check by using your left hand to open the car door. This way your body swings around in your seat so that you're facing the side the traffic is coming from.



## 15.3 HOW TO OVERTAKE CYCLISTS

Cyclists generally move at a slower speed than cars, so you'll often find yourself needing to overtake them. Because of their vulnerability, however, you'll need to take extra care when passing them.

### Here're the steps for passing a cyclist:

- ✓ Check your mirrors and blind spot and indicate right.
- ✓ If you're clear, move right and overtake the cyclist.
- ✓ Indicate left as you pass the cyclist.
- ✓ Look over your shoulder to ensure you're clear of the cyclist before moving back to the left.
- ✓ Return your car to the correct position.



- ✓ Check once more for the cyclist in your mirror to ensure they're safe.

**Remember to:**

- ✓ Avoid crowding the cyclist by maintaining a distance of at least 1.5m between your car and them.
- ✓ Ensure there's adequate space to pass safely. Slow down and wait if there isn't.

## 16.0 QUICK REFERENCE

### 16.1 LEARNER DRIVER BEWARE – TEN COMMON MISTAKES

# Learner Driver Beware:

## 10 Common Mistakes



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<p>Changing lanes without looking</p> 	<p>Not wearing the seat belt</p> 	<p>Not stopping at stop signs</p> 
<p>Speeding</p> 	<p>Forgetting to indicate</p> 	<p>Driving tired</p> 
<p>Getting distracted</p> 	<p>Maintaining the wrong following distance</p> 	<p>Braking sharply</p> 
		<p>Incorrect positioning</p> 

## 16.2 TOP TIPS FOR LEARNER DRIVERS

- ✓ **Always stay within posted speed limits.**
- ✓ **Never drink and drive.**
- ✓ **Pay attention to the road.**
- ✓ **Be prepared for any type of emergency.**
- ✓ **Keep your car in good running condition**
- ✓ **Start out on a hill (Manual Car) – to see where clutch catches**
- ✓ **Never follow too closely. – 3 second rule**
- ✓ **Remove all distractions – no mobile phones!!**
- ✓ **Practice driving on many different types of roads and highways as well as in the daytime and at night.**
- ✓ **Consider taking some driver training courses.**

## 17.0 CONTACT US

### Opening Hours

**Mon-Fri:** 9am-5pm

**Saturday:** 10am-4pm

**Sunday:** Closed

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