

1st Edition March 08

# Keep Me Safe

Driver booklet

essential driver support 



GE imagination at work

# Welcome

To ensure you have the driving experience you deserve, please familiarise yourself with the information contained in this essential guide, which covers how to maintain your vehicle and other information relevant to keeping you safe on the road.

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# Maintaining your vehicle

Many people agree that driving a company car is less hassle than running a privately owned vehicle - but the responsibility of car maintenance should still be with the driver and not just the Fleet Manager.

Ensuring that your vehicle is serviced regularly (in line with the manufacturers recommendations) will help to avoid breakdowns and accidents caused by vehicle faults. To ensure safety for both yourself and those around you and to keep your vehicle running smoothly, remember **FLOWER**:

## Fuel

Keep fuel level high enough so you have a reserve for traffic delays, especially in winter conditions. If travelling to or around a remote area, remember that petrol stations may be few and far between so play safe and stay topped up.

## Lights

Turn on and walk all around the car, remember to check main beams, indicators, fog lights and sidelights. Check brake lights against a garage door or wall or get a friend to help you out.

## Oil

With the car standing on level ground, engine cold and having been standing, remove the dipstick and check that the oil level is between the 2 marks. Over-filling or under-filling the oil risks engine damage. New cars need frequent careful monitoring until you are sure of what is normal.

## Water

Keep the screen wash reservoir full and use plenty of additive in winter, BEFORE it freezes up. Coolant levels should be between minimum and maximum, get to know what is normal for your car so you can spot any changes and therefore problems early on.

## Electrics

Ensure your battery is ok. Sluggish starting in winter spells bad news and they only get worse with age. Worn wiper blades cannot clear the screen so well; replace them as soon as signs of wear are apparent. Other things to check include: electric windows, horn and heater fan, defects will only worsen if neglected.

## Rubber

Check in your manual the correct tyre pressure for your car. Check this every couple of weeks and make adjustments when necessary. Tread depth of your tyres must be at least 1.6mm across the central  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the width of the tyre. Ensure that your spare tyre also meets these regulations, it is of no use to you flat or worn.



### Did you know?

A recent survey of tyre pressure levels of **8,700** cars has shown that **44%** of cars had at least 1 tyre at a low-pressure level.

# Driving

## On rural roads

### Did you know?

Just 4% of serious or fatal crashes take place on a motorway, compared to 50% on rural roads, making them the most dangerous roads you drive on!

This is a startling statistic and one that many may find hard to believe. However, driving on rural roads can be extremely dangerous if you don't follow a certain etiquette expected of drivers.

When driving in the countryside, watch out for wildlife; animals and birds frequently stray onto the side of the road and suddenly dart across the road. Observe the signposts that indicate wildlife is present in the area. And remember:

- Many country roads are narrow and winding, with blind corners and high hedges obscuring your view, so be aware of possible hazards - especially large or slow-moving farm vehicles.
- Drive slowly and don't be frustrated by slow moving traffic.
- If you need to overtake, make sure you can see straight ahead for oncoming traffic. Make a point of looking carefully for concealed junctions and entrances where vehicles may emerge as you are overtaking.
- If you are approaching a blind bend, slow down and sound your horn to warn any potential on-coming traffic that you are there.
- If the road you are on is only wide enough for one vehicle, be aware that you will need to pull to the side for oncoming vehicles.
- Don't assume the driver of the oncoming vehicle will pull over.
- Always watch out for pedestrians & cyclists.

### Did you know?

Did you know that 74% of all collisions take place on urban roads?

## On urban roads

It is easy to make the assumption that just because most of us drive on urban roads everyday, that these are the safest of our roads, wrong. It is because there are so many of us driving on urban roads that the dangers are so vast.

When driving on urban roads:

- Keep your distance – rear end shunts and collisions can be avoided by keeping your distance and maintaining concentration.
- Slow down early, warning the driver behind you that you are slowing, therefore giving him time to react.
- Look twice at junctions – you never know who or what could have just moved out into your path.
- Keep your eyes on the road – there are so many distractions on our city roads – people/ advertising/ other cars, it is easy to let your eyes wander. Before you know it you have gone into the back of another car or even worse, hit a pedestrian.

# On the motorway

Help avoid motorway accidents by following some simple rules:

- **Plan your journey**

Take time to check weather and traffic reports and always ensure your vehicle is road worthy before setting off (see vehicle maintenance section).

- **Take plenty of breaks if travelling long distances**

The government recommends that you break at least every 2 hours for 15 minutes.

- **Keep left except when overtaking**

When driving along motorways in the UK, always remain in the left lane unless you are travelling faster than traffic ahead of you, and it is safe to move over into one of the other lanes. Try to avoid middle-lane driving - the middle and right lanes are for overtaking only, and you should move into the left lane again as soon as possible after overtaking a vehicle.

- **Keep your distance**

If a large vehicle is in front of you and obstructing your view, then drop back so that you can see any obstructions ahead. Remember; it is important to leave a large gap between you and the vehicle in front, since stopping distances increase dramatically when travelling at speed. Do not tailgate other drivers; leave a sensible gap between the two cars, especially since you may be liable if the car in front needs to brake abruptly and you then crash into the back of them. Look ahead for slow-moving traffic; leaving a gap will give you a better view of the road ahead, as well as essential time to slow down. If the vehicle behind is tailgating you, don't brake - simply move over and let it pass.

- **Watch your speed**

The speed limit for cars, motorbikes, light goods vehicles and buses or coaches less than 12m long on motorways is 70mph.

The speed limit for vehicles towing a caravan or trailer, LGVs, articulated lorries and buses or coaches over 12m long on motorways is 60mph.

However 99% of all LGVs are now fitted with a speed limiter restricting them to around 53mph-56mph, depending on their age and a range of other factors.

Warning signs on the motorway may advise of temporary speed enforcements due to road works or an accident - and these speed limits must be observed.

## Did you know?

Statistically, motorway driving is safer than driving on urban or country roads.

10% of all motorway fatalities are the result of a vehicle colliding with another one on the hard shoulder.

- **Take special care at road works**

Make sure you slow down to the set speed and get into the correct lane. Don't switch lanes and keep eyes on the road ahead and not the road works. Remember to keep a safe distance between you and the car in front, as queues can form very quickly where there are road works.

- **If you breakdown on the motorway...**

If you breakdown on the motorway, use your left indicators or hazard lights - and when safe to do so, manoeuvre your vehicle onto the hard shoulder, parking as far to the left as possible. Turn your steering wheel so that your wheels are facing left - then, should a car hit your vehicle from behind, the car will not roll onto the busy motorway carriageway. Switch on your hazard warning lights and lock all doors, except for the passenger front door. Get out of the vehicle using the passenger door only and stand on the motorway embankment; away from the main carriageway, behind crash barriers if any are present. This is to avoid being injured from passing traffic.

Never attempt to place a warning triangle on a motorway. Call the emergency services immediately and give them your exact location, including motorway details and last junction number. The number on the nearest marker post will help the operator to pinpoint your precise location.

If you do not have a mobile phone, use the emergency telephone boxes that are located along (UK) motorways at one-mile intervals. Arrows on the marker posts point to the nearest emergency telephone. These call boxes are free to use and link you directly to the Motorway Police control centre. Always face the oncoming traffic while using the phone.

If you feel at risk from the presence of another person whilst waiting at the roadside on the motorway, return to your vehicle. Sit in the front passenger seat with the seat belt on and lock the doors. If you have a mobile phone, use it to contact the Emergency Services and advise them of the impending danger.

It is illegal for anyone - other than the emergency or breakdown services - to stop on the motorway and offer assistance. As soon as the other person has gone, get back out of the vehicle and return to the embankment. Remember; only get back in your vehicle if you think there is a risk of attack from another person.

When the rescue service arrives, do not drop your guard. If in doubt, ask for identification.

If your vehicle is repaired at the roadside and you can continue your journey, then gradually build up your speed to match the speed of other vehicles before leaving the hard shoulder. Never reverse on the hard shoulder.



# Abroad

It may seem trivial, but it is laws such as this that many drivers are unaware of and should be, to travel safely abroad.

Before you go, make sure you take:

- Your Great Britain (GB) Driving licence and if required, an International Driving Permit (IDP), check well in advance if the country you are travelling to requires one of these.
- A spare set of keys.
- A GB sticker and a set of headlamp converters.
- A fire extinguisher, first aid kit, tool kit, spare bulbs and a warning triangle.
- Registration document, driving licence and passport.
- Your UK motor insurance certificate. Green Card (if issued) and details of any breakdown and travel insurance, together with any emergency helpline numbers.

## VE103

If you are in possession of a leased, hired or rented vehicle, the registration certificate will normally be held securely by the company that supplied the vehicle. When travelling abroad it is important that drivers are able to produce documentation to show that they are authorised to be in possession of the vehicle. The vehicle on-hire certificate (VE103) has been developed to satisfy this requirement. The certificate, which is subject to a small administrative fee of £7.50, is valid for 12 months from the date of issue.

## How to obtain the VE103 (For vehicles provided by GE Fleet Services)

The VE103 can be obtained from GE Fleet Services by calling the Driver Helpline, available 7 days a week 24 hours a day and quoting your customer number featured on your driver helpline card. The form will be completed over the phone. You will be asked to provide the following information: -

- Exact dates the car will be out of the country
- Countries to be visited
- Any additional drivers

Upon completion, we will send you the relevant documentation in the post. To make sure you receive this in time for your trip, please allow two weeks notice.

### Did you know?

In Spain, it is an offence if you do not have a spare pair of spectacles with you if you need to wear them?



## Driving abroad: essential information for drivers and fleet operators

|             | SPEED LIMITS (KM/HR) |           |           |  | OTHER LIMITS        |               |                  | EQUIPMENT   |                |                   |  |
|-------------|----------------------|-----------|-----------|--|---------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|--|
|             | * Urban              | Open Road | Mtway     | Drink/drive limit (% alcohol in blood) | Minimum driving age | First aid kit | Warning triangle | Spare bulbs | Fire ext'isher | Reflection jacket |  |
| Austria     | 50                   | 100       | 130       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ●             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ●                 |  |
| Belgium     | 50                   | 90        | 120       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Denmark     | 50                   | 80        | 110       | 0.05%                                  | 17                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Finland     | 50                   | 80        | 120       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| France      | 50                   | 90        | 130       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ○                | ●           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Germany     | 50                   | 100       | 130 (rec) | 0.05%                                  | 17                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Greece      | 50                   | 90        | 120       | 0.05%                                  | 17                  | ●             | ●                | ○           | ●              | ○                 |  |
| Italy       | 50                   | 90        | 130-150   | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ●                 |  |
| Luxembourg  | 50                   | 90        | 120       | 0.08%                                  | 17                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Netherlands | 50                   | 80        | 120       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Norway      | 50                   | 80        | 90        | 0.02%                                  | 17                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Portugal    | 50                   | 90        | 120       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ●                 |  |
| Spain       | 50                   | 90        | 120       | 0.05%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ●           | ○              | ●                 |  |
| Sweden      | 50                   | 70        | 110       | 0.02%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●(2)             | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |
| Switzerland | 50                   | 80        | 120       | 0.08%                                  | 18                  | ○             | ●                | ○           | ○              | ○                 |  |

● = obligatory ○ = recommended \*Unless otherwise indicated

# Ten tips on staying safe abroad

1. **Research the roads you'll take.** You'll especially want to know if travelling through areas of major road construction. Ensure the maps you are using are up-to-date.
2. **Get the car checked,** especially the filters, belts, fluid levels and have the oil changed. Don't wait until the last minute, it may take time to get an appointment and parts may need to be ordered. You also want some time to drive around town and make sure that whatever they fix stays fixed.
3. **Adjust headlights to accommodate for driving on the right.** One of the most common reasons for Brits falling foul of the police in Europe is dazzling other road users. Xenon and modern halogen headlights often need to be adjusted by a garage to prevent dazzling, otherwise deflector strips can be used.
4. **Carry a warning triangle, a complete set of spare bulbs, first aid kit and a fire extinguisher** – this should comply with most European laws.
5. In Italy, Austria and Spain it is compulsory to carry a **reflective jacket**, which should be worn if the driver or passenger has to exit the car onto a motorway or main road. In Spain the jacket has to be carried in the cabin rather than the boot of a car. However it is better to be safe than sorry, so when travelling abroad always carry a reflective jacket with you somewhere in the car.
6. Almost all European countries have a **lower blood-alcohol limit** than the UK's 0.08%, while the limit in Gibraltar, Hungary and Poland, among others, is zero. The best advice, if you're driving, don't drink any alcohol.
7. **Seat belts** front and rear are obligatory everywhere.
8. **Check the condition of your wiper blades,** the operation of your turn signals, brake lights as well as the tread on your tyres.
9. **Make sure your car is prepared for the weather** it will encounter on your trip.
10. **Check your plates, registration and insurance information** to make sure they are all valid. Be sure to place your insurance company's emergency contact number in your car.

# In hazardous weather conditions

Because the winters in the UK are less predictable than those in many other countries, UK drivers are often less prepared for dealing with extreme weather conditions. Severe winter weather - rain, snow, ice, fog and low winter sun - can make driving treacherous.

In winter, adverse weather conditions mean it is harder to see and takes longer to stop. Traffic may also be slow moving, meaning journeys take longer than expected so drivers are more prone to tiredness.

## Before you set off

Before you set off for your journey, ensure that you do the following:

- Top up your radiator with antifreeze.
- Ensure windscreen wipers are working.
- Top up your washer fluid level.
- Remove snow from your vehicle completely before setting off, especially from the roof of the car. This avoids snow slipping onto your windscreen or being blown back onto vehicles behind you.
- De-ice your windscreen completely.
- Make sure all door locks are defrosted and can open easily.
- Carry the de-icer in the vehicle with you.
- Ensure your windscreen is clear from smears on both the inside and outside – the low winter sun can be a real hazard.
- Clean all mirrors and lights - and make sure your fog lights are working.
- Check your oil level and top up if necessary. Remember, cars use more oil in the winter.
- Check your tyre conditions, including the spare, for tyre pressure and tread. Tyres will not grip the road properly unless they are in good condition.
- Ensure you have plenty of fuel for your journey; you don't want to run out of fuel in a remote area, and if you breakdown, you'll need fuel to keep the engine running for warmth.



## Top Tips

**Slow Down** - if visibility is poor or the road is wet or icy, it will take you longer to react to hazards and your speed should be reduced accordingly.

**Maintain a safe gap** behind the vehicle in front - stopping distances are double in wet conditions and 10 times greater in icy weather!

**Look out for vulnerable road users** - be aware that people on foot, bicycles and motorbikes and horses are harder to spot in adverse weather or in the dark.

**Look out for warning and speed restriction signs.**

**Stay in control** - avoid harsh braking and acceleration and carry out manoeuvres slowly and with extra care.

**Use headlights and fog lights when necessary.**

**Check weather forecasts and traffic news**, it may be advisable to set off earlier in bad weather to avoid rushing and not driving with the care and attention the weather demands.

**Check your tyres, lights and wipers** are up to scratch and make sure you clean your windscreen, windows and mirrors to ensure you have clear vision around the whole of the vehicle.

**Always carry an emergency kit** and make sure it is fully packed with everything you might need, including:

- Ice scraper & de-icer.
- Blanket, warm clothes & boots.
- High-visibility vest.
- Warning triangle.
- Mobile Phone (hands free).
- Torch.
- Food & Drink.
- First-aid kit.
- Map.
- Old carpet and spade if driving in the snow.



## If you are stuck or stranded in severe weather...

Do not spin wheels if stuck in snow. If it is safe to get out of the vehicle without risk from fast moving traffic, use some old carpet around the drive wheels to give them something to grip to try and pull away.

If waiting in the vehicle, keep warm by running the engine and heater every 10 minutes.

Guard against carbon monoxide poisoning by ensuring the exhaust pipes are clear of snow and opening a window.

Keep moving to maintain circulation, but avoid over-exertion as cold weather puts added strain on the heart.

### Did you know?

In 2004 in the UK, there were **926** crashes in fog, **1238** in the snow and **31, 525** in the rain!

# In-car safety

## Child Seats & driving with passengers

As the driver of a vehicle, it is your responsibility to ensure that all passengers obey the seatbelt laws including back-seat passengers. Many people are still unaware that, since 1991, it has been obligatory to wear a seatbelt in the rear of a car. If you're in a car crash as a rear seat passenger, the impact with which you'll be thrown forward is between 30 and 60 times your own body weight - and in a 30mph crash, an adult back-seat passenger can be thrown forward with the force of around three and a half tons. Many front seat drivers and passengers involved in accidents die due to being crushed by a back-seat passenger not wearing their seatbelt.

Children should always use a child seat or booster cushion that is appropriate for their weight and size. Police authorities have the power to issue fines of up to £1,000 if you fail to wear a seatbelt - and you can also be fined the same amount again for carrying a child passenger with an inappropriate child restraint.

### The Law

- You must wear a seatbelt in cars and goods vehicles, where one is fitted.
- The driver is liable to prosecution if a child under 14 does not wear a seat belt or a child head restraint.
- Children up to 135cms in height must use the appropriate child restraint when travelling in any car, van or goods vehicle.
- A child may use an adult belt when they reach 135cm or the age of 12.
- In buses or coaches with belts fitted, passengers' aged 14+ must use them.



### Did you know?

Seat belt wearing saves over  
2,000 lives every year!

## Child Seat Safety Tips

Look for a label with an 'E' mark and an approval number starting with '03'. Only very old restraints will have a BS 'Kitemark'. **Seats with this BS 'Kitemark' cannot be used after May 2008.**

Before buying a child restraint, try it in your car to **check it fits** properly. Ask for a **demonstration**.

**Beware** of old or second hand restraints, which may be damaged or worn out.

**Take time** to check that the seat you are buying is the right one for your child and that you follow the fitting instructions properly.

### Did you know?

In 2006, **26** children aged **0-11** were killed and **277** seriously injured in cars.

Here is a quick guideline of the law concerning in car seating and safety:

|  | Front Seat                                | Rear Seat  | Who is responsible |
|--|---|--|--------------------|
| Driver   | Seat belt must be worn if fitted          |  |                    |
| Child under 3 years of age   | Correct child restraint must be used      | Correct child restraint must be used. If one is not available in a taxi, may travel unrestrained   | Driver             |
| Child from 3rd birthday up to 135cms in height (approx 4'5") (12th birthday, whichever they reach first) | Correct child restraint must be used      | Correct child restraint must be used where seat belts fitted. Must use adult belt in rear seat if correct child restraint not available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a taxi; or</li> <li>• For a short distance in an unexpected necessity; or</li> <li>• If two occupied child restraints prevent fitting of a third</li> </ul> | Driver             |
| Child 12 or 13 or over 135cms (approx 4ft 5ins) in height  | Adult seat belt must be worn if available | Adult seat belt must be worn if available  | Driver             |
| Adult Passengers   | Seat belt must be worn if available       | Seat belt must be worn if available  | Passenger          |

# Head restraints

## Minimise the risk

- **Make sure** that the top of your head restraint is level with the top of your head. This **provides maximum support** in the instance of a crash.
- **Always ensure** that your head restraint is as close to your head as possible, ideally touching, as this **minimises the risk of whiplash**.
- **Whiplash** is the cause of 200,000 injuries per year to drivers and of those injured **2,000 will suffer a permanent disability**, including ongoing neck and back problems.
- In very serious cases, the neck can fracture or break **causing death**.

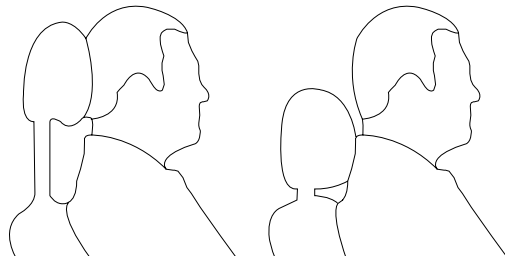
## What is Whiplash?

- Whiplash is mainly caused through rear-impact crashes, when the vehicle occupant is thrown forward.
- If the occupant's head is not positioned properly by the head restraint, their head will not accelerate as quickly as the torso. This will cause the head to be flung backwards and the neck to bend.
- If the head restraint is positioned too low, it is possible for the head to be forced right back over the restraint, causing extreme cases of whiplash and often long term damage.

### Did you know?

In a survey conducted by Brake and direct line, it found that **65%** of drivers and passengers did not know that the top of their head restraint should be level with their head.

## Correct head restraint positioning



Good Adjustment

Poor Adjustment

# Airbags

There are many different views about airbags, especially when they are used in conjunction with child seats positioned in the front seat of a vehicle. GE Capital Solutions, Fleet Services offer the following advice:

- Rear-facing child seats located on the front seat behind a passenger airbag can be dangerous; a rear-facing baby seat should never be fitted into a seat protected by an airbag. Where possible, sit babies and young children in the rear of the vehicle, using properly maintained child seats.
- Drivers and front seat passengers should try and move their seats as far back as possible from the airbag. However, if you're a driver, make sure you can still comfortably use the pedals without having to stretch your legs.

## Eye tests & general health



We all know that, during driving tests, candidates must read a number plate from a distance - but how often do you set this task for yourself?

The Highway Code states that you must be able to read a vehicle number plate from a distance of 20 meters (66 feet). If you need to wear glasses (or contact lenses) to do this, you must wear them at all times when driving.

Police authorities have the power to require a driver, at any time, to undertake an eyesight test in good daylight. Remember that, as we get older, our eyesight tends to deteriorate gradually, so it's a good idea to have regular eye tests at least every two years.

# Road rage

It is very easy to get sucked into 'seeing red' and a recent survey has found that 'road rage' has affected almost half of all drivers. In 1 in 7 of these cases, victims of road rage faced an aggressor who got out of the car and physically or verbally abused them. This is a situation we would all like to avoid. This can be done by following our top tips to avoid 'seeing red' and to calming a situation of 'road rage':

Always drive courteously even if others are not. Remember to use your indicators, don't tailgate and never cut in front of other motorists.

Never assume that something has been done as an act of aggression, **we all make mistakes** and the driver who just pulled out on you could have simply misjudged your distance. Slow down, relax and let any anger pass, detach yourself emotionally from the situation and never retaliate. Think; is retaliating aggressively towards the person who cut you up worth risking your life? Seeing red means you are less aware of the risks around you and are much more likely to be involved in a serious incident.

## Did you know?

A recent survey has found Britain to be the leading country in the world for road rage, with **80.4%** having been victims at least once.

**Prepare yourself properly for the journey** by checking traffic and weather reports, as it may be wise to leave early, or avoid a certain route. This will avoid raised stress levels caused by rushing, and means you are less likely to take out your frustration on another driver. Ensuring you get plenty of sleep and playing soothing music while driving may also help to keep you calm and avoid road rage.

If you feel you are in the wrong, **acknowledge your mistake**. You'll be amazed at how a simple hand up in the rear view mirror can turn a very angry person calm in a matter of seconds. If you feel yourself getting into a situation of road rage, **Realise & acknowledge** feelings of anger and frustration. Learn to control these in the best way for you.



# Driving & alcohol

Our advice about driving under the influence of alcohol is simple - **don't do it!**

Even the smallest amount of alcohol can affect your judgement and impair your control over a vehicle.

However if you are drinking make sure you go OTT: Organise, Take your time and Think.

**1. Organise** - alternative routes home. Use public transport or ask a friend or partner to pick you up. If this is impossible consider walking, but remember to wear reflective gear in order to be seen.

**2. Take your time** - it is impossible to sober up any quicker (e.g. taking a shower or having a coffee). It takes 1 – 1.5hrs for 1 unit of alcohol to leave your system. Do the math and stay safe.

**3. Think** - is getting in the car really worth losing your licence, your job or even your life? Make the right choice.

## The morning after the night before

Remember - even though you might have had a night's sleep, you could still be over the drink-drive limit the next morning. The human body can only metabolise around one unit of alcohol per hour (one unit is equivalent to half a pint of ordinary-strength beer).

If you've had a lot to drink the night before, try working out when your body will be free of alcohol - the results could be surprising.

## IF IN DOUBT - DON'T DRIVE

### Did you know?

- **1 in 6** road deaths are caused by drink drivers.
- After a drink driving conviction you could pay up to **3x** more for your car insurance.
- As little alcohol as **4 pints** could mean that you are still over the limit the next morning.



# Driving & smoking

On 1st July 2007 a new smoke free law came into force in England to protect employees and the public from the harmful effects of second hand smoke. New legislation has banned smoking in enclosed public places, workplaces and also vehicles.

It is therefore the legal responsibility of anyone who drives, manages or is responsible for order and safety on a vehicle, to prevent people from smoking.

## Which vehicles does this law apply to?

- **Company cars**

The law will require all Company Cars to be smoke free at all times if they are used in the course of paid or voluntary work by more than one person – regardless of whether they are in the vehicle at the same time. If there is a possibility that you may have colleagues (or suppliers/ customers) in your vehicle then the vehicle has to be non-smoking.

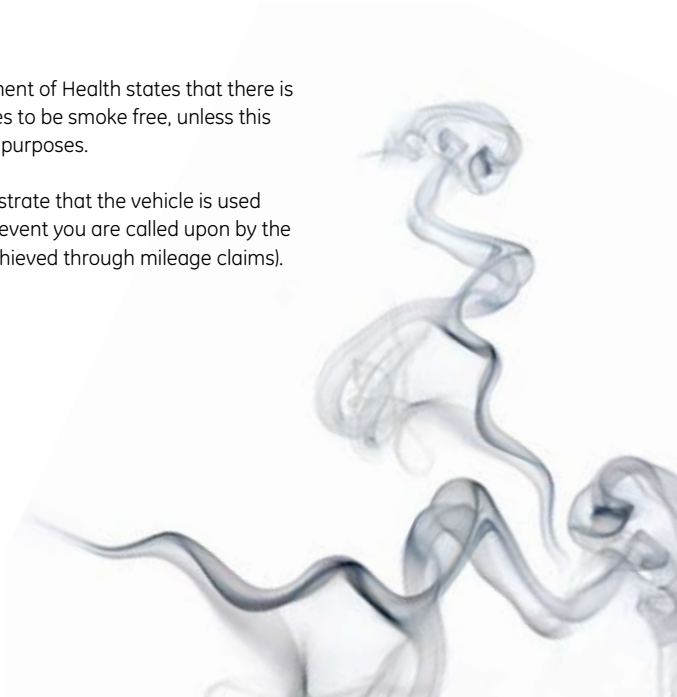
- **Pool and Delivery Vehicles**

All pool and delivery vehicles must be smoke free at all times.

- **Private cars**

In its consultation paper the Department of Health states that there is no intention to require private vehicles to be smoke free, unless this vehicle is used primarily for business purposes.

You must however be able to demonstrate that the vehicle is used primarily for private purposes, in the event you are called upon by the local authorities (e.g. this could be achieved through mileage claims).



## What do I need to do?

As a driver, you have the duty to prevent smoking in a smoke free vehicle. This includes: -

- Displaying 'no smoking' signs in smoke free vehicles.
- Taking reasonable steps to ensure that staff, customers / members and visitors are aware that vehicles are legally required to be smoke free.
- Ensuring that no one smokes in smoke free vehicles.



## What signage do I have to display?

Smoke free vehicles will need to display a no smoking sign in each compartment of the vehicle in which people can be carried. This must show the international no-smoking symbol\* at least 70mm in diameter. You should ensure that you have the appropriate sticker to display in your vehicle.

\*Means a symbol, which consists of a graphic representation of a single burning cigarette enclosed in a red circle of at least 70mm in diameter with a red bar across it.

## The Law

The penalties and fines for the smoke free offences set out in the Health Act 2006 are:

| Offence   | Who is liable?                                       | Fixed Penalty Notice (if paid in 15 days) | Fixed Penalty Notice (if paid in 29 days) | Court awarded fine |
|---|--|---|---|--------------------|
| Smoking in a smokefree vehicle                  | Anyone who smokes in a smokefree vehicle             | £30                                       | £50                                       | Up to £200         |
| Failing to display required no-smoking signs    | Anyone who manages or occupies the smokefree vehicle | £150                                      | £200                                      | Up to £1000        |
| Failing to prevent smoking in a smokefree place | Anyone who manages or controls the smokefree vehicle | N/A                                       | N/A                                       | Up to £2500        |

For more information visit: [www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/thefacts/situation.html](http://www.smokefreeengland.co.uk/thefacts/situation.html)

# Driving & mobile phones

**Under the Road Safety Act, drivers caught using a hand-held mobile phone while driving will be fined £60 and given three penalty points.**

## Did you know?

In 2004 nearly **74,000** fixed penalty notices were issued for illegal use of a mobile phone while driving.

The same changes are also being made to the penalties for not having proper control of a vehicle – a measure which can also be

used where a driver has been distracted by using a hands-free mobile phone. But, if the police or the driver chooses to take a case to court rather than use a fixed penalty notice, the maximum

fine remains at £1,000 (£2,500 for drivers of vans, lorries, buses and coaches).

Transport Secretary Douglas Alexander said: **'Research shows that talking on a mobile phone while driving affects your concentration and ability to react to dangerous situations.** It's quite simple – it's impossible to do two things at once and do them well. But worryingly, **while 92% of people agree with the law, 21% of drivers admit to breaking it.**

ROSPA would also like to see the use of hands-free phones while driving banned as well, because people are sucked into a conversation and pay less and less attention to the road, resulting in them tailgating, varying their speed and wandering about the road.

## Other distractions

### Did you know?

- Attempting to eat a packet of crisps while driving makes reaction times **29% longer**.
- Reading a **Satellite Navigation system** while driving is potentially as dangerous as using a mobile.
- Reading while driving **trebles** the risk of a crash or near miss.
- Fiddling with the radio controls increases the average stopping distance at 60mph from **59m – 85m**.
- Looking at external objects increases the risk of a crash or near miss by **4 times**.
- Rummaging through a bag or pocket adds **15 meters** to your stopping distance at 60mph.
- Applying make-up while driving **trebles** the risk of crashing.



# Reversing

## Did you know?

Nearly **25%** of all fatalities involving vehicles at work occur when reversing!

This is a shocking statistic and one that should make us all think about the way we manoeuvre and take the time to do it properly!

## Top Tips

**Try and avoid reversing whenever possible**, if you need to manoeuvre, consider if it could be done by driving forwards. If this is not possible, always reverse into a space rather than out of it, there is less chance of hitting another person or vehicle.

**Reverse slowly, constantly checking** around the vehicle with the use of mirrors, sensors and any other devices available to you. You should NEVER reverse blind when people, particularly children may be around!

**If you take a wrong turn**, continue going wherever possible to the next roundabout, this will be much less dangerous than attempting a 3-point turn on an unsuitable or busy road.

**Always check that you are in the right gear** and you are about to drive off in the right direction. Sometimes it may be advisable to get help from someone when reversing either into or out of a space. In this circumstance, ensure that you can see them at all times and agree a clear hand signal for 'stop'.

# Blind spots

Most manoeuvres create blind spots, these include:

- **Reversing** (blind spot to the rear).
- **Changing lanes/overtaking** (blind spots to the side & behind A pillars on each side of the rear window).
- **Pulling away at a crossing** (blind spot immediately in front of the vehicle).
- **Turning at junctions** (blind spot behind A pillars on each side of the windscreen & at the sides).

A simple way to test if you are in another driver's blind spot is if you can see their eyes. If you cannot see the other drivers' eyes either directly or in their mirrors - they cannot see you!

Try to anticipate the movements of other drivers. If you think they are likely to move into your lane, put yourself in a position where they can see you.

Another useful tip is to look out for lorries with foreign registration plates. The driver may therefore be sitting on the other side of the cab, making his major blind spot on the right of the vehicle! The driver may also be unsure of the UK road network so you are best to give them plenty of space.

## Did you know?

Every year about **400** people are killed in EU countries when drivers fail to detect objects in their blind spots while manoeuvring. Most victims are pedestrians, cyclists & motorcyclists.

# Child & cyclist safety



When driving in built up areas, stay well within the speed limit. A pedestrian hit at 30mph has a 20% chance of dying, whereas a pedestrian hit at 40mph has an 85% chance of dying.

You should always slow down to 20mph or below around schools and homes as a pedestrian hit at 20mph has just a 5% chance of dying. **Drive in these areas as though a child could step out in front of you at any time.**

Knowing your stopping distances is extremely important in built up areas, did you know that at 20mph it takes 12 meters to stop, whereas at 30mph it takes 23 meters to stop!

## Do's & Don'ts for cyclists

- Read the **Highway Code** and undertake formal cycling training.
- **Be visible.** Ride well clear of the kerb, wear bright clothing and always use lights after dark or in poor weather conditions.
- Show drivers what you plan to do. **Always** look and signal before you start, stop or turn.
- **Always** wear a helmet. Make sure it fits properly and hasn't been damaged.
- **Use** off-road cycle paths where provided.
- **Don't** jump red lights.
- **Don't** ride on pavements.
- **Don't** ride the wrong way up one-way streets, unless there is a sign saying cyclists can.

## Do's and Don'ts for motorists

- **Expect** sudden movements by cyclists, especially in windy weather and on bad road surfaces.
- **Watch** for cyclists on the inside when you turn left.
- **Always** look for cyclists before opening a car door.
- Give cyclists turning right extra **consideration**.
- **Don't** squeeze past cyclists – give them space, at least half a car's width.
- **Don't** dazzle cyclists – use dipped headlights, the way you would with another car.

### Did you know?

A child is hurt or killed on UK roads every **18** minutes.

Remember to always set a good example to children when driving or using the road. Think about the message you send by not wearing a seatbelt, crossing on the 'red man' or talking on a mobile phone while crossing the road or driving.

# Car security

## - parking



Make sure you leave plenty of room for the car next to you; look out for cars with child seats or 'Disabled Driver' stickers, as you will need to leave extra room for wide door openings. Fold back wing mirrors wherever possible, to avoid your mirror being clipped by both pedestrians and other motorists. At night, try to park on a well-lit street as close to your destination as possible. Many crimes happen in public car parks, so always look for one that is well supervised, with restricted entry and exit points, good lighting and security cameras.

Opportunist thieves commit many car crimes - but the following simple safeguards can dramatically reduce the likelihood of theft:

- Remove the ignition key even if the car is parked in your drive or garage, or when filling up with petrol.
- Always close the sunroof and all windows.
- Lock doors, boot and fuel caps.
- Engage the steering lock and switch on the car alarm if one is fitted.
- Don't store your spare key or any of your vehicle documents in the car; they could help the thief sell the vehicle or provide them with a cover story if stopped by police.

## Car insurance

Almost 1 in 4 of all fleet cars are privately owned. In order to legally drive your car for work purposes you must ensure that you have the appropriate business-use insurance cover. It is also part of your employers' duty of care obligation, to ensure that you have full insurance cover before allowing you to drive for work. With a little research you'll find companies who will upgrade your insurance to cover business use, for no or very little extra cost.

### Did you know?

According to a study by Gocompare.com, **72%** of employers are failing to ensure their employees have the appropriate level of business insurance.

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