

Everyday driving tips

Follow these driving tips and you'll help reduce your risk of being involved in a crash as well as improve your personal safety as a motorist.

Power check

When checking your vehicle, the POWER check is the easiest to remember. This stands for Petrol, Oils, Water, Electric, and Rubbers. Everything under each heading should be visually checked at least once per week.

Two-second gap

At all times maintain a two-second gap from the vehicle ahead, no matter what speed you are travelling. When it is raining, a foggy night, or any combination of these, the gap should be doubled to four seconds.

Safety gap between vehicles

When you stop behind another vehicle in a line of traffic, always ensure you are able to clearly see the bottom of the vehicle's rear tyres. This ensures you are not too close to the other vehicle. Also, as you commence to move your two-second gap will already be in place.

Keep left

Keep to the left at all times unless overtaking. The right hand lane is for overtaking, or turning right. Use it for driving straight through only if the left lane is obstructed by road works or parked vehicles, or if it is not useable for any reason.

Indicate early

Where practical, use your indicators for at least 30 metres before commencing to turn or change lanes, to tell other road users what you will do.

Drive with anticipation

Expect the unexpected and be aware that we all make mistakes sometimes. The other driver may forget to indicate, or to look to see if you are near by. If you have anticipated this may happen, it will not be a surprise.

We should be driving as a team, not as individuals, be prepared to let the other driver in, rather than blocking them out.

Stop at lights or stop signs

When you stop at the lights or at a stop sign, your car should be behind the thick stop line. There are some intersections, where if you stop over the stop line and a truck or bus turns into the street that you are leaving; it will collide with your vehicle.

Plan ahead

Always plan well ahead. Your line of sight should travel parallel to the road, not down onto it. This makes it easier for you to prepare for anything that may happen long before you get there.

Overtaking

Overtaking is probably one of the most dangerous manoeuvres a driver can perform, especially on a two-way carriageway. Quite often the vehicle you overtake is only travelling slightly slower than you are. Make sure that you have enough room to go well past the overtaken vehicle before you move back to the left. Don't cut them off.

Anti-lock braking systems (ABS)

Anti-lock braking systems (ABS) prevent the wheels of a vehicle from locking under emergency braking. They enable steering control with the brakes fully operating, enhancing the driver's chances of avoiding a hazard.

ABS does not necessarily stop a vehicle in a shorter distance than ordinary brakes. If you drive a vehicle with ABS, still keep the same two-second gap from the vehicle in front. ABS should only be relied upon in an emergency braking situation.

Drive smoothly

Drive smoothly and make decisions early so that you can accelerate, brake and change gears smoothly. It will make your vehicle last longer, cost you less, and it is far more comfortable for your passengers. Rough acceleration, braking, or steering, can easily cause your car to skid.

Negotiating a curve

When you are negotiating a curve in the road, try to flatten the curve out as much as you can. This will give you a better view around the curve, a smoother path and it will decrease the potential of the car commencing to skid. For a left curve, approach as near as is safe to the right of your lane, when you can see where the road straightens out ahead, gently move across to the left of the lane and finish back in the middle of your lane. Use the opposite sequence for a right curve.

Night driving

Night driving can be quite difficult. Oncoming vehicles' headlights can dazzle you and you must keep alert to the lights and reflectives of cyclists and motorcyclists. Pedestrians can be impossible to see. Traffic lights can appear to blend in with advertising signs.

Leave yourself more space from the car in front, as this will create more time for you to be able to see what is ahead and prepare for anything that may happen.

Driver courtesy

Be courteous and share the road: