



# A Guide to Safer Roads

Dorset Police



**Dorset  
ROAD  
SAFE**  
Safer Together



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## Introduction

Alongside enforcement and engineering, education plays a vital part in reducing risk and the number of incidents on our roads. Changing the behaviour and attitude of all road users, whether it be a driver, rider or pedestrian can contribute to reducing risk, promoting a road respect culture.

This guide has been produced to provide accurate and informative advice to all road users about how they can be even safer on the roads. We all like to think we are safe road users and we rarely make mistakes – but human error is actually a contributory factor in 98% of all incidents.

So please, take the time to read and refer to this guide, and share it with family and friends, so we can work together to make our roads even safer.

## Safety Advice

One of the key reasons that drivers lose concentration or become stressed when driving is because they are in a hurry. You should always allow plenty of time to complete your journey.

Use this plan on your journey...

Remember **COAST**:

**C**oncentrate on your driving at all times.

**O**bserve all around you.

**A**nticipate what might happen next.

**S**pacegive space at all times; it gives you:

**T**ime to plan your driving.

Always allow plenty of time to complete your journey however you are using the road.

### Driving too close - the 'Two-Second Rule'

You should always drive with at least a two-second time gap between you and vehicle in front and you can work it out like this:

- On a dry road, choose a point like a lamp post or road sign.
- When the vehicle in front passes that point, say out loud "Only a fool breaks the two-second rule".
- Check your position in relation to your chosen point as you finish saying this. If you have already passed the point, you are driving too close to the vehicle in front and need to drop back.
- In wet weather, double the distance between your vehicle and the one in front of you by saying "Only a fool breaks the two-second rule" twice.

## Journey Preparation

Plan your route in advance, including time for breaks and always consider weather conditions before setting off, then allow extra time for your journey if necessary.

You should make sure that your vehicle is road worthy by checking the following:

**Petrol** – Do you have enough fuel for your journey?

**Oil** – Do you have sufficient oil, brake and steering fluid?

**Water** – Do you have sufficient windscreen and coolant water levels?

**Electrics** – Are all electric systems functioning correctly?  
Any warning lights showing?

**Rubber** – Are tyres worn or flat (minimum legal tread depth 1.6 mm) and are the windscreen wipers worn?

### Fuel Efficiency

- Try to keep moving by driving smoothly, accelerate gently and read the road ahead to avoid unnecessary braking.
  - Stick to the limits.
- The faster you go the more fuel you use. Driving at 70 mph uses up 9% more fuel than at 60 mph and up to 15% more fuel than driving at 50 mph.
  - Don't be idle.
- If you are likely to be queuing for more than 3 minutes, switch off your engine and save fuel. It's also better for the environment.

### Towing Advice

If you are going to be towing anything here are some safety tips:

- Ensure the towing hitch/stabiliser is correctly attached.
- Ensure the breakaway cable is attached.
- Check the jockey wheel is raised and secure.
- Check that the tyres, brakes and lights on the trailer or caravan are working and in good order.
- Check the gas is off and correctly stowed.
- Know the speed limits and weight limits for towing.

## Emergency Vehicles

By following a few simple steps, you can help the emergency services get to the scene faster and safer:

1. When you hear sirens, don't panic and stay alert.
2. When you see blue flashing lights scan the road looking for place that will allow the emergency vehicle safe passage. You should use your indicators or hand signals to let other drivers and the emergency vehicle driver know your intent to pull over.
3. Don't slam on your brakes or stop abruptly blocking the road or a junction.
4. Do not mount the pavement causing a danger to other road users.
5. Wait for the emergency vehicle to pass and watch for more than one. Check to make sure the way is clear and signal before moving back into traffic.
6. Never follow or try to outrun an emergency vehicle. If you do, you most likely will be breaking the speed limit and could also face charges of careless or dangerous driving.
7. Never try to overtake a moving emergency vehicle displaying flashing lights unless directed to do so by a police officer or emergency personnel.



# Impaired Driving

## Drink

Any amount of alcohol affects reaction times and judgement of speed and distance.

Abilities and tolerance to alcohol depends on a range of factors including weight, gender, age, metabolism and whether you have eaten recently.

So the only safe option is not to drink alcohol if you plan to drive.

There's no safe way to calculate how much alcohol you can drink to stay below the legal limit.

Effects of alcohol on driving:

- Reduced co-ordination.
- Slower reactions.
- Poor vision.
- Poor judgement of speed and distance.
- Drowsiness.

● If in doubt, don't drive.

● Sobering-up tricks do not work  
Coffee and cold showers the morning don't help you sober up. Time is the only way to get the alcohol out of your system and you could still be over the legal limit many hours after drinking.

# Impaired Driving

## Drugs (including medication)

Driving while unfit due to drugs is also against the law and this applies to medication as well as illegal substances. In fact, driving while unfit through drugs is just as dangerous as drink driving. The effects of some drugs can last much longer.

Medicines that can make you feel sleepy will carry a message saying:

**“Warning; May cause drowsiness. If affected, do not drive or operate machinery.”**

Always ask your GP or pharmacist if your medication may affect your ability to drive. Also check:

- The medicine's packaging.
- The patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.

## Tiredness

It is estimated that drivers who fall asleep at the wheel account for around one fifth of incidents on major roads. To avoid this;

- Plan your journey to include a 15-minute break every two hours.
- Don't start a long trip if you're already tired.
- Remember the risks if you have to get up unusually early to start a long drive.
- Try to avoid long trips between midnight and 6am when you're likely to feel sleepy anyway.
- If you start to feel sleepy, find a safe place to stop.
- The only real cure for tiredness is proper sleep. A caffeine drink and a 20 minute nap is a short-term solution.

● Did you know?  
Driving tired is the same as driving having consumed 6 glasses of wine.  
(Loughborough University)

## Life As A Pedestrian...

## Babies/Toddlers

Buggy or push chair:

- Strap in your child securely.
- Keep well back from the edge of the road.
- When going down hills, use a strap that goes around your wrist and around the buggy handle.

When your child starts to walk with you:

- Make sure hand holding is your number one rule.
- Use safety reins or a wrist strap.

It is recommended to hold hands until your child is at least eight.

## Watch your children

- Children should not cross streets by themselves or be allowed to play or walk near traffic. Children are small, unpredictable, and cannot judge vehicle distances and speeds.

Know where they're going. Help them plan a safe route.  
If you live by roads with fast traffic, don't let them out alone.

● Teach them to do three things:

1. Use a crossing if possible.
2. Stop at the kerb.
3. Look right, left, then right again.

● See and Be Seen

- Drivers need to see you so wear bright colours or reflective clothing if you are walking near traffic at night. Carry a torch when walking in the dark.
- Make eye contact with drivers when crossing busy streets.
- On country roads always walk on the right hand side facing on-coming traffic.

## Life As A Pedestrian...

## Teenagers

Talk to your teenager about the dangers of accepting lifts from mates driving cars or motorbikes.

Young drivers are the highest risk group of drivers because they have not developed the key skill of anticipation which comes through experience.

Agree with your teenager that you will always pick them up even if it's very late at night.

Make sure their phone is charged and they have enough credit to get hold of you if they need to, and tell them they can call you any time, day or night.

## Adult / Mature

- Mature pedestrians should allow themselves plenty of time to cross the road.
- Always make eye contact with drivers if possible to ensure that they see you.
- Use marked crossings if possible.

● FACT

Road Death is the biggest killer of 16 – 24 year olds in the UK.

● FACT

1. As we get older our eyes become less sensitive to light so focusing takes longer.
2. Reaction time is slower.
3. Motor skills can be less effective due to weaker muscles and that affects overall flexibility.

## Life On Two Wheels...

### Cycling

#### Rules & Advice:

- You must not cycle on a pavement.
- You must not cross the stop line when the traffic lights are red.
- At night your bicycle must have white front and rear red lights lit.
- You must not carry a passenger unless your bicycle has been built or adapted to carry one.
- You must not ride under the influence of drink or drugs, including medicine.
- Make sure before you set off that every rider wears a helmet and high visibility clothing.
- Make sure, when overtaking, that you pass wide around parked cars, to avoid doors opening unexpectedly. And don't do anything until you have had a good look over your right shoulder.
- Try to position yourself so that you can be seen in the side mirrors of large vehicles. Remember, lorry and coach drivers often have blind spots and cannot see cyclists.
- Children, infants and toddlers will need to be carried in properly fitted child seats which conform to BS EN 14344 2004, the appropriate British standard for child bicycle seats.
- When choosing a seat, ensure there are footrests to guard against feet straying into wheel spokes. Check how the harness locks and releases, and make sure your child is comfortable in the seat.

## Life On Two Wheels...

### Mopeds

A moped **MUST** have an engine capacity not exceeding 50 cc, not weigh more than 250kg and be designed to have a maximum speed not exceeding 28mph (45 km/h).

To ride a moped, learners **MUST**

- Be 16 or over.
- Have a provisional moped licence.
- Complete Compulsory Basic Training (CBT).

You **MUST** first pass the theory test for motorcycles and then the moped practical test to obtain your full moped licence.

If you passed your car driving test before 1 February 2001 you are qualified to ride a moped without L plates (and/or D plates in Wales), although it is recommended that you complete CBT before riding on the road.

If you passed your car driving test after this date you **MUST** complete CBT before riding a moped on the road.

● **Did you know?**  
Motorcyclists account for just one per cent of total road traffic, but account for 19 per cent of all Great Britain's road user deaths.

## Life On Two Wheels...

Here are some top tips to help all motorcyclists keep safe on the roads:

- 1. Expect the unexpected** – Drivers often fail to notice motorcyclists so it's best to always ride with the expectation that you won't be seen, and to be alert and observant and keep an eye out for other vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists.
- 2. Make yourself visible** – Wear a light or brightly coloured helmet and fluorescent clothing or strips when riding in daylight and reflective clothing or strips when riding in the dark.
- 3. Get your positioning right** – Position yourself in the most visible place, usually the middle of the lane. Take up your road position in good time before turning right or left, showing others what you aim to do.
- 4. Take care when overtaking** – Can you see hazards? Is there a bend or junction? Can you overtake without speeding up or swerving too much? Before you overtake, take a lifesaver glance over your shoulder and check what others around you are doing.
- 5. Look after your gear** – and it will look after you. Always wear the right clothes - leathers, gloves, boots and a safety helmet that fits. Don't buy second-hand kit as the chances are it won't protect you properly if you have a crash.
- 6. Dress for the weather** – Be prepared for the weather to change. Take waterproofs and visor wipes for that sudden downpour – an uncomfortable ride can distract you from hazards.

Bikesafe is a national educational initiative. For more information visit [www.bikesafe.co.uk](http://www.bikesafe.co.uk)

## Life On Four Wheels...

### Pregnancy

You must wear a seat belt if you're pregnant, unless your doctor says you don't have to for medical reasons.

### Child

Children up to 135cms tall must use the appropriate child restraint for their weight (not age) when travelling in the front or back seat of any car, van or goods vehicle. There are very few exceptions. 'Child restraint' means baby seat, child seat, booster seat or booster cushion.

**What about Air Bags?**  
A rear-facing baby seat **MUST NOT** be fitted into a seat protected by an active frontal airbag, as in a crash it can cause serious injury or death to the child.  
(Highway Code rule 101).

### Get in the Back...

Passengers 12 years old and younger need to be sitting in the back because it's the safest place to be. If the car you're in is involved in a collision, you have much less chance of hitting something hard like the windscreen if you're in the back.

You also won't be injured when the airbag inflates rapidly during a crash.

If you're in the back seat with friends or brothers and sisters, everyone needs to keep their seatbelts on. It can be hard for the driver to concentrate on driving and see what's going on outside the car if they are being distracted by passengers.

**Seat Belts Save Lives**  
In a crash at 30 mph, an adult is thrown forwards with a force of 3.5 tonnes.  
Research shows that you are twice as likely to die in a crash if you don't wear a seat belt.

## New Drivers

You are vulnerable:

- Having passed the driving test you are able to drive unsupervised for the first time and this can be quite daunting initially making you much more vulnerable than you may realise.
- Try to identify your strengths and weaknesses and consider further training so that you can drive safely in all conditions and on all types of road otherwise you will be at greater risk of being involved in a collision.
- That risk is already reflected in car insurance premiums which may be reduced by taking further training, for example the Pass Plus scheme.

### Positive Driving:

Take responsibility for your actions and give consideration to all road users.

**LOOK** – Always take good effective all round observation.

**ASSESS** – Think carefully about what you see and how you might be affected or influence other road users.

**DECIDE** – Do not hesitate; make a decision and act on it.

**ACT** – Taking positive action gives a clear message to other road users.

## Driving For Work

Driving for work can involve being behind the wheel for long distances over long time periods. Here are some useful tips to help you stay safe when driving for work:

- Check out your employer's 'driving at work' policy (which should be part of their existing Health and Safety at Work Policy). Talk to your employer about driving assessment and training.
- Check your vehicle - basic maintenance saves time in the long run and helps avoid incidents.
- Plan your journey - this will help to avoid the temptation of speeding, trying to read a map or calling the depot for directions on your mobile phone while you're driving.
- Switch off your mobile phone or go to voicemail.
- Wear a seat belt. Van and goods vehicle drivers are only exempt from wearing seat belts when making deliveries less than 50 metres apart.

Dorset Police provide driver education sessions to groups of business drivers. The sessions have been specifically developed for people who drive for work and cover a range of useful topics including Health and Safety legislation, vehicle dynamics and load, observation, hazard perception and driver fatigue. (see Contacts page).

● **Did you know?**  
It's estimated that around 200 road deaths and serious injuries each week in the UK involve someone at work.



## Mature Drivers

Modern driving can be stressful due to sheer volume of traffic and new engineering & technology in vehicles that we are perhaps unfamiliar with.

Make sure you know your vehicle, what all the switches and dashboard lights are for and know how and when to use them (refer to the vehicle handbook and the Highway Code).

- Always signal clearly and in good time.
- Only move off when it is safe to do so.
- Take extra care when turning right and emerging at junctions as you will be crossing the path of other vehicles.
- When approaching roundabouts take notice of signs and road markings which direct you into the correct lane.
- Practice good lane discipline.
- Consider refresher training with a qualified Driving Instructor.
- Check your eyesight – it is an offence to drive any vehicle if you cannot read a standard number plate in good daylight from 20.5m (67 feet) away.

## Wheelchairs & Mobility Scooters

**Information:** There is one class of manual wheelchair (called a Class 1 invalid carriage) and two classes of powered wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters. Manual wheelchairs and Class 2 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 4 mph (6 km/h) and are designed to be used on pavements. Class 3 vehicles are those with an upper speed limit of 8 mph (12 km/h) and are equipped to be used on the road as well as the pavement.

### Rules:

1. Give pedestrians priority and show consideration for other pavement users, particularly those with a hearing or visual impairment who may not be aware that you are there.
2. Powered wheelchairs and scooters **MUST NOT** travel faster than 4 mph (6 km/h) on pavements or in pedestrian areas.
3. When you are on the road you should obey the guidance and rules for other vehicles; when on the pavement you should follow the guidance and rules for pedestrians.
4. When on the road, you should travel in the direction of the traffic. When there is no pavement, you should use caution when on the road.
5. You **MUST** follow the same rules about using lights, indicators and horns as for other road vehicles. Make yourself more visible - even in the daytime and also at dusk - by, for instance, wearing a reflective jacket or reflective strips on the back of the vehicle.
6. All normal parking restrictions should be observed. Your vehicle should not be left unattended if it causes an obstruction to other pedestrians - especially those in wheelchairs.

# YOU SPEED

## The Human Factor

Most collisions are caused by the following, known as 'The Fatal Four';

### 1 - Speed

Here are some tips to help stay within the speed limit:

- Check your speedometer regularly, especially when leaving high speed roads.
- Know the limits - look for signs, especially at junctions.
- Street lighting means 30 mph, until signs say otherwise, but remember it could be 20 mph.
- Remember, speed limits are a maximum, not a target.
- Try using 3rd gear in a 30mph limit to help you stay in the limit.
- Recognise what makes you speed - keeping up with traffic, overtaking or being tailgated.
- Concentrate - distracted drivers speed.
- Slow down when entering villages.

## Speed Limits

Type of vehicle	Streetlights	Single carriageway	Dual carriageway	Motorways
Cars & Motorcycles (including car-derived vans up to 2 tonnes maximum laden weight)	30	60	70	70
Cars towing Caravans / Trailers (including car-derived vans & motorcycles)	30	50	60	60
Buses & Coaches (not exceeding 12 meters in overall length)	30	50	60	70
Goods Vehicles (not exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	30	50	60	70*
Goods Vehicles (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	30	40	50	60

\* 60 if articulated or towing a trailer

## 2 - Seatbelts

By law, you must wear a seat belt in cars and goods vehicles where one is fitted. There are very few exceptions to this. The driver is liable to prosecution if a child under 14 years does not wear a seat belt or child restraint as required.

In buses and coaches with seat belts fitted, passengers aged 14 years and above must use them. Passengers on vehicles used for public fare paying passengers on 30mph roads are exempt.

### Exemptions

You don't need to wear a seat belt if you're:

- A driver who is reversing, or supervising a learner driver who is reversing.
- In a vehicle being used for police, fire and rescue services.
- A passenger in a trade vehicle and you're investigating a fault.
- Driving a goods vehicle on deliveries that is travelling no more than 50 metres between stops.
- A licensed taxi driver who is 'plying for hire' or carrying passengers.

### Medical Exemptions

Your doctor may say you don't have to wear a seat belt for a medical reason. They'll give you a 'Certificate of Exemption from Compulsory Seat Belt Wearing'.

You must:

- Keep this in your vehicle.
- Show it to the police if you're stopped. You'll also need to tell your car insurer.

**● FACT**  
 If you are not wearing a seatbelt you can be prosecuted. The fixed penalty for not wearing your seat belt is £100, but if you are convicted in court the fine can be up to £500. A child can use an adult belt when they reach 135cm or their 12th birthday, whichever comes first.

## 3 - Mobile Phones

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone or similar device while driving a vehicle, riding a motorcycle or supervising a learner. The penalty for doing so is £100 and 3 penalty points and if the case goes to court, you will face a maximum fine of £1,000 (£2,500 if driving a bus, coach or heavy goods vehicle), discretionary disqualification and 3 points. On top of all that, your insurance costs could also go up.

Even careful drivers can be distracted by a phone call or text message and that split second lapse in concentration could result in a crash. Using any type of mobile - be it hands free or handheld - means reaction times are worse than those driving under the influence of alcohol.

### What should you do?

Either switch off your phone or create a voicemail, before setting off. If your phone does ring, leave it and pick up any messages and make calls once you are safely parked with the engine switched off and keys out of the ignition.

**IMPORTANT:** If you ring someone on their mobile phone who turns out to be driving when they answer, say you'll call them later and hang up.

**● Did you know?**  
 Research has shown that those using a mobile phone while driving are four times more likely to crash.

**● FACT**  
 You can also be prosecuted for using a hands free phone or similar device if you are distracted and not in proper control of the vehicle. Employers could also be prosecuted if employees are distracted because they require them to use their mobile phones while driving.

## 4 - Drink/Drug Driving

The penalties for drink and drug driving are the same. You will receive:

- A 12-month driving ban.
- A £5,000 fine.
- A criminal record.

What's the legal limit? In the UK, the legal alcohol limit for drivers is:

- 80 milligrams of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of blood in your body.
- 35 micrograms of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of breath.
- 107 micrograms of alcohol for every 100 millilitres of urine.

A driver found guilty of causing death by dangerous driving will go to prison for up to 14 years.

A conviction for drug driving is shown on your driving licence for 11 years. If you drive for work, your employer will see the conviction when you show them your licence.

## Respect All Road Users

Here are a few simple tips;

- Keep your distance – Driving too close can intimidate a motorcyclist or cyclist.
- Check for bikes when changing lanes – A motorcyclist or cyclist may be in the space you want to move into. Remember your blind spot.
- Check for bikes and pedestrians when turning – Parked cars or large vehicles can obstruct your view.
- Two wheelers might pass you on either side – so double-check whether you're turning left or right.
- Always check for bikes and pedestrians at junctions – Remember to look carefully for bikes, as it is often difficult to see them when they are coming out of junctions. Always look out for them before you emerge from a junction because they could be approaching faster than you think.
- Park safely – Check for two wheelers before opening a car door and ensure that your passengers do the same. When you pull away remember that two wheelers are narrower than cars, which can make them harder to see.
- Be particularly careful of horse riders especially when overtaking. Always pass wide and slowly.
- Drivers don't always see pedestrians – make yourself visible

**Drive To The  
Conditions  
Within The  
Speed Limit**  
Give pedestrians  
priority when they  
are crossing the road  
and give them time  
to cross safely

# Contacts

**Dorset Police non-emergencies - 101**

**Dorset Police Driver Awareness Scheme enquires - 01305 227670**

**Dorset Police Business Driver Education enquiries - 01305 227670**  
**business-drivers@dorset.pnn.police.uk - Dorset Police [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk)**

**Dorset Road Safe [www.dorsetroadsafe.org.uk](http://www.dorsetroadsafe.org.uk)**

**Directgov Motoring [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)**

**Department for Transport (DfT) [www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)**

**Transport Direct [www.transportdirect.co.uk](http://www.transportdirect.co.uk)**

**BikeSafe enquiries 01305 227670 [www.bikesafe.co.uk](http://www.bikesafe.co.uk)**

**Driving Standards Agency (DSA) [www.dsa.gov.uk](http://www.dsa.gov.uk)**

**Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)**

**Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) [www.iam.org.uk](http://www.iam.org.uk)**

**Institute of Road Safety Officers (IRSO) [www.irso.org.uk](http://www.irso.org.uk)**

**Local Authority Road Safety Officers' Association (LARSOA) [www.larsoa.org.uk](http://www.larsoa.org.uk)**

**Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) [www.rospa.org.uk](http://www.rospa.org.uk)**

**Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents - Child Car Seats (RoSPA) [www.childcarseats.org.uk](http://www.childcarseats.org.uk)**

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