



Guide for Instructors

Information on:

- Mobile Phone Law
- Young Drivers Insurance
- Illegal Drugs
- Tyre Care Tips
- Winter - respect the elements
- Buyers of second hand cars
- Don't be a victim of car crime
- If you are involved in a road accident
- Drink Driving - The Facts
- Motorway Breakdowns and Emergencies



MAKING SOUTH YORKSHIRE
ROADS SAFER

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Mobile Phone Law - Questions & Answers

Q: What does the ban mean?

A: It is a specific offence to use a hand-held phone when driving. A hand-held device is something that “is or must be held at some point during the course of making or receiving a call or performing any other interactive communication function.” A motorist can regard driving as meaning a vehicle with the engine running. In simple terms you can use a mobile as long as you don't hold the phone and you can't use a hand-held phone if the engine is running.

Q: How much is the fine if you get caught using a hand-held mobile when driving?

A: Currently motorists will receive a fixed penalty of £30. This is a £60 fine and 3 penalty points.

Q: What happens if you take the matter to court?

A: Motorists can take the matter to court where the maximum fine is £1000. (£2,500 for drivers of goods vehicles). + Penalty points.

Q: Can I use a hands-free phone while I'm driving?

A: Yes, but you can only use it if it can be operated without holding the phone. Therefore mobile phones should be placed in cradles which are attached to the dashboard. Pushing buttons is permissible but the best advice is don't use it.

Q: Can I stick the phone on to the dashboard?

A: Technically yes, because the law states that you must not hold the phone when making and receiving a call. However, we urges drivers not to think of methods of replacing the cradle as they could make their driving more dangerous.

Q: Will I still get stopped by police if I am using a hands-free phone when driving?

A: If you are stopped by police and you are using a hands-free phone while driving, you can face prosecution under other motoring laws. The police can charge you with driving without due care and attention, not being in proper control of the vehicle or even dangerous driving. If there is an accident and you are using a phone you may well be charged with these offences. If someone is killed in an accident where any part of the phone is being used, the driver will almost certainly go to jail.

Q: Why is there no ban on hands-free mobiles as well?

A: Drivers should remember that the police can use other legislation if a motorist is distracted by a call on a hands-free phone. If there is an accident and the driver is using a phone, then there is a risk of prosecution for dangerous driving.

Drivers are reminded that research shows drivers who use hands-free phones are four times as likely to be involved in an accident.

Q: If the Government has banned mobile phones, then why did they not stop people tuning in the radio and talking?

A: Many people find using a phone much more intrusive to their concentration than talking to a passenger or having the radio on – it seems harder to ignore the phone conversation. There are many reasons that might explain that, but the effect is the important thing – it distracts too much.

Q: Can I make and receive calls if my phone is in a cradle?

A: You can push buttons on the phone while it is in a cradle or on the steering wheel or handlebars of a motorbike, as long as it is in the cradle and you don't hold the phone. However, we urges drivers not to use even hands-free phones as they are four times as likely to be involved in an accident.

Q: Can you text and use the internet on your phone while driving?

A: The use of mobile phones for these purposes is prohibited if you hold the phone. You can push buttons on a phone while it is in the cradle as this does not breach the new regulation. However, police may use their powers to stop you under other laws. We urge drivers not to do this as it could be distracting. Research has shown that drivers who use hands-free are four times as likely to be involved in an accident. Looking at the phone to send or read a text message is obviously not looking where you are going, and risks prosecution for dangerous driving.

Q: Can motorists use navigation equipment, personal digital assistants (PDAs) or other computer equipment that sends or receives data?

A: In theory yes – providing it is not a hand-held device. The Government guidelines state that use of devices other than mobile phones is only prohibited if the device performs an interactive communication function by sending and receiving data. If the device does not perform this type of function, you can use the device without breaching the regulations.

Q: Are 2-way radios banned?

A: The use of 2-way radio equipment when driving is not included in the offence. Remember that there is still a risk of distraction and prosecution under other motoring laws.

Q: Can I use a hand-held phone when I am stationary in traffic?

A: No, the regulations state that driving includes time when stopped at traffic lights or during other hold-ups, so you can't use a hand-held. However, if there was an accident on a motorway, for example, and you are sure you won't move, then you could turn the engine off and then use the phone legally.

Q: Can I use my hand-held mobile if it is placed between my ear and shoulder?

A: No, because you will be holding the phone and breaking the law.

Q: Can I use an earpiece kit if my phone is not in a cradle?

A: Technically yes. But we would never recommend using this though because it would be tempting to pick the phone up and then you would be breaking the law. It could also easily fall on the floor and then you are distracted from driver by trying to pick the phone up. You can use an ear-piece kit if the phone is placed in a cradle and you don't hold the phone when receiving a call.

Q: Should motorists turn off mobiles when driving?

A: The best way to avoid making or receiving calls in the car is to turn the phone off. However, this is not always practical for everyone. It is safer to let the phone ring and return the call when safely parked. However, motorists should remember that the car engine needs to be switched off to make or take the call. Passengers in the car can use their phones.

Q: Can I make emergency calls?

A: There is an exemption for making 999 calls to the emergency services where it is unsafe or impractical to stop.

Q: Who do the regulations apply to?

A: The regulations apply to drivers of all motor vehicles, including, cars, motorcycles, goods vehicles, buses, coaches and taxis. They also apply to anyone supervising a learner driver, while the learner is driving.

Q: Will cyclists be prosecuted for using a mobile phone while cycling?

A: No, but police do have the powers to deal with careless or dangerous cycling.

Q: Are employers guilty of an offence if their employees use a hand-held phone while driving?

A: The regulations apply to anyone who causes or permits any other person to use a handheld phone while driving. Under Department for Transport guidelines, they consider that employers would not be liable just because they supplied a telephone or because they phoned an employee who was driving. However, employers would probably be liable if they required their employees to use a hand-held phone while driving and might also be liable if they failed to forbid employees to use such phones on company business.

Increasing concern about corporate manslaughter and the likelihood of the Health and Safety Executive becoming involved in cases where a business driver has a fatal accident means that many companies are becoming tough on drivers who use mobile phones. Some are even banning the use of hands-free phones by employees.

Q: Do you think hands-free kits are too expensive?

A: There is a wide range of hands-free kits on the market and consumers have a choice as to how much they spend. The IAM Motoring Trust says that if a motorist is not prepared to spend the money on the hands-free kit, they should turn the phone off while driving. However, if you are caught using a hand-held mobile twice then that would have easily paid for the hands-free kit.

Q: What are the insurance implications if motorists are caught using mobile phones when driving?

A: In theory, an insurance company could refuse to pay for damage to your own car if you were breaking the law at the time of the accident (this could include using a mobile telephone).

The effects on your insurance if you have an accident could include loss of no claim bonus which would result in an insurance premium increase by at least 50 percent.

Some insurance companies increase premiums for drivers with penalty points. From 27th February this means that breaking the mobile phone law will not only cost a fine and points, but could also increase your premium.

A number of convictions, such as drink driving and dangerous driving may result in cover being refused or a significant financial penalty being applied.

Q: The police do not bother to enforce the law, and many, many people break it – I see them on every journey. Do I really need to comply?

A: That is your choice. But The IAM Motoring Trust would point out that in the first year of the law 77,000 drivers were caught and fined. The three points will hurt drivers more than a fine, and we know that with the points will come a whole new enforcement approach.



Young Drivers Insurance

Young drivers are traditionally known as high-risk drivers and have to pay extra premium. This is because based on statistics; young drivers are more likely to have claims. This is particularly true of male young drivers who it is said are encouraged to drive quickly in order to show off to their friends. Whilst this is not true of all young male drivers, it is of sufficient quantity to mean that as a demographic group, the claim costs for this group is higher.

The worst age group statistically are for the male teenagers. This group not only have a higher claims frequency but also have more expensive claims. Average loss ratios for insurers writing this business is 120%, which makes them a highly unattractive risk prospect.

The cars that younger drivers buy tend to be older and less well maintained due to financial pressures on this age group. This again contributes to higher accident frequency. A car that is poorly maintained is less likely to brake as well in the event of a claim; this leads to higher accident ratios.

A factor that contributes to the higher average cost of a claim is that there is a lower than average car ownership within this category. The practical meaning of this is that when a person turned just 18 years old (particularly those still in education) has a car, he or she is likely to have to transport a number of his or her friends around. This is a particular concern to car insurance because of the possibility of over loading.

By far the most expensive aspect to car insurance claims is the personal injury aspect side; if there is a big accident with five

passengers in a car then the accident is potentially five times more than with one passenger in the car. It is the passengers who are particularly important in that they are all considered third parties in the event of an accident. The driver has fairly limited compensation opportunities.

This question of passengers in the car can manifest itself in the over-loading of vehicles. An over loaded car is less stable than a car under-loaded. The suspension, braking and steering mechanisms of a car will struggle when a car is over loaded, thus increasing the risk.

Research shows that young drivers (in common with young people in general) are more likely to be out night near nightclubs. This presents the risk of vandalism in addition to the risks outlined above of overcrowding on the way home. A boisterous set of teenagers turned just 18 years olds on their way home from a nightclub are a much higher risk than the normal commuter who drives his car on his own to work and back every day.

It is for the reasons outlined above that certain specialist companies have cropped up to deal with the insuring of young drivers.

● **Some young drivers are under the illusion that by naming themselves on their parents second policy will reduce the rates. Insurers are aware that this practice goes on but frown upon what is called “Fronting”.**

● **In the event of a claim, insurers can repudiate a claim on the basis of non-disclosure if the young drivers has been input as an occasional driver when in fact he or she is the main driver. It is imperative that the insured is always completely honest on the proposal form. Non-disclosure is a breach of policy conditions.**



Illegal Drugs

Drugs can affect a driver's behaviour and body in a variety of ways (depending on the drug). These can include:

- Slower reactions
- Poor concentration and confused thinking
- Distorted perception
- Over confidence, resulting in taking unnecessary risks
- Poor co-ordination
- Erratic behaviour
- Aggression, panic attacks or paranoia
- Blurred vision
- Tremors, dizziness, cramps
- Severe fatigue the following day

The affects of illegal drugs in more detail

■ Cannabis

Impaired concentration, resulting in slower driver reaction times. Impaired steering control and co-ordination. The drug can also induce feelings of paranoia, drowsiness and disorientation.

■ Cocaine

This stimulant drug can result in drivers misjudging speed and stopping distances. The drug can give drivers a feeling of overconfidence, which can lead to aggressive driving and increased risk taking.

■ Ecstasy

This stimulant drug has hallucinogenic properties and can distort the driver's vision and affect concentration. Drivers under the influence of "E" show a significant decrease in their awareness of road dangers followed by severe fatigue the following day.

■ LSD

This hallucinogenic drug can strongly influence a driver's senses. Drivers may react to objects or sounds that aren't there, placing themselves and other road users in danger.

■ Opiates such as heroin and methadone (and certain painkillers)

Opiates lead to slower reaction time, lethargy, sleepiness and impaired co-ordination.

■ Tranquillisers

These drugs may impair driver reaction times and can cause drowsiness.

Over-the-Counter Drugs

- Many of the 'over-the-counter' treatments for colds, flu and hay-fever that can be bought without a doctor's prescription also cause drowsiness which might impair driving ability.

Prescription Drugs

- For many medications it is difficult to predict whether, how, when and for how long they will affect a person's ability to drive safely. A driver may not even notice that they have been impaired until it is too late. The effects depend on how much, how often and how a medicine is used, plus the psychological and physical attributes of the person taking it.

Some medicines may cause:

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness or feeling light-headed
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling edgy, angry or aggressive
- Feeling nauseous or otherwise unwell
- Reduced coordination, including shaking
- Feeling unstable



Tyre Care Tips

Tyres are expensive, and of all the consumables in motoring tyres come second only to fuel in terms of cost. As with fuel consumption, the way you drive can impact on your tyre consumption.

If a tyre does develop a problem, it is useful to be able to identify what that problem is, so that you can prevent it recurring. The main problems are wheel alignment and incorrect tyre pressure. Don't just assume that when you have had your alignment checked that it will be correct; keep an eye on your tyre wear. Similarly, air pressure needs to be checked, even on recently fitted tyres.

However, your **driving habits** may impact on your tyre wear. It has been said that high speed driving can overheat tyres and result in the degradation of the rubber, resulting in the breakdown of the tyre. This is true, but generally your car should be fitted with tyres with speed ratings above the maximum speed of the car itself. Also, that heat build-up usually only occurs when the tyre is under-inflated. So high speed driving alone is not usually the sole reason for tyre failure - or else our motorways would be littered with cars needing tyres replaced.

Tyre wear is accelerated under **hard driving**, so the heavy footed driver, both on the accelerator and brake is likely to see higher tyre wear. If he adds high speed cornering he can expect to increase tyre wear even more.

Harsh braking wears down tread quicker, and it can lead to flat spots, especially on older cars with oval brake drums or uneven discs.

Inflation is key to keeping tyres in good safe condition. The air in the tyres warms up very quickly, even on a cold day, and when the tyre starts rolling it generates some heat, which heats up the air in the tyre, which expands thus creating a higher air pressure. So, when you drive a mile to the garage to set your tyre pressures, and they are at 32lbs instead of 30lbs, and you drop them by 2lbs you have actually reduced the pressure from the correct 30lbs.

Tyre pressures should always be checked at cold before you move the car - which is why tyre pressure monitoring systems that function as soon as you put the key in the ignition are better than ABS fed systems. (Most cars sold in Europe with TPMS have electronic sensors in the wheels that check tyre pressure automatically).

Incorrect tyre pressures have various outcomes. Firstly **too low** a pressure can result in uneven wear on the shoulder of the tyre. It can lead to overheating and tyre breakdown. It makes the suspension feel softer, and can make the car's handling sluggish and slow to react to steering input.

Too high a pressure results in uneven wear around the centre of the tread. With less contact on the road it makes wheelspin and skidding more likely, accelerating wear in the high pressure contact area. The car will have very light steering and in some situations it will be over-responsive to steering input and have a propensity to skid.

There are very few circumstances where reducing tyre pressure on the road can be recommended. Not even in snow and ice. However, if towing, or running a heavily laden vehicle it may be a requirement that the tyres are inflated to a higher pressure - see your vehicle owners' handbook for details.

Balancing your wheels is important for several reasons. Firstly, an imbalance in the wheels, especially front, will be felt as a vibration through the steering at some or all speeds. It can increase noise levels and make the car uncomfortable to drive. On the short to long term it can increase mechanical component wear in the track rod ends, ball joints, steering rack and even the wheel bearings can fail. If you have your wheels balanced after a new tyre fit or a puncture repair, be wary of any detrimental changes to your car's "feel", it may need the wheels rebalancing.

Another area that causes increased tyre wear is that of **road surfaces**. There isn't a great deal that the driver can do, other than be aware that on some road surfaces - even those that appear smooth, there may be a multiplying factor on tyre wear. A worst case example would be that tyres that might do 30,000 miles in the UK, might, under similar driving conditions in some areas of Norway or Sweden only do 20,000 miles or less. This is because the Scandinavian road surfaces are built to offer better surface drainage and grip due to their adverse weather conditions.

Spotting the Faults

Tyre pressure: is best checked with the tyres cold, in the morning. Tyres should be inflated to the vehicle manufacturer's recommendations. However, when you buy replacement tyres you should check that they need to be inflated to the same level - some tyres operate better at slightly different pressures.

Balancing: Any feel of vibration should be investigated, and the first stop is wheel balancing. If you are not happy with the response from one tyre fitter, use another.

Alignment: is one of the bugbears. Every tyre depot claims to do wheel alignment but many just don't get it right, and that includes some very big names. So watch for uneven tyre wear and at the first sign of poor alignment or you can feel your steering pulling to one side under normal driving on a flat road get your car in and have it checked. You will be told that you may have kerbed the car, hit a pothole or similar, but have it checked by someone you can trust and who lets you see quite clearly what they are doing. If your tyre fitter doesn't use laser alignment then take it somewhere that does, and ask to see the figures.

Accounting for general wear requires **tyre rotation**. Most owner's manuals show the proper cycle for rotation.

Punctures can sometimes be avoided by removing objects just stuck in the tyre. Beware however, or removing penetrations from inflated tyres. You may be able to drive to a tyre depot with a nail in the tyre. This is because radial tyres have a soft **butyl liner** that seals around small penetrations to prevent sudden air loss. This minimises the risk of high speed sudden loss of pressure, and it allows a get to safety option. If you remove a screw or nail, the tyre will deflate quickly and you will need a roadside tyre change - not always the best place to do the job.



Winter - respect the elements

The British winter is unpredictable. Bad weather can strike suddenly so the best advice when severe weather hits is to stay off the road. If you must drive, make sure you are prepared for the conditions.

Plan your journey

During wintry weather conditions:

- Ask yourself - is your journey absolutely essential?
- Check the local and national weather forecasts.
- Listen to local and national radio for travel information.
- Tell someone at your destination what time you expect to arrive.
- Make sure you are equipped with warm clothes, food, boots and a torch. In snowy conditions, take a spade.
- Clear your windows and mirrors before you set out and carry a screen scraper and de-icer.

If you get into trouble:

- Do not use a mobile phone while driving. Stop somewhere safe or ask a passenger to make the call.
- On a motorway, it is best to use a roadside emergency telephone, because the breakdown/emergency services will be able to locate you easily. If you have to use a mobile phone, make sure you know your location from the numbers on the marker posts on the side of the hard shoulder.

- Abandoned vehicles can hold up rescue vehicles and snowploughs. To ensure that the road is cleared as quickly as possible, stay with your vehicle until help arrives.
- If you have to leave your vehicle to get help, make sure other drivers can see you.

Vehicle Condition

In winter it is even more important to check your vehicle is well maintained and serviced.

- Keep the lights, windows and mirrors clean and free from ice and snow.
- Keep your battery fully charged.
- Add anti-freeze to the radiator and winter additive to the windscreen washer bottles.
- Make sure wipers and lights are in good working order.
- Check that tyres have plenty of tread depth and are maintained at the correct pressure.

Adjust your driving to the conditions

- Hail, heavy snow and rain reduce visibility.
- Use dipped headlights and reduce your speed.

When roads are icy or slushy

- It can take ten times longer to stop in icy conditions than on a dry road. Drive slowly, allowing extra room to slow down and stop.
- Use the highest gear possible to avoid wheel spin.
- Manoeuvre gently, avoiding harsh braking and acceleration.
- To brake on ice or snow without locking your wheels, get into a low gear earlier than normal, allow your speed to fall and use the brake pedal gently.

- If you start to skid, ease off the accelerator but do not brake suddenly.

Watch out for fog

- Watch out for fog - it drifts rapidly and is often patchy.
- In foggy conditions, drive very slowly using dipped headlights.
- Use fog-lights if visibility is seriously reduced, but remember to switch them off when visibility improves.
- Don't hang on to the tail-lights of the vehicle in front. This gives you a false sense of security and means you may be driving too close.
- Don't speed up suddenly, even if it seems to be clearing. You can suddenly find yourself back in thick fog.

Winter Sun

- Dazzle from winter sun can be dangerous. Keep a pair of sunglasses handy.

Rain

In wet weather, stopping distances will be at least double those required for stopping on dry roads. This is because your tyres have less grip on the road. In wet weather:

- You should keep well back from the vehicle in front. This will increase your ability to see and plan ahead.
- If steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means the water is preventing the tyres from gripping the road. Ease off the accelerator and slow down gradually.
- The rain and spray from vehicles may make it difficult to see and be seen.

Flooded roads

- Don't attempt to cross if the water seems too deep.
- Drive slowly in first gear but keep the engine speed high by slipping the clutch - this will stop you from stalling.
- Avoid the deepest water, usually near the kerb
- Remember - test your brakes when you are through the flood before you drive at normal speed.

Take care around winter maintenance vehicles

The Highways Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Transport, is responsible for the motorways and trunk roads in England. We aim to reduce delays and accidents during wintry weather conditions by pre-treating clearing motorways and trunk roads to prevent the formation of ice and snow, and by clearing snow from carriageways and hard shoulders as soon as conditions permit. Local Authorities are responsible for this work on the local road network.

Salting and snow ploughing

- Take care when travelling behind winter service vehicles. Drivers of vehicles such as salt spreaders and snowploughs take all reasonable precautions to protect the safety of other road users.

Salting vehicles

- Salting vehicles travel at speeds of up to 40 mph spreading salt across all lanes of the carriageway. Drivers are advised to maintain a safe distance behind them. Do not attempt to overtake.

Snow ploughing

- Snow ploughing can throw up irregular amounts of snow that may be a hazard to vehicles. Drivers are advised to maintain a safe distance behind vehicles and not to attempt to overtake.

Roadworks on motorways and major roads

The Highways Agency will be working on a number of major maintenance schemes and improvements on motorways and trunk roads in England over the winter months and drivers are advised to plan their journeys accordingly.

If you have to drive through roadworks, please take extra care.

- Keep to the speed limit - it is there for your safety.
- Get into the correct lane in good time - don't keep switching.
- Concentrate on the road ahead, not the roadworks.
- Be alert for works traffic leaving or entering roadworks.
- Keep a safe distance - there could be queues in front.
- Observe all signs - they are there to help you.



Buyers of second hand cars

Unless you are lucky enough to afford a brand new car, then you will probably be looking for a second hand vehicle. When buying your first car there are a lot of things to consider. The key to making the right choice is research.

If this will be your first car then you are bound to be excited, but it is better to stay calm, be sensible, and take the time to make the right choice. If you make a mistake, you could lose a lot of money or have a nasty accident, or both! You can be ripped off in many different ways. It is often difficult to distinguish between a disguised 'disaster car' and a sound buy. This guide will help you to tell the difference.

Before you rush off to find your first car...

Research

- Decide what make and model you are interested in.
- Set a budget and stick to it.
- Find out what the insurance costs are likely to be on the type of car you are looking for.
- Think about servicing and repair costs. Where would you take the car to be fixed and serviced?

Whether you buy from a dealer or privately, there are many things to look out for and check. Don't be in a hurry to buy, there are plenty of cars out there, and plenty of people ready to take your money. Shop around and compare prices for cars of the same age and condition.

- Look for reputable dealers - ask the advice of friends. Also look for a trade association sign which means that the garage should follow a code of practice.
- Take care when buying from private owners as you have fewer legal rights than when buying from a dealer. Keep a copy of the advertisement or write down anything the seller says.
- If buying privately, make sure the seller's name and address is on the vehicle registration document.
- Make sure the registration document correctly describes the car you are buying.
- Take along a mechanic friend. Examine the car in broad daylight and also take it for a test drive. Alternatively get it looked at by a professional or an independent qualified examiner.
- Ask to see the service record, and if the car is more than three years old, the MOT certificate. Does the car's condition match up with the documents and records?
- If you buy from a garage, check what any guarantee covers and what it excludes. Is there a warranty of any kind?

Ask lots of questions about the car. If the vendor is genuine and honest, he or she will be happy to tell you anything you want to know. Remember if you are at all suspicious about the vendor or the car you are viewing, then walk away!

Buying any used car can be a gamble, but you can reduce the risk by getting independent expert advice.



Don't be a victim of car crime

How sure can you be that the second-hand car you are about to buy is not a stolen vehicle? Nationally, cars are stolen at an alarming rate with about 30% of them never being recovered.



Cars that are stolen do not disappear for ever, they re-enter the second hand car market in a disguised form, and are re-sold to innocent buyers. The disguises will vary from a change of number plates to more definite changes to hide a vehicle's true identity. The worst of it is that if you do buy a car which is later found to be stolen, you will have no right to ownership of the car and it will be taken away from you.

You could lose the car and all the money you paid for it!

The following information should help you avoid buying a stolen car.

Your Research

- Decide what make and model you are interested in buying
- Find out where the vehicle's identification numbers should be.
- Consider taking an independent qualified examiner along with you when viewing a car.

When buying from a private advertisement

- Can you identify the vendor? Beware of mobile telephone numbers which may not be traceable.
- Beware of “between 5pm and 6pm” type adverts. Is it a telephone box? Try calling the number outside the specified hours.
- Does the vendor hold the vehicle registration documents and MOT certificate? If not, ask why not.
- Always arrange to view the car in daylight and at the vendor’s home. Make sure that it really is their home.
- Never allow them to bring the vehicle to your home or meet to meet you at another location.

About the vendor

- Is he or she familiar with the car and its controls?
- Question them about the sort of insurance premiums they have paid on the car.
- Is he or she the registered keeper? If not, ask why not.
- When looking at the registration document, it should have a watermark when held up to the light.

Registration Plates

- Do the registration plates appear newer than car?
- Are there too many screw holes?
- Do the registration plates appear to have been taken off at any time? (Remember: Most registration plates display a dealer’s name!)

Check Windows

- Are there any dealer’s stickers on the windows? If there aren’t, ask why not.
- Check carefully to make sure stickers don’t conceal anything.
- Are the windows etched with the correct identification numbers?
- Have any areas of glass been scratched off - including head-lamps, tail-lamps and sunroofs.
- Have any windows been broken and replaced? Ask the circumstances.

Vehicle Identification Numbers - When looking at the VIN plate check:

- Does the VIN number match the registration document?
- Does it appear to have been tampered with?
- Have any of the rivets been removed?
- Has the VIN plate been removed? If it has, ask why?

Find the stamped-in vehicle identification number and check:

- The surrounding area for signs of any alteration.
- The 17 digit number should be evenly and levelly spaced and should match the registration number and documents.

Find the engine number and check:

- Does it match with the registration document?
- Has it been tampered with or has the whole engine been changed?

Check the locks and security

- Does the car have a working security system?
- Do any of the locks differ?
- Do any of the door locks and surrounding areas look like they have been damaged?
- Check the locking petrol cap to see if it has been damaged or replaced.

Final Advice when buying a second hand car

If you are unlucky enough to have bought a car which is later found to be stolen, you will not only lose the car but you will have to explain your actions to the police.

Remember:

You will lose both the car and the money you paid for it - so be aware!

- **Be sure before you buy.**
- **Never feel pressured into buying a car.**
- **Never pay cash.**
- **Always remember: IF IN DOUBT - WALK AWAY**



If you are involved in a road accident...

...try to record the following information

Important information is

- The make, model and registration number of the other vehicle.
- The name, address and all telephone numbers of the other party.
- Any insurance particulars the other party can provide, hopefully involving the name, address and policy number.
- The extent of damage to the other vehicle.
- Whether any injuries are apparent and if so, a description of those injuries.
- Full names, addresses and telephone contact numbers of any witnesses, either independent or passengers in vehicles.
- The exact date and time of the accident.
- The exact location, including street name.

Other information which may be of assistance

- The colour of the vehicles.
- The name and address of the owner of the other vehicle, if different from the driver.
- If the Police attend, the name and number of the reporting officer and details of his local station.

IF YOU HAVE A CAMERA PHONE TRY TO TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE CAR AND DAMAGE



Drink Driving - The Facts

The Crashes

- On average 3,000 people are killed or seriously injured each year in drink drive collisions.
- Nearly one in six of all deaths on the road involve drivers who are over the legal alcohol limit.
- Drinking and driving occurs across a wide range of age groups but particularly among young men aged 17-29 in both casualties and positive breath tests following a collision. The Government's most recent drink drive campaigns aims to target this group.
- When the Government first published statistics in 1979, 1,640 people were killed in drink-related crashes.
- The latest provisional figures, from 2003, show that some 560 people were killed in crashes in which a driver was over the legal limit.
- Some 20,000 lives are estimated to have been saved in the last 13 years thanks to central government drink drive campaigns.

The Body

- The legal limit in the UK is 80 milligrammes of alcohol in 100 millilitres of blood.
- But there is no failsafe guide as to how much you can drink and stay under the limit.

- It can depend on many factors such as the amount and type of alcoholic drink, your weight, sex, age, food intake and metabolism.
- The only safe option is not to drink any alcohol if you plan to drive and never offer an alcoholic drink to anyone else who is driving.
- Alcohol affects your ability to drive safely as your reaction times are impaired and you're unable to judge speed and distances.
- People who drive at twice the current legal alcohol level are at least 50 times more likely to be involved in a fatal car crash.
- And if you think you won't get caught, more than half a million breath tests are carried out each year and on average 100,000 are found to be positive.

The Morning After

- If you've been out drinking you may still be affected by alcohol the next day. You may feel OK, but you may still be unfit to drive or over the legal alcohol limit.
- You could still lose your licence if you drive the next day when you're still over the legal alcohol level.
- It's impossible to get rid of alcohol any faster. A shower, a cup of coffee or other ways of 'sobering up' will not help. It just takes time.

The Law

- Driving or attempting to drive whilst above the legal limit or unfit through drink carries a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment, a fine of up to £5,000 and a minimum 12 months driving ban.
- An endorsement for a drink-driving offence remains on a driving licence for 11 years, so it is 11 years before a convicted driver will have a "clean" licence again.
- Being in charge of a vehicle whilst over the legal limit or unfit through drink could result in 3 months' imprisonment plus a fine of up to £2,500 and a driving ban.
- The penalty for refusing to provide a specimen of breath, blood or urine for analysis is a maximum 6 months' imprisonment, up to £5000 fine and a driving ban of at least 12 months.
- Causing death by careless driving when under the influence of drink or drugs carries a maximum penalty of 14 years in prison, a minimum 2 year driving ban and a requirement.



Motorway Breakdowns and Emergencies

If your vehicle breaks down, think first of all other road users and:

- get your vehicle off the road if possible.
- warn other traffic by using your hazard warning lights if your vehicle is causing an obstruction.
- help other road users see you by wearing light-coloured or fluorescent clothing in daylight and reflective clothing at night or in poor visibility.
- put a warning triangle on the road at least 45 metres (147 feet) behind your broken-down vehicle on the same side of the road, or use other permitted warning devices if you have them. Always take great care when placing or retrieving them, but never use them on motorways.
- if possible, keep your sidelights on if it is dark or visibility is poor.
- do not stand (or let anybody else stand) between your vehicle and oncoming traffic.
- at night or in poor visibility do not stand where you will prevent other road users seeing your lights.

Additional rules for the motorway

If your vehicle develops a problem, leave the motorway at the next exit or pull into a service area. If you cannot do so, you should:

- pull on to the hard shoulder and stop as far to the left as possible, with your wheels turned to the left.

- try to stop near an emergency telephone (situated at approximately one-mile intervals along the hard shoulder).
- leave the vehicle by the left-hand door and ensure your passengers do the same. You **MUST** leave any animals in the vehicle or, in an emergency, keep them under proper control on the verge. Never attempt to place a warning triangle on a motorway.
- do not put yourself in danger by attempting even simple repairs.
- ensure that passengers keep away from the carriageway and hard shoulder, and that children are kept under control.
- walk to an emergency telephone on your side of the carriageway (follow the arrows on the posts at the back of the hard shoulder) – the telephone is free of charge and connects directly to the Highways Agency or the police. Use these in preference to a mobile phone. Always face the traffic when you speak on the phone.
- give full details to the Highways Agency or the police; also inform them if you are a vulnerable motorist such as disabled, older or travelling alone.
- return and wait near your vehicle (well away from the carriageway and hard shoulder).
- if you feel at risk from another person, return to your vehicle by a left-hand door and lock all doors. Leave your vehicle again as soon as you feel this danger has passed.

Before you rejoin the carriageway after a breakdown, build up speed on the hard shoulder and watch for a safe gap in the traffic. Be aware that other vehicles may be stationary on the hard shoulder.

If you cannot get your vehicle onto the hard shoulder:

- do not attempt to place any warning device on the carriageway.
- switch on your hazard warning lights.
- leave your vehicle only when you can safely get clear of the carriageway.

Disabled drivers. If you have a disability which prevents you from following the above advice you should:

- stay in your vehicle.
- switch on your hazard warning lights.
- display a 'Help' pennant or, if you have a car or mobile telephone, contact the emergency services and be prepared to advise them of your location.

Obstructions

If anything falls from your vehicle (or any other vehicle) on to the road, stop and retrieve it only if it is safe to do so.

Motorways. On a motorway do not try to remove the obstruction yourself. Stop at the next emergency telephone and call the Highways Agency or the police.

Incidents

Warning signs or flashing lights. If you see or hear emergency or incident support vehicles in the distance, be aware there may be an incident ahead. Police Officers and Highways Agency Traffic Officers may be required to work in the carriageway, for example dealing with debris, collisions or conducting rolling road blocks. Police officers will use rear-facing flashing red and blue lights and HA Traffic Officers will use rear-facing flashing red and amber lights in these situations. Watch out for such signals, slow down and be prepared to

stop. You **MUST** follow any directions given by Police officers or Traffic officers as to whether you can safely pass the incident or blockage.

When passing the scene of an incident or crash do not be distracted or slow down unnecessarily (for example if an incident is on the other side of a dual carriageway). This may cause a collision or traffic congestion, but see Rule 283 (The Highway Code).

If you are involved in a crash or stop to give assistance

- use your hazard warning lights to warn other traffic.
- ask drivers to switch off their engines and stop smoking.
- arrange for the emergency services to be called immediately with full details of the incident location and any casualties (on a motorway, use the emergency telephone which allows easy location by the emergency services. If you use a mobile phone, first make sure you have identified your location from the marker posts on the side of the hard shoulder).
- move uninjured people away from the vehicles to safety; on a motorway this should, if possible, be well away from the traffic, the hard shoulder and the central reservation.
- do not move injured people from their vehicles unless they are in immediate danger from fire or explosion.
- do not remove a motorcyclist's helmet unless it is essential to do so.
- be prepared to give first aid as shown in 'First aid on the road'.
- stay at the scene until emergency services arrive.

If you are involved in any other medical emergency on the motorway you should contact the emergency services in the same way.

Incidents involving dangerous goods

Vehicles carrying dangerous goods in packages will be marked with plain orange reflective plates. Road tankers and vehicles carrying tank containers of dangerous goods will have hazard warning plates (see 'Vehicle markings').

If an incident involves a vehicle containing dangerous goods, follow the advice in Rule 283 (The Highway Code) and, in particular:

- switch off engines and **DO NOT SMOKE**.
- keep well away from the vehicle and do not be tempted to try to rescue casualties as you yourself could become one.
- call the emergency services and give as much information as possible about the labels and markings on the vehicle. **DO NOT** use a mobile phone close to a vehicle carrying flammable loads.

Documentation 286 (The Highway Code)

If you are involved in a collision which causes damage or injury to any other person, vehicle, animal or property, you **MUST**:

- stop.
- give your own and the vehicle owner's name and address, and the registration number of the vehicle, to anyone having reasonable grounds for requiring them.
- if you do not give your name and address at the time of the collision, report it to the police as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case within 24 hours.

