

Practical tips to avoid
traffic accidents
(commuting and on-the-job)



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INTRODUCTION

In occupational terms, a traffic accident is considered a work-related accident in two specific situations:

- **“On-the-job” accident.** This refers to an accident which occurs while working, in other words while required to travel in order to perform your job. This type of accident mainly affects transport workers, such as: bus and delivery van drivers, travelling salespeople, etc.

Such accidents can be divided into two groups:

- Those which occur at the company, while travelling on internal routes to transfer people and goods from one area to another.
- Those which occur outside the company, when travelling on the national road network.
- **“Commuting” accident.** This is an accident which occurs when an employee is travelling between their home and their workplace. Such accidents are governed by Article 115 of the consolidated text of the General Social Security Act, Royal Decree 1/1994, of 20 June 1994.

In order for it to be classified as a "commuting" accident, the following must be taken into account:

- The departure or destination address must be the employee's regular abode.
- The route taken must always be the standard route.
- The journey must not be voluntarily extended or interrupted.

As traffic on highways and city streets becomes more intense, so it becomes more likely that accidents may happen while in transit, because although we all believe we know how to be a safe driver or pedestrian, the reality is quite different.

Such travel leads to tens of thousands of accidents, which considerably increase the number and cost of work-related accidents.

This manual is not intended to offer any new revelations, but simply aims to remind people of the basic driving principles which affect both pedestrians and cyclists, car drivers and motorcyclists. An employee's life may often depend on abiding by these rules.

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PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS



Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users, and so must take particular care when using or crossing the road, etc. They should plan their route properly. Do not take a shortcut which is in poor condition. Aim for the safest route, and always stick to this. Walk on the pavement, never along the edge of the carriageway. Avoid walking under anywhere there is a risk of falling objects.

Mobile phone use can cause distraction and increase accidents. Never cross a street while distracted. Do so only at designated crossings. If there are no crossings, cross at a corner. Always walk in a straight line, at right angles to the pavement, so that you are on the carriageway for the shortest time possible.

Walk at a good pace, without dallying, running, or bumping into other pedestrians. To cross a carriageway, wait on the pavement until the road is clear. Don't rush!



Look first to your left for any vehicles coming from that side. Once halfway across the carriageway, look to your right to see if there might be any vehicles approaching from that direction.

Do not shut yourself off from your surroundings by using a mobile phone with headphones, or by listening to music. This will prevent you from detecting possible dangers. The most common distractions affecting pedestrians when using their phone include sending text messages, consulting social media, taking photographs or videos.

An amber traffic light means that the red is about to switch to green. This gives time for pedestrians to get ready to cross, and for vehicles approaching the "crossing" to come to a halt. Never cross on an amber light.



Some less busy crossings use flashing amber lights, which mean that pedestrians can cross, and vehicles must give way. Before beginning to cross, pedestrians must allow nearby vehicles to pass, while the vehicle must stop and give way to the pedestrian if they have already begun to cross.

Where traffic is being directed by a police officer, road users must follow their instructions.

City squares must not be crossed diagonally. Users must go around them, following the pavement.

Never get into a moving vehicle. This is a reckless act which could cause serious injury. Do not try to climb aboard a public transport vehicle if it is overfull. Never cross in front of a parked vehicle, above all a larger vehicle, as you could be run over by another vehicle that you cannot see. You should ideally cross behind it, at a sensible distance to avoid being run over if the vehicle begins to reverse.

Always respect the barriers and signals at level crossings.

Don't trust in your eyes (as the distance and speed of the train may deceive you), or in your legs. The Law makes no allowance for recklessness.

Never walk along a motorway or expressway, or hitchhike on this type of highway.



PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

WALKING ALONG THE HIGHWAY

On highways, walk along the hard shoulder on the left-hand side. This will allow you to see vehicles heading towards you.

When crossing a highway, follow the same rules as for crossing a city street, taking particular care to look and listen out, since traffic here is more dangerous as the vehicles are travelling at higher speed.

On blind curves to the left, walk as close as possible to the drainage ditch. Take the same precaution when approaching the crest of a hill.



If the wind or passing vehicles raise a cloud of dust which hampers your view of the highway, or if visibility is affected by fog or rain, stay away from the edge of the carriageway.

During bad weather it is important to wear appropriate footwear (waterproof and non-slip) to avoid slipping.

TRAVELLING AT NIGHT

Pay attention to any signals (horn or lights) given by vehicle drivers to warn you of their approach.

A vehicle's lights indicate its proximity; on seeing them you should take care, moving as far as possible from the approaching danger.

When two vehicles cross, the danger is further increased by the fact that the drivers could dazzle one another and leave the carriageway or crash. If you are at their crossing point, you should move towards the drainage ditch and walk more slowly, waiting for the vehicles to pass.

You should ideally wear clearly visible clothing (reflective armband) or carry a torch.



PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

SAFETY TIPS FOR CYCLISTS



If there is a specific cycle path, you should only use this. If there isn't, ride along the right-hand side in the direction of travel, and as close as possible to the pavement or hard shoulder.

Always wear an approved or certified helmet when travelling on out-of-town roads.

For your own safety, ride on the right-hand side in the direction of travel, and as close as possible to the pavement or hard shoulder. Groups of cyclists should take particular care to avoid colliding with one another.

Cyclists are forbidden from using headphones or speaking on a mobile while cycling.

Article 54 of the Spanish General Traffic Regulation allows cyclists to travel in a group, but this does not mean bunched together as in a road race. Two bicycles may, in exceptional circumstances, ride abreast, as close as possible to the far right-hand side of the road, and riding one behind the other in sections where there is limited visibility or a build-up of traffic. On expressways they must only ride along the hard shoulder, without entering the carriageway at any time.

Cyclists should thus ride along the right-hand hard shoulder, if the surface is tarmacked and wide enough for each bicycle, and if not, should use only as much of the carriageway as is needed.



Never be towed by another vehicle - this is dangerous.

On long downhill stretches with bends, cyclists may move out from the hard shoulder onto the right-hand side of the carriageway, at all times riding on the right, and if they have a support vehicle, this may follow along the hard shoulder at low speed.

Always ride in a straight line, without zigzagging or making sudden turns. Do not weave between other vehicles that are travelling slowly or are temporarily at a standstill, as they could unexpectedly run you over.

Give advance signal of any planned turn.

Always signal any manoeuvre you are about to make. All other road users need to know your movements sufficiently in advance. Remember that when cycling, your body is the bumper.



At night, and when lights are mandatory on out-of-town roads, you must have a white or yellow light at the front and another red light at the rear, along with a reflective garment allowing drivers and other road users to identify you at a distance of 150 metres.

On arriving at a right or left turn onto another road, and when travelling in a group, once the first of the cyclists has begun to cross or has entered a roundabout, the remaining cyclists have right of way over motor vehicles.

For your own safety, allow anyone wishing to overtake to do so.

Don't act deaf. Stick to the right-hand side. A vehicle overtaking must keep as far as possible from the cyclist, and needs space to do so.

It is dangerous to carry packages or other bulky items that will prevent you from seeing clearly and controlling the handlebars with both hands.

Adults can carry a child up to the age of seven, but must have an additional, approved seat to do so.



Do not be in such a hurry as to disregard the instructions given by traffic lights and other road signs.

Only overtake another if you are sure that there are no dangers of any kind. Avoid doing so at a junction, on a bend, before the crest of a hill, or wherever you don't have full visibility.

There is a greater risk of skidding and falling on rainy, windy days. Ride more slowly and take particular care.

Be very careful on level crossings.

PEDESTRIANS AND CYCLISTS

Extreme caution is required when crossing a railway at a level crossing. If there is no barrier, you should stop, look and listen to make sure that no train is coming. If there are two tracks, with trains travelling in both directions, bear in mind that when one train passes, it could conceal another approaching from the opposite direction.

Keep your brakes, lights and tyres in good condition, along with all other mechanical parts of the bicycle in general, just as you would if using a machine in a factory.



SAFE DRIVING

MOTORCYCLES

Helmets are mandatory for motorcyclists. Pillion passengers must also wear a helmet. Remember that you don't have a spare head! Appropriate, hard-wearing clothing is advisable.

Motorways and expressways are off-limits for mopeds and mobility scooters (kerbside weight no more than 350 kilograms and speed limit of no more than 45 km/h on the flat).

The life of the motorcyclist and all others depends on the vehicle running properly. The steering, brakes, lights, wheels, etc. all require constant attention.

Remember the importance of reaching your destination, rather than speeding. You should therefore set off sufficiently in advance.

Rushing is never a good idea on the road.

Signal any manoeuvres you plan to make sufficiently in advance. If your motorcycle does not have indicator lights, signal with your arm.

Make it easier for anyone wishing to overtake you to do so. Remember that on a motorcycle, your own body is the bodywork, and in the event of an accident, the motorcyclist will come off worse.

If carrying a pillion passenger, warn them of the manoeuvres you will make. They could otherwise fall off behind.

You can carry a passenger over twelve years of age, with their own helmet, provided that the model of moped or motorcycle so allows. As an exception to the rule, you may also carry a child over the age of seven years, provided that you are the child's parent or guardian, or an adult authorised by a parent or guardian.

On city streets ride as close as possible to the right-hand pavement, in a straight line, without weaving between other vehicles.

Make sure to use the seatbelt in the case of motorcycles (with and without sidecar), mopeds, three-wheelers and lightweight four-wheeler vehicles fitted with a protective structure and seatbelts, as indicated on their technical inspection card, since both you and your passenger are obliged to make use of these devices, whether travelling in or out of town, although you are exempt from wearing a helmet.

If travelling in convoy, do so in the appropriate position, without attempting to jump the line. In the event of a tailback, wait in place for the vehicles ahead to begin moving.

SAFE DRIVING

CARS

Being careful is not enough. You also need to take into account other people's possible carelessness. If you plan your route well, you can avoid sections with heavy traffic.

Periodic car maintenance ensures that your vehicle will run smoothly.

At intersections with poor visibility, even if you have right of way, don't take it for granted. This will help avoid accidents caused by other reckless road users.



Never use your mobile phone or adjust the settings of your satnav or any other communications system or device while driving, unless there is a hands-free function, and do not wear headphones, earphones or similar apparatus. Lighting a cigarette or tuning the car radio are distractions known to have been a factor in traffic accidents causing injury.

If you have to refuel, remember that aside from the engine and lights, you must also switch off any electrical and electromagnetic systems that might be on, such as your radio and mobile phone.

Do not fit mechanisms, systems or any instrument to your vehicle in order to evade traffic controls (radar detectors), or make signals for this purpose.

If you encounter an emergency with an impact on traffic flow, you should drive only along the right-hand hard shoulder or the essential part of the carriageway, at abnormally low speed, provided that your vehicle weighs no more than 3,500 kg, and on the condition that you leave the road at the first possible exit, if driving along a motorway or expressway.

On reaching a Give Way or Stop sign, you must give way to vehicles driving along the road that has priority, whether this requirement is marked by a road sign or road markings.

Never leave your vehicle without putting on your hi vis reflective vest, in the event of an emergency that forces you to stop on the carriageway or hard shoulder of an out-of-town road. All occupants should ideally wear this vest.

Squares, mandatory anti-clockwise direction

On arriving at a town square, roundabout or intersection which has a monument, garden, streetlamp, fountain, traffic island, central reservation or similar in the middle, drive on the right-hand side (with the traffic island on your left in the direction of travel, unless indicated otherwise).



Level crossings

Level crossings (railway or tram) are a special category of junction. In the approach phase you must:

- Look at the signals (signpost or light).
- Take particular caution.
- Slow down (in case you need to stop your vehicle) to below the speed limit.
- Do not overtake (this is prohibited).

As you position yourself to enter the level crossing, bear in mind the following:

- If the level crossing is closed or has the barriers or half-barriers in motion (moving down or up), vehicles should stop one behind the other, on the right-hand side of the carriageway corresponding to their direction of travel, until the crossing opens.
- Before crossing the track, make sure there is no risk that the vehicle could stop or be left motionless (because of traffic or for other reasons) within the level crossing itself.

SAFE DRIVING

Right of way

As for right of way, the general rules are that a driver required to give way to another must not begin or continue their forward motion or manoeuvre, nor resume such movements, without first ensuring that this would not cause the vehicle with priority to make a sudden change of direction or speed, and must indicate sufficiently in advance that they will in fact give way, by their form of driving, in particular by gradually slowing down.

However, even if you have the right of way, you should try to allow vehicles to enter the road you are on if they wish, provided that this would not force you suddenly to change speed or direction (by lifting your foot off the accelerator or braking gently).

Right of way is not an absolute right over other users.

You should in particular allow other vehicles progressively to join the lane you are in or to cross the road, in the event of traffic conditions giving rise to long tailbacks, and when vehicles are moving very slowly. Nonetheless, drivers attempting to join or cross must not do so unless they are certain that they are being let in, by means of hand signals or notable deceleration.

Cases where road users on the right have priority

As a general rule at junctions, you can always check right of way by following the corresponding signposts or road markings, and if there are none, you are required to give way to vehicles coming from the right, except in the following cases, where priority is given to...

- Vehicles travelling on a paved road, over those turning off an unpaved road.
- Vehicles that travel on rails (trams), over all other users.
- At roundabouts, those who are already on the circular road, over those wishing to enter the roundabout.



Seatbelts

Seatbelts must be used, whether travelling on a highway or in town.



Speed

All drivers are obliged to abide by the established speed limit, and furthermore to take into account their own physical and mental condition, the characteristics and state of the road, the vehicle and its load, ambient, weather and traffic conditions, and in general all applicable circumstances at the time in question, in order to adjust the speed of their vehicle accordingly. They should therefore always be able to stop within the limits of their field of view, and in response to any obstacle which could arise.

The speed limits for cars and motorbikes established in the Spanish Traffic Code in all cases are:

50 km/h on urban streets. 90 km/h on single-carriageway out-of-town roads with no hard shoulder. 100 km/h on dual-carriageway out-of-town roads or those with a hard shoulder measuring 1.50 m. 120 km/h on motorways.

The right-hand side of the carriageway is where you are safer. Keep to the right unless, and only unless, you need to overtake another vehicle.

SAFE DRIVING

Overtaking

To overtake another vehicle you must look in your rearview mirror to ensure that no one is trying to overtake you. First estimate the speed of the vehicle you intend to pass, and whether the distance to the vehicle behind will allow you to overtake. Next, use your left indicator to signal your overtaking manoeuvre, accelerate and proceed to overtake in the shortest time possible. Having completed the manoeuvre, rejoin the right-hand lane without turning too sharply.

If another vehicle wants to pass, you must allow it to overtake so as to complete the manoeuvre in as short a time as possible, sticking to the right-hand side of the lane, and slowing down if necessary.

As soon as you realise that the vehicle behind plans to overtake you, you should use the right-hand indicator to signal if the road is clear for them to overtake, or the left-hand indicator to tell them to wait, if there are oncoming vehicles.

When taking a bend with limited visibility, stay as close as possible to the right-hand side, as another oncoming vehicle could appear, encroaching on the lane you are driving along.

When driving behind another vehicle, always keep a safe distance behind, in case the vehicle in front brakes suddenly. Do not place too much trust in your brakes.

If you have to decelerate to swerve or stop, do so gradually rather than sharply, and indicate your intentions sufficiently in advance, to avoid being rammed by the vehicle behind.





Tunnels and underpasses

If the traffic situation inside a tunnel or underpass could foreseeably force the driver to stop inside, they are obliged to wait outside behind the other vehicle in the corresponding lane, until their path is clear.

Drivers must abide by the rules in tunnels and underpasses. They should also use their headlights.

Drivers must abide by the rules in tunnels and underpasses, which forbid stopping, parking, U-turns or reversing. They should also use their headlights and follow the instructions of traffic lights and variable-message panels, as well as any other instructions issued by public address or any other means.

If an emergency forces you to stop inside a tunnel, you must switch off your engine, turn on your hazard lights, and leave your sidelights on. In the case of a fault which would allow you to continue, carry on driving as far as the tunnel or underpass exit. You should otherwise direct your vehicle towards the closest established emergency area in your direction of travel, and if there is no such area, position your vehicle as close as possible to the right-hand side of the carriageway, place the emergency triangles, and request help at the closest S.O.S. post.

In the event of fire, pull your vehicle over as far as possible to the right, switch off the engine, leave the ignition key in and the doors open. All occupants should leave the vehicle and head to the closest refuge or exit in the opposite direction from the fire, without walking on the carriageway.

However, if the vehicle is brought to a stop because of traffic requirements, none of the occupants should alight. You should temporarily turn on your hazard lights to warn others, stop as far as possible from the vehicle in front, and switch off your engine.

If there is traffic in both directions, overtaking is not allowed, unless there is more than one lane in your direction of travel, which you can use to overtake without encroaching on the oncoming lane.

If you do not intend to overtake, you must at all times remain a safe distance behind the vehicle in front, at least 100 metres, or a time interval of 4 seconds. For vehicles that weigh more than 3,500 kg, the distance will be 150 m, or a time interval of 6 seconds.

SAFE DRIVING

Respect for cyclists

Remember that you must slow down, and even come to a stop, when approaching bicycles travelling in the vicinity of cycle-only paths and their intersections, both in and out of town.

If you arrive at a roundabout or a right or left turn together with a group of cyclists, bear in mind that if the first of them has already begun their manoeuvre, you must give way to them until the last cyclist has passed by, as they enjoy right of way over your vehicle.

On reaching a roundabout or turning, the cyclists will have right of way over your vehicle.



ALCOHOL AND TRAFFIC

Alcohol is not a good driving companion, and is all too often the cause of traffic accidents. Although on average only 4% of drivers drive when under the effect of alcoholic drinks, they are estimated to be responsible for between 40% and 50% of fatal accidents.

New levels of alcohol in blood have been in force since May 1999 (0.5 or 0.3 grams/litre, depending on the specific case).

While it is clear that alcohol abuse has a negative impact on health, its influence on traffic accidents is entirely beyond all disputes. It is estimated that one in every five deaths caused by alcohol in Spain are connected with traffic accidents, accounting for some 4,000 fatalities per year.

Meanwhile, various studies of the Spanish population suggest that alcohol is very heavily involved in traffic accidents: between 40% and 80% of those killed had levels of more than 0.5 grams of alcohol per litre of blood.

Alcohol has numerous effects on drivers, which in the interests of brevity we will not mention here. We will nonetheless emphasise the most important, given their impact on the number of traffic accidents.

Alcohol causes a sense of euphoria, which makes drivers reckless, while in parallel -which is what makes it so serious- it reduces the capacity to react and judge distance and speed, as well narrowing the field of view.

The time which passes between the moment when a danger is noticed by the driver, and when they put their foot on the brake, is known as the "reaction time". During this period the vehicle continues to travel at the same speed as before. Now, this reaction time is significantly longer if the driver has drunk alcohol.



SAFE DRIVING

Legal limits on alcohol in blood

Royal Decree 1428/2003, of 21 November 2003, approving the Spanish General Traffic Regulation, establishes:

- 0.5 grams of alcohol per litre of blood, or 0.25 milligrams of alcohol per litre of breath, for drivers of private vehicles. The maximum level of 0.5 grams of alcohol in blood also affects cyclists, who are now specifically covered by the new traffic regulations.
- 0.3 grams of alcohol per litre of blood, or 0.15 milligrams of alcohol per litre of breath for drivers of goods vehicles with a maximum authorised weight of more than 3,500 kg, passenger transport vehicles with more than nine seats or those in public service, or carrying school pupils or children, dangerous goods, or those used for emergency services or special transportation.
- The same limit of 0.3 grams of alcohol per litre of blood, or 0.15 milligrams of alcohol per litre of breath applies to novice drivers during the first two years after they receive their driving licence.

Tests of alcohol in blood

Law enforcement officers are entitled to perform alcohol tests on all vehicle drivers. They can also require a test of any other road users involved in any traffic accident.





When can I be called on to undergo a test?

- Alcohol tests may be preventive in nature, and can be performed on any driver chosen at random.
- They may also be used in the case of those who show signs of driving under the influence of alcohol, based on their actions or statements.
- As a result of committing any type of traffic violation.
- After being involved in an accident (whether as victim or cause).

Can you refuse to undergo the test?

We would not recommend this, as the following will happen: first of all, the law enforcement officers can immobilise the vehicle and will turn the driver over to the Examining Magistrate. A refusal to undergo the test (Article 380 of the Spanish Penal Code) is considered serious contempt of authority, punishable by between six months and one year in prison. As you can see, you are better off not refusing.

However, even if despite having refused to undergo the test the judge finds in your favour, stating that there is no criminal liability, the matter does not end there. The authorities will then launch the corresponding penalty proceedings, since Article 14.2 of Royal Legislative Decree 6/2015, as amended, states: "Vehicle drivers are obliged to undergo tests to detect alcohol or the presence of drugs in their body, which will be conducted by the law enforcement officers responsible for traffic supervision, in performing the functions entrusted to them." All other road users involved in a traffic accident are subject to the same obligation, as well as those who have committed a violation of any of the rules established in this legislation.

It should be pointed out that the ultimate effects of the same quantity of alcohol vary considerably from one person to another. There are a great many factors influencing this variability, such as: gender, weight, age, physical condition, time of day, when the alcohol was ingested, etc. This makes it impossible to establish any hard and fast rules. Each individual must set a limit based on a sensible approach.

Testing positive for alcohol is classified as a "very serious" administrative violation, subject to a fine and disqualification from driving for a period of up to 3 months. According to the aforementioned Act 17/2005, the perpetrator will also have 6 points taken off their licence.

And they will not be allowed to continue driving until the quantity of alcohol has dropped to the permitted level. The officer will immobilise their vehicle, unless someone else can take the wheel, having first undergone an alcohol test.

SAFE DRIVING

What are my rights?

If the precision breathalyser indicates a level above the permitted figure, the driver is entitled to a second test, ten minutes after the first. If this is still positive, the driver can demand a second alcohol test and blood sample.



The Penal Code

It should also be borne in mind that the Spanish Penal Code penalises driving under the effects of alcohol and other drugs and/or dangerous driving, on the following terms:

Article 379. Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Any person who drives a motor vehicle or moped under the influence of intoxicating drugs, narcotics or psychotropic substances or alcoholic beverages shall be penalised by imprisonment from three to six months, or a fine of six to twelve months in duration, and as the case may be, community service of 31 to 90 days, and will in all cases be disqualified from driving motor vehicles and mopeds for a period of more than one and up to four years.

Article 381. Dangerous driving.

Any person who drives a motor vehicle or moped dangerously, specifically endangering the life or safety of people, will be penalised by imprisonment from six months to two years and be disqualified from driving motor vehicles and mopeds for a period of more than one and up to six years.

Driving will in all cases be considered to be dangerous, specifically endangering the life or safety of people, in cases of driving under the effects of alcohol with high levels of alcohol in the blood, and disproportionately excessive speed with reference to the established limits.

DRIVING EMERGENCIES

This chapter offers certain tips about how you should react to certain emergency situations that could arise while driving.

It is important to have a response prepared in advance, since the imminent danger means there is no time to stop and think what you should do.

You need to act as swiftly as the danger itself arises.

If for any reason you find yourself forced to stop and alight from your vehicle on a motorway, expressway or highway, you must put your hi vis vest on first.

If the vehicle needs to remain stationary, even if for a short period of time, you must place the reflective triangles in front and behind, at a distance of 50 metres.

IF YOUR BRAKES FAIL WHEN DRIVING DOWNHILL

Intermittently push down on the brake pedal quickly and frequently, applying the handbrake progressively, but NOT brusquely. Immediately change down to a lower gear to take advantage of the engine's braking effect, by speeding up even if suddenly. And if absolutely necessary, turn off the road.

IF A TYRE BLOWS WHEN DRIVING AT HIGH SPEED

Do not brake. Hold the steering wheel firmly with both hands and turn it sufficiently to keep the vehicle in the same direction, while lifting your foot off the accelerator, gradually and not brusquely. Allow the engine to gradually slow the car down, and once it has lost speed, progressively apply the brake and turn off the highway if possible, to change the tyre.

IF YOUR CAR SKIDS ON A WET ROAD SURFACE WHEN DRIVING AT HIGH SPEED

Do not brake or lift your foot off the accelerator. Immediately turn the steering wheel in the same direction as the rear wheels are skidding, and as soon as the car begins to straighten, turn in the opposite direction. Ease slightly off the accelerator, and once the skid has corrected, reduce speed by braking.

IF DAZZLED BY ANOTHER CAR'S LIGHTS

If, although you have flashed with your lights, the other driver does not respond, then slow down or even stop in order to avoid hitting vehicles or pedestrians travelling in the same direction as you. Never look straight into the dazzling headlights. Turn your head slightly, looking towards the right-hand side of the highway.

DRIVING EMERGENCIES

IF A CAR APPROACHES YOU TRAVELLING THE WRONG WAY

Beep loudly on the horn and turn on your headlights. If the other driver does not react to these signals, turn sharply to avoid it, even if you go off the carriageway.

IF A HEAD-ON COLLISION SEEMS UNAVOIDABLE

Brake hard and remove the ignition key to avert the possibility of a fire. Drop to one side to avoid the rigid impact from the steering wheel, but if possible, do not let go of it. The front seat passenger should bend down with their arms on the dashboard, and the rear passengers should lie down, with their back against the front seats, protecting their head with their arms. The best protection is to wear a SEATBELT.

IF A CAR CATCHES FIRE

Switch off the ignition and turn off towards the side of the highway, braking and getting all passengers out of the car. Put out the flames with the extinguisher, a blanket, clothes, soil or sand, but never with water. If the fire spreads close to the petrol tank, move away quickly to avoid the danger of explosion.

IF YOUR CAR FALLS INTO WATER

Try to get out through a door or window while the car is still floating. If the car sinks nose down, climb out through the rear window, smashing it with a hard object or by punching it hard in the middle. The car door will not open until the water pressure is the same inside and out, in other words once the car is almost completely flooded. At this point, take a deep breath and open the door.



IF YOUR CAR'S ENGINE STALLS ON A LEVEL CROSSING

Put it in second gear immediately, release the clutch, and operate the starter motor continuously.

IF YOUR HEADLIGHTS SUDDENLY FAIL AT NIGHT

Come slowly to a stop as soon as possible, and if you can see the highway, move off to one side, signalling your car in advance. In such an emergency, a spark from the instrument panel is the key alarm sign. If a fuse blows, you need to know where it is and how to replace it.

IF YOUR CAR'S WINDSCREEN SHATTERS, LEAVING YOU WITH NO VISIBILITY FOR TENTHS OF A SECOND

With due caution, quickly give the windscreen a sharp punch, to open up a gap allowing you to see the road.



IF ANOTHER CAR APPROACHES IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION WHILE A CAR IS TRYING TO OVERTAKE YOU

Use hand signals or your indicators to tell them to abandon the manoeuvre. If they do not comply, there are two things you can do: reduce or increase your speed. If you are sure that the driver coming from behind will pass you, decelerate sharply and head off the highway onto the right-hand hard shoulder, as the driver overtaking you will tend to swerve in front of you, which could trigger a three-vehicle collision. If they have not finished overtaking and the oncoming car is travelling at high speed, then you should ideally accelerate to leave space behind your vehicle.

DRIVING EMERGENCIES

IF YOU TAKE A CURVE AT EXCESSIVE SPEED

Brake several times. While taking the curve, accelerate slightly. If you notice your car begin to skid, while keeping your right foot on the accelerator, brake slightly with your left foot. Stay on your side of the road. At night, always drive more slowly, at a speed which would in all cases allow you to brake within the distance you can see. This is particularly important on bends, as your headlights will dazzle drivers straight ahead.

IF A PERSON FALLS TO THE GROUND IN FRONT OF YOUR WHEELS

Do not slam on the brakes! You should in any event brake but then immediately lift your foot off the pedal. If the braked wheels run the person over, that would be much worse than if they are spinning. There are three situations in which you should not slam on the brakes: in the event of a blowout, if the car skids, and if there is a pedestrian under the wheels.

IF YOU ARE FORCED TO STOP AT NIGHT

Make sure you have your emergency triangles and hi vis vest easily to hand, under your seat for example, since if you have them in the boot you will waste precious seconds looking for them. Remember that you must not leave your car without first putting on your hi vis vest.

Make every effort to park your car on the shoulder of the highway, to perform a repair or wait for help to arrive. Put on your hi vis vest and place the triangles in front of and behind your vehicle, at a distance of 50 metres.

IF YOU ARE FORCED TO LEAVE THE CARRIAGEWAY

Do not brake sharply or try to turn back onto the carriageway straight away, since this could cause your vehicle to turn over. Take your foot off the accelerator and hold the steering wheel firmly to keep control of the car, turning slightly to the left. Press the brake pedal softly several times. Once the car has slowed or stopped, and after checking that no vehicles are coming in any direction, carefully return to the highway.

IF A WASP FLIES INTO YOUR CAR

Do not become agitated or lose your nerve, since nervousness could cause an accident. Do not take your eyes off the road or your hands off the wheel. Calmly stop your car off the highway, and try to get rid of the insect. A wasp sting will always be less dangerous than the tree you could crash into if you lose control of your vehicle!

IF A DOG CROSSES THE HIGHWAY

As a general rule, you should not swerve or brake suddenly to avoid a dog or other small animal (chicken, cat, rabbit, etc.) which crosses your path. To avoid running it over, look far ahead to spot the animal as soon as possible, and beep your horn.

FIRST AID IN THE EVENT OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

Traffic accidents are the most common kind, and cause the greatest number of victims. They are so frequent and widespread as to justify the need to train a great many people who can, when the time comes, provide assistance and first aid as effectively as possible to accident victims of any kind.

Drivers and other road users involved in a traffic accident are obliged to take the necessary measures to assist or request assistance for any victims, to cooperate in avoiding any further danger or harm, to restore safe driving conditions as far as possible, clarify the events and collaborate with the public authorities and their officers.

Bearing in mind that the first person who approaches an accident victim is almost always the driver or passenger of the vehicle passing by the accident site at that time, their attitude is therefore not of vital importance. The way in which the first aider acts is, instead, often decisive.

The right approach by the person providing first aid to a traffic accident victim is of huge importance and significance, since this can reduce fatality rates by approximately 30%, with the same impact on serious consequences.



TRAFFIC SAFETY-RELATED MEASURES

1. Park your own car off the road and switch on your hazard lights. At night, point your dipped headlights towards the accident site. Put on your hi vis vest and step out of the vehicle to place the triangles in line with the direction of the carriageway, 50 metres from your vehicle in each case.
2. Put out any fire in the damaged vehicle, using sand, soil or an extinguisher.
3. Turn off the engine of the damaged vehicle, if it is running, using the ignition key or by disconnecting the battery, to avoid fire and explosion of any petrol that may have spilled.
4. Wedge the wheels and apply the brakes of the damaged car, to prevent it from sliding during the efforts to remove any possible victims.



5. Mark and secure the accident site. Do this as follows:
 - If possible, turn on the hazard lights, whether by day or by night.
 - Turn on the dipped headlights if headlights are required because of the time, weather or ambient conditions.
 - Place the hazard warning devices or other similarly effective elements.
 - Aim to move the vehicle or any load that has fallen onto the road surface off to the side, or wherever it will cause the least obstacle to traffic. If you cannot keep the carriageway clear, leave it as safe as possible.

FIRST AID IN THE EVENT OF TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS

VICTIM-RELATED MEASURES

1. Carefully release the victims, removing them from the damaged vehicle as best you can, but without pulling them out suddenly or violently, as far as possible. One useful approach for accident victims in the front seats is often the Rautek method, as follows:
 - Open the car door fully; the rescuer should position themselves behind the accident victim, on the road, slip their arms through those of the victim, and grab their inner arm (with reference to the car) by the elbow and wrist.
 - Bend backwards from the waist to shift the accident victim off the seat, support them on your knees, and then place them on the ground, lying on their side if they have lost consciousness, so as to help expel any possible vomit which could have built up in the mouth and could asphyxiate them.
2. Provide first aid according to the type of injury encountered, and the resources available.



3. Seek medical assistance from the closest emergency service facility with the utmost urgency, using the quickest means available, such as the S.O.S. posts.
4. Focus your attention and assistance first of all on unconscious victims or those with serious breathing problems or massive bleeding.
5. Evacuate the victims, taking any precautions that their injuries require. They should never be piled like cargo into another vehicle in the aim of getting them quickly to a medical centre.



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