

Refresher Driving Training



Road Safety

Produced with the support of the  
Department for Transport

# INTRODUCTION

Driving a car is an essential part of personal, family and work life for over 30 million people in the UK. Between us, we drive some 2.5 billion miles each year. It can be enjoyable and pleasant, but also stressful and dangerous.

Car drivers in the UK are involved in well over 100,000 crashes each year in which around 2,600 people are killed, 26,000 seriously injured and 250,000 slightly injured. This is the tip of an iceberg. Tens of thousands more people are taken to hospital, or treated by first aid or GPs in unreported crashes.

Of course, it is not always the driver who is at fault, but our ability to anticipate and cope with the mistakes and misbehaviour of other people is just as important as our own driving skills and attitudes.

Everyone develops their own driving style and habits over time, and we often do not realise (or do not want to accept) that we could improve our driving, even though this would make driving safer, less stressful and more enjoyable.

# SECTION 1 – KEY DRIVING SAFETY MESSAGES

## Road Safety Facts and Figures

**On average, every day in 2005:**

- Almost 9 people were killed on the road.
- Almost 80 people were seriously injured.
- In total, 750 people were killed or injured.

Road User	Deaths	% of all road deaths	Casualties	% of all road casualties
Car Users	1,675	52	178,302	65
Pedestrians	671	21	33,281	12.5
Motorcyclists	569	18	24,824	9
Pedal Cyclists	148	5	16,561	6
Goods Vehicle Users	109	4	8,891	3
Bus/Coach Users	9	0.5	7,920	3
Other	20	0.5	1,238	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,201</b>		<b>271,017</b>	

### Key Facts

90% of road crashes involve at least one car driver.

Just over half of the people killed and two-thirds of those injured are car drivers or passengers.

One in five of those killed are pedestrians.

Almost one in five people killed on the road are motorcyclists.

Most road accidents occur on urban roads.

Most road accidents occur in daylight and good driving conditions.

Crashes which occur on rural roads are often more severe because of the higher speeds involved.

The most dangerous hours on the roads on weekdays are the rush hours from 3.00 to 6.00pm, and then 7.00 to 9.00am.

Virtually all (95%) road accidents involve some human error, and in three-quarters, the human is solely to blame.

Most road accidents could be prevented with care and common sense.

## Our Driving Habits


Surveys reveal a list of things that drivers admit doing and/or that they find annoying about other drivers. The same poor driving habits come up in survey after survey:



“Focus On” factsheets on the main causes of road crashes are included in Section 4.



Driving while using a mobile phone, no seat belt



Map reading while driving



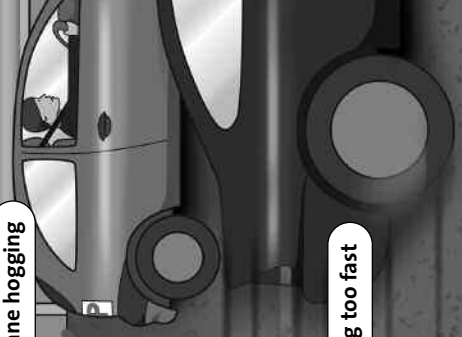
Road rage



Lane hogging




Changing lanes with no indication



Driving too fast

## An Illustrated Guide to Common Driver Faults



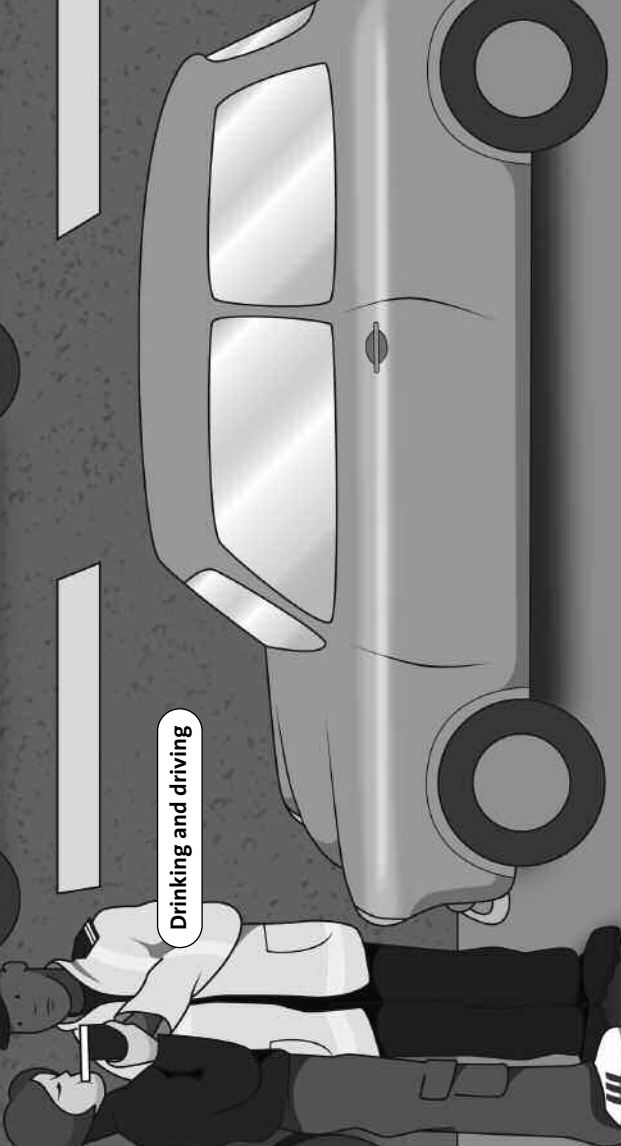
Smoking while driving, one hand on the wheel



Eating while driving



Driving while tired



Drinking and driving

## Key Reasons to take Refresher Training

### To Enjoy Your Driving

You'll enjoy driving more and feel much less stressed. Your passengers will prefer being driven by you, and children who suffer from motion sickness will be less likely to feel ill, because the drive will be so much smoother and safer.

### To Improve Your Confidence

You'll feel much more confident, both in your own driving and in your ability to deal with the behaviour of other drivers.

### To Reduce Your Crash Risk

It will help you to avoid making mistakes and mis-judgements that lead to crashes, and help you cope with the mistakes of other road users.

### To Improve Your Fuel Consumption

You'll spend less money on fuel, and cause less harm to the environment, because your driving will be smoother and more systematic, with less sharp acceleration and braking and better use of gears.

### To Ensure Less Wear and Tear on Your Vehicle

Your car (possibly the second most expensive item you own) will last longer and may have a higher resale value.

### To Lower Your Insurance Premiums

You may be able receive insurance discounts – make sure you tell your insurer what extra training you've taken. At the very least, it will help you keep your no claims bonus intact.

### To Improve Career Prospects

Many jobs involve driving, and having extra driver training and/or qualifications can improve your CV and help to distinguish you from other applicants.

### To Meet People

By joining a driving group, you can meet other like-minded people.

### To Meet the Challenge

A reason often given by people who take advanced driver training is the challenge of proving that they are a driver of the highest standard. Some want a formal qualification, which can be useful when job hunting.



## Refresher Driver Training Self Assessment Questionnaire



	YES	NO
Have you had an accident while driving in the last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you had a near miss while driving in the last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have any penalty points on your licence?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you been stopped by the Police while driving in the last 3 years?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has it been more than 5 years since you read the Highway Code?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has it been more than 3 years since you had any driver training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you got children who are, or soon will be, learning to drive?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you, or are you about to, change the type of car you drive? (for example, to an automatic car)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the type of driving you do changing? (for example, because you have changed your job)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your passengers make comments about your driving?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you think other drivers are to blame whenever there is an accident, near miss or conflict situation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you often feel anxious or stressed when driving?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you become impatient and try to intimidate other drivers to get out of your way?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you sometimes find you have no clear recollection of the road along which you have just been travelling?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you break the speed limit?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you sometimes fail to notice pedestrians or pedal cyclists until the last moment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel competitive when driving?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you feel more anxious when driving in heavy traffic, bad weather or at night?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you find driving more stressful or difficult than you used to do?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you get angered by other drivers and remonstrate with them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you fail to check rear view mirrors before pulling out or changing lanes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you answered 'yes' to any of these questions, you should consider taking some refresher driver training.**

# Focus on Inappropriate Speed

At higher speeds, we have less time to identify and react to hazards. It takes longer to stop. If there is a crash, it is more severe, causing greater injury to the occupants and any pedestrian or rider we hit.

Excessive speed contributes to 26% of collisions in which someone is killed, 18% of crashes resulting in a serious injury and 12% of all injury collisions. This means that around 900 people are killed each year on our roads because drivers and riders travel too fast, and over 6,000 are seriously injured.

About two-thirds of crashes in which people are killed or injured happen on roads with a speed limit of 30 mph or less.

At 30 mph, a car travels 44 feet (3 car lengths) every second. Even in good conditions, the difference in stopping distance between 30 mph and 35 mph is an extra 21 feet, more than 2 car lengths. Even a small amount above the limit makes a big difference.

- Hit by a car at 20 mph, 1 out of 40 pedestrians will be killed  
97% will survive
- Hit by a car at 30 mph, 2 out of 10 pedestrians will be killed  
80% will survive
- Hit by a car at 35 mph, 5 out of 10 pedestrians will be killed  
50% will survive
- Hit by a car at 40 mph, 9 out of 10 pedestrians will be killed  
10% will survive

Unfortunately, most drivers exceed the speed limit at some time. In one study, over 70% of drivers admitted speeding; other studies have found even higher figures – up to 85%.

Drivers who speed are more likely to be involved in crashes. They are also more likely to commit other offences such as close following, red-light running, and drinking and driving.

Drivers' perception of what is a safe speed on a particular road will often differ to that of pedestrians, pedal cyclists and horse riders using the road.

## Further Information

[www.rospa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety)

*click on 'Driving' and then 'Speed'*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

*click on 'Road Safety Campaigns', then 'Slow Down', then 'Printed Media' and then 'Speed: Know your Limits'*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

*click on 'Road Safety Campaigns' and then 'Slow Down'*

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Employers', then 'Driving for Work: Safer Speeds'*

[www.stoppingdistances.org.uk](http://www.stoppingdistances.org.uk)

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Top Ten Tips'*

# Focus on Drinking and Driving

Around 11 people are killed and 40 seriously injured in drink drive crashes every week. It's not just the drivers who suffer, but also their passengers, people in other vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists, and the families of everyone involved.

The legal drink drive limit is 80mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood. However driving ability can be impaired at blood alcohol levels below 80mg/100ml and the only really safe advice is to never mix drinking and driving. Furthermore, it is possible for a person to be charged with driving when under the influence of drink or drugs even though their blood alcohol level may be below 80mg/100ml if, in the opinion of a police officer, they are 'unfit' to drive. The penalties are the same as for the 'over the limit' driver.

Every year, about 90,000 people are convicted of drinking and driving, and face an automatic driving ban of at least 12 months, a large fine and possible imprisonment.

## Alcohol

- makes drivers over-confident and more likely to take risks
- slows their reactions
- increases stopping distances
- impairs judgement of speed, distance and time
- affects vision
- makes co-ordination more difficult
- reduces the ability to concentrate.

Even a small amount, below the legal limit, seriously affects the ability to drive safely.

We absorb alcohol very quickly, but it takes about an hour for 1 unit to be removed by a healthy liver. The number of units of alcohol in a drink depends on its size and alcoholic strength by volume (abv). Drinkers cannot be sure how much alcohol they are consuming because the alcoholic strength of drinks varies enormously, as does the size of measures.

The speed with which alcohol is absorbed into the bloodstream varies depending on a person's size, age, weight and gender and whether they have eaten. The same amount of alcohol will give different blood alcohol levels in different people.

## Morning After

Many drivers are caught the morning after they have been drinking. It takes several hours for alcohol to disappear from the body, so someone who was drinking late the previous evening could still be over the limit on their way to work the next morning.

Nearly half (44%) of drivers questioned in a Home Office survey, admitted to having driven after drinking some alcohol in the previous year. 1 in 8 said they had driven when they thought they were over the limit.

## Further Information

[www.rosipa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety)

*click on 'Driving' and then 'Drinking and Driving'*

[www.rosipa.com](http://www.rosipa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Employers', then 'Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs'*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

*click on 'Road Safety Campaigns' and then 'Drink Driving'*

# Focus on Drugs and Driving

Driving while unfit through drugs, whether illegal or prescribed or over-the-counter medicines, is an offence that carries the same penalties as drink driving. The Police can, and do, conduct roadside tests to assess whether a driver is impaired.

## Illegal Drugs

Around 18% of people killed in road crashes have traces of illegal drugs in their blood, with cannabis being the most common. 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 after use.

The effects can last for hours or even days, and vary from person to person. They can be difficult for an individual to detect. There is a high risk of falling asleep through severe fatigue afterwards.

## Medicines

It is difficult to predict whether a particular medicine will affect a person's ability to drive safely, and if so, how and for how long. 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.

A person's driving ability can also be affected by the medical condition for which they are taking the medicine.

Many over-the-counter medicines, including those for coughs, colds, flu and hay fever, cause unwanted drowsiness. Warnings about drowsiness are not always clear so, if the label says, "may cause drowsiness", assume that it will do so.

## Alcohol and Drugs

Taking alcohol and drugs together is even worse as their effects combine and impairment can be multiplied.

## Further Information

[www.rospa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety)

*click on 'Driving' and then 'Drinking and Driving'*

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Employers', then 'Driving for Work: Drink and Drugs'*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

*click on 'Road Safety Campaigns' and then 'Drug Driving'*

## Focus on Inexperience

Over 3,000 car drivers aged under 25 years of age are killed or seriously injured on Britain's roads each year. Nearly 38,800 people are killed or injured each year in collisions involving at least one driver with less than two years post-test driving experience.

Learner drivers have few accidents because they are always under supervision. But, once they have passed their test, and can drive unsupervised, their chances of crashing increase dramatically. Young drivers are much more likely to crash than experienced drivers.

- 1 in 5 drivers crash within their first year of driving.
- 1 in 3 male drivers aged between 17 and 20 years crash in the first two years after passing their test. An 18 year old driver is more than three times as likely to be involved in a crash as a 48 year old driver.
- Young drivers are more likely to be involved in high speed crashes, single vehicle crashes involving losing control, crashes in the dark and crashes when overtaking and negotiating bends.

## Why?

### Lack of Experience

This is one of the main reasons. As new drivers gain more driving experience their accident rate begins to fall.

### Attitude

Young drivers, especially men, tend to be over confident and are more likely to drive in risky ways: too fast, too close to the vehicle in front and dangerous overtaking. They consistently rate their own driving as above average and are more likely to regard 'good' driving as the ability to master the controls of the car at higher speeds.

### Hazard Perception

Young drivers often have excellent vehicle control skills and fast reactions. But, they are poor at identifying potential hazards and assessing risk, and tend to overestimate their ability to avoid the hazard and accident. It takes new drivers up to two seconds longer to react to hazardous situations than more experienced drivers.

### Peer Pressure

Young drivers, especially men, who carry friends, are more likely to have a crash.

### Gender

Novice male drivers have higher accident rates than novice female drivers, and are more likely to commit driving offences.

### Further Information

[www.rosipa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety)

*click on 'Driving' and then 'Young Drivers'*

[www.getinlane.com](http://www.getinlane.com)

[www.helpingLdrivers.com](http://www.helpingLdrivers.com)

[www.passplus.org.uk](http://www.passplus.org.uk)

# Focus on Falling Asleep at the Wheel

Almost one in five crashes on motorways or other monotonous roads resulting in death or injury are sleep-related.

Sleep-related crashes are most likely to happen:

- On long journeys on monotonous roads, such as motorways
- Between 2am and 6am
- Between 2pm and 4pm (especially after eating, or taking even one alcoholic drink)
- After having less sleep than normal
- After drinking alcohol
- If taking medicines that cause drowsiness
- On journeys home after night shifts.

They are more likely to be serious because the driver is unable to brake or swerve before the impact.

The vast majority of sleep related crashes involve male drivers.

Human beings need to sleep. The longer someone remains awake, the greater the need to sleep and the more difficult it is to resist falling asleep. Sleep will eventually overpower the strongest intentions and efforts to stay awake.

Most of the things that drivers do to fight off sleepiness when driving are ineffective for more than around 10 minutes. They are only useful in an emergency to provide time for the driver to find somewhere safe to stop and rest.

The only measures that have an effect in reducing sleepiness when driving are taking a nap of around 15 minutes and taking at least 150mg of caffeine (at least two cups of strong coffee or equivalent). However, even these measures are no substitute for sleep. And there is some concern that drivers may use these tactics to enable themselves to continue driving when they should really stop.

It is clear that while drivers are aware that they are becoming sleepy, and that this increases their risk of having an accident, many will persevere with their driving, and employ a number of measures to fight off sleepiness.

Drivers need to plan trips to include a rest stop every two hours.

## Further Information

[www.rospa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety)

*click on 'Driving' and then 'Driver Fatigue'*

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Drivers', then 'Safer Journey Planner'*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

*click on 'Road Safety Campaigns' and then 'Driver Tiredness'*

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Employers', then 'Driving for Work: Safer Journey Planner'*

# Focus on Driver Distraction

## Mobile Phones

Using a hand-held or hands-free mobile phone while driving substantially increases the risk of crashing. Drivers who use a mobile phone, whether hand-held or hands-free:

- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them
- fail to see road signs
- fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed
- are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front
- react more slowly and take longer to brake
- are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic
- feel more stressed and frustrated.

They are four times more likely to crash, injuring or killing themselves and/or other people. They are likely to be at fault for the crash.

Using a hands-free phone while driving does not significantly reduce the risks because the problems are caused mainly by the mental distraction and divided attention of taking part in a phone conversation at the same time as driving.

## Hand-held Phones

It is illegal to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. It is also an offence to "cause or permit" a driver to use a hand-held mobile phone while driving. Therefore, employers can be held liable as well as the individual driver if they require employees to use a hand-held phone while driving.

## Hands-free Phones

It can be illegal to use a hands-free phone while driving if it distracts the driver. Depending on the circumstances, drivers could be charged with 'failing to have proper control of their vehicle'. In more serious cases, the use of any type of mobile phone could result in prosecution for careless or dangerous driving.

The Police may check phone records when investigating fatal and serious crashes to determine if use of the phone contributed to a crash.

High mileage and company car drivers are more likely than most to use a mobile phone while driving.

## Other Distractions

Many other things can distract a driver and increase the risk of crashing, such as eating, drinking, smoking, reading a map and so on, while driving.

## Further Information

[www.rospa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety)

*click on 'Driving' and then  
'Using A Mobile Phone While Driving'*

[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

*click on Road Safety then 'Employers', then  
'Driving for Work: Mobile Phones'*

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

*click on 'Road Safety Campaigns'  
and then 'Mobile Phones'*

# Focus on Close Following

Driving too close to the vehicle in front is one of the most common driving faults. Surveys conducted as part of National Motorway Month found that over one quarter of drivers on motorways follow the vehicle in front too closely. On some motorways, over half of drivers were following too closely.

The Highway Code shows stopping distances from various speeds between 20 mph and 70 mph. The overall stopping distance of a vehicle comprises the reaction (or thinking) time (during which the driver realises s/he has to stop and transfers his or her foot to the brake pedal) and the braking distance (the distance covered before the brakes bring the vehicle to a complete stop).

For example, a driver travelling at 30 mph who decides s/he has to stop, will travel about 9 metres (29' 6") before they even begin to brake. Their car will travel a further 14 metres (45' 11") before coming to a halt – a total of 23 metres (75' 5") from the moment the driver decides to stop.

This assumes a reaction speed of about 0.7 seconds. A less alert driver will take longer to react and therefore cover more distance before even beginning to brake.

Poor visibility means drivers may not see hazards early enough to slow down or stop safely.

The braking distances in the Highway Code also assume a braking deceleration of about 6.5 metres per second squared ( $6.5\text{m/s}^2$ ), but again this could be affected by poorly adjusted brakes, worn tyres or the amount of pressure the driver puts on the brake pedal. The road surface is also critical. The stopping distances in the Highway Code are based on a dry road – on wet or icy roads, the braking distance is much greater.

## Further Information

[www.rosipa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rosipa.com/roadsafety)

[www.stoppingdistances.org.uk](http://www.stoppingdistances.org.uk)

[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

## Free Road Safety Resources

Available from [www.rospa.com/roadsafety](http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety)

**Driving for Work Guides**  
**Refresher Driver Training Report**  
**Helping Young People Learn To Drive Safely**  
**Safer Journey Planner**  
**Presenting Road Safety: A Guide for the Media**

**Get More from Your Driving**  
**Parents and Young Drivers**  
**Drivers and Vulnerable Road Users**  
**Top Ten Tips to Stay Within the Limit**

Available from [www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)

**Wake Up To the Signs of Tiredness**  
**Horse Sense for Motorists**  
**Speed: Know Your Limits**

**When Will You Have had too Much?**  
**Switch it Off**

## Useful Links

The Road Safety Department of your Local Authority

Your Road Safety Partnership

**[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)**

**[www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk](http://www.thinkroadsafety.gov.uk)**

**[www.highwaycode.gov.uk](http://www.highwaycode.gov.uk)**

**[www.road-safety.org.uk](http://www.road-safety.org.uk)**

**[www.roadsafetyni.gov.uk](http://www.roadsafetyni.gov.uk)**

**[www.larsoa.org.uk](http://www.larsoa.org.uk)**

**[www.pacts.org.uk](http://www.pacts.org.uk)**

**[www.theaa.com](http://www.theaa.com)**

**[www.roadpeace.org](http://www.roadpeace.org)**

**[www.motoring.gov.uk](http://www.motoring.gov.uk)**

**[www.drugdrive.com](http://www.drugdrive.com)**

**[www.roadada.org.uk](http://www.roadada.org.uk)**

**[www.dft.gov.uk](http://www.dft.gov.uk)**

**[www.dsa.gov.uk](http://www.dsa.gov.uk)**

**[www.helpingldrivers.com](http://www.helpingldrivers.com)**

**[www.stoppingdistances.org.uk](http://www.stoppingdistances.org.uk)**

**[www.airso.org.uk](http://www.airso.org.uk)**

**[www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)**

**[www.racfoundation.org](http://www.racfoundation.org)**

**[www.roadsafe.com](http://www.roadsafe.com)**

**[www.acpo.police.uk](http://www.acpo.police.uk)**

**[www.iam.org.uk](http://www.iam.org.uk)**



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