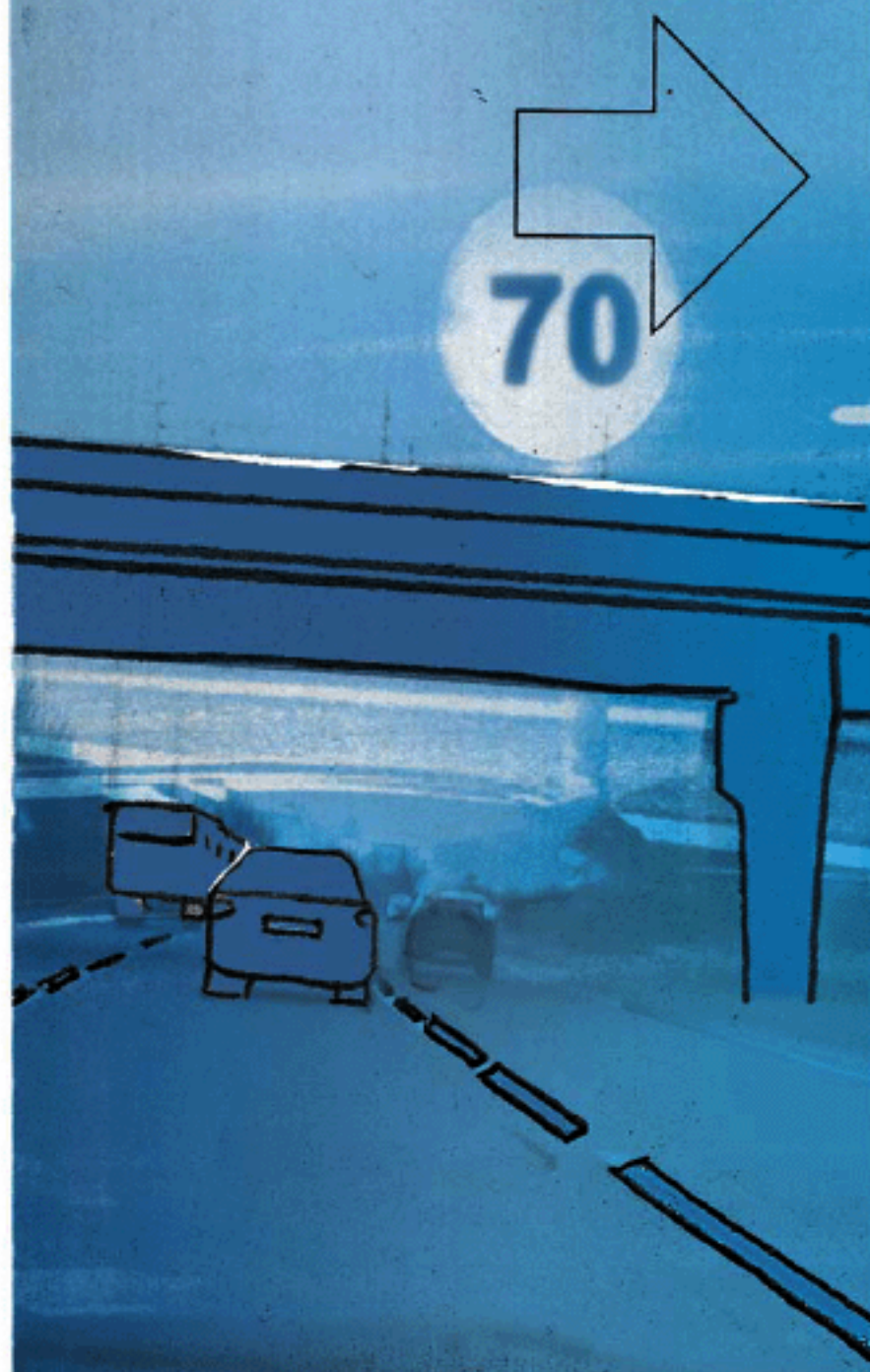


ROAD SAFETY EDUCATION OFFICE
MOTORWAYS



MOTORWAYS

Prohibited Vehicles

Motorways **MUST NOT** be used by pedestrians, holders of provisional car or motorcycle driving licences unless exempt, riders of motorcycles under 50cc, cyclists and horse riders. Certain slow-moving vehicles and those carrying oversized loads (*except by special permission*), agricultural vehicles and most invalid carriages are also prohibited. Since motorway traffic travels faster than on other roads, you must think faster too. It is especially important to use your mirrors earlier and to look much further ahead than on other roads.

Checks before Driving

Your Own Fitness to Drive

Fatigue, depression, ill-health, a heavy meal and medicines are some factors that can slow reactions and impair judgement, especially at speed.

Your Car's Fitness to be Driven

Make sure that the windscreen, windows, mirrors, lights and reflectors are clean and that any load that you are carrying or towing is secure.

Tyres

Tyres **MUST** be correctly inflated and be free from certain cuts and other defects. Cars, light vans and light trailers **MUST** have a tread depth of at least 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the breadth of the tread and around the entire circumference. **Motorcycles, large vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles MUST** have a tread depth of at least 1mm across three-quarters of the breadth of the tread and in a continuous band around the entire circumference. Tyre pressures should be checked weekly. Do this before your journey, when tyres are cold. Warm or hot tyres may give a misleading reading. Your brakes and steering will be adversely affected by under-inflated or over-inflated tyres. The car's handbook will show the recommended pressures.

Vital Fluids

Check oil, water, fuel, windscreen washer and brake fluid levels. Sustained high speeds cause undue stress to a vehicle and increases fuel consumption.

Seat Belts

Everyone **MUST** wear seat belts, where fitted. The driver **MUST** ensure that all children under 14 years of age wear seat belts or sit in an appropriate child restraint. This means a baby seat, child seat, booster seat or booster cushion appropriate to the child's weight and size, fitted to the manufacturer's instructions.

Joining the Motorway

When you join the motorway you will normally approach it from a road on the left (a slip road) or from an adjoining motorway. You should

- give priority to traffic already on the motorway
- check the traffic on the motorway and adjust your speed to fit safely into the traffic flow in the left-hand lane
- not cross solid white lines that separate lanes
- stay on the slip road if it continues as an extra lane on the motorway
- remain in the left-hand lane long enough to adjust to the speed of traffic before considering overtaking.

Leaving the Motorway

Unless signs indicate that a lane leads directly off the motorway, you will normally leave the motorway by a slip road on your left. You should

- watch for the signs letting you know you are getting nearer your exit
- move into the left-hand lane well before reaching your exit
- signal left in good time and reduce your speed on the slip road as necessary.

On leaving the motorway or using a link road between motorways, your speed may be higher than you realise – 50 mph may feel like 30 mph. Check your speedometer and adjust your speed accordingly. Some slip roads and link roads have sharp bends, so you will need to slow down.

Lane Discipline

You should drive in the left-hand lane if the road ahead is clear. If you are overtaking a number of slower moving vehicles it may be safer to remain in the centre or outer lanes until the manoeuvre is completed rather than continuously switching lanes. Return to the left lane once you have overtaken all the vehicles or if you are delaying traffic behind you. Slow moving or speed restricted vehicles should always remain in the left lane of the carriageway unless overtaking. You **MUST NOT** drive on the hard shoulder except in an emergency or if directed to by signs.

Overtaking

Do not overtake unless you are sure it is safe to do so. Overtake only on the right. You should

- check your mirrors
- take time to judge the speeds correctly
- make sure that the lane you will be joining is sufficiently clear ahead and behind
- take a quick sideways glance into the blind spot area to verify the position of a vehicle that may have disappeared from your view in the mirror
- remember that traffic may be coming up behind you very quickly. Check your mirrors carefully. When it is safe to do so, signal in plenty of time, then move out
- ensure you do not cut in on the vehicle you have overtaken
- be especially careful at night or in poor visibility when it is harder to judge speed and distance.

Do not overtake on the left or move to a lane on your left to overtake. In congested conditions, where adjacent lanes of traffic are moving at similar speeds, traffic in left-hand lanes may sometimes be moving faster than traffic to the right. In these conditions you may keep up with the traffic in your lane even if this means passing traffic in the lane to your right. Do not weave in and out of lanes to overtake.

You **MUST NOT** use the hard shoulder for overtaking.

Motorway Signals

Motorway signals are used to warn you of a danger ahead, e.g. there may be a collision, fog or a spillage, which you may not immediately be able to see.

Signals situated on the central reservation apply to all lanes. On very busy stretches, signals may be overhead with a separate signal for each lane.

Amber Flashing Lights

These warn of a hazard ahead. The signal may show a temporary maximum speed limit, lanes that are closed or a message such as 'Fog'. Adjust your speed and look out for the danger until you pass a signal which is not flashing or one that gives the 'All clear' sign and you are sure it is safe to increase your speed.

Red Flashing Lights

If red lights on the overhead signals flash above your lane (there may also be a red 'X') you **MUST NOT** go beyond the signal in that lane. If red lights flash on a signal in the central reservation or at the side of the road, you **MUST NOT** go beyond the signal in any lane.

Special signals are used on motorways. Be sure that you know these.



Reduced visibility ahead



Lane ahead closed



Temporary maximum speed limit



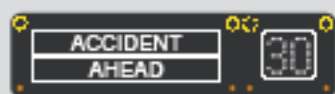
End of restriction



Do not proceed further in this lane



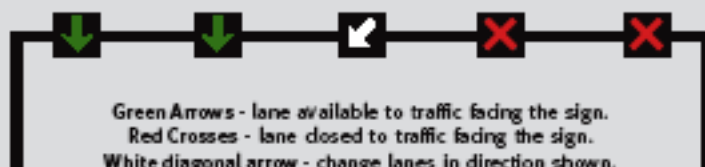
Change lane



Temporary maximum speed limit and information message








Leave motorway at next exit




Speed Limits on Motorways

When driving on the motorway you

- **MUST NOT** exceed 70 mph, or the maximum speed limit permitted for your vehicle
- **MUST NOT** exceed the lower limit, if a lower speed limit is in force, either permanently or temporarily, at roadworks
- **MUST NOT** reverse, cross the central reservation, or drive against the traffic flow. If you have missed your exit, or have taken the wrong route, carry on to the next exit.

TYPE OF VEHICLE	
Cars & motorcycles (including car derived vans up to 2 tonnes maximum laden weight)	
Cars towing caravans or trailers (including car derived vans and motorcycles)	
Buses and coaches (not exceeding 12 metres in overall length)	
Goods vehicles (not exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	
Goods vehicles (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)	

On some motorways, mandatory motorways signals (which display the speed limit within a red ring) are used to vary the maximum speed limit to improve traffic flow. You **MUST NOT** exceed this speed limit.

MOTORWAYS

MPH
70
60
70
70†
60

†60 If articulated or towing a trailer

Separation Distances

When you can see well ahead and the road conditions are good, you should

- drive at a steady cruising speed which you and your vehicle can handle safely and is within the speed limit
- keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front and increase the gap on wet or icy roads, or in fog.

Adverse Weather Conditions

You **MUST** use headlights when visibility is seriously reduced, generally when you cannot see for more than 100 metres (328 feet). You may also use front or rear fog lights (in addition to headlights) but you **MUST** switch them off when visibility improves.

Fog

Before entering fog, check your mirrors and then slow down. If the word 'Fog' is shown on a roadside signal or overhead gantry but the road is clear, be prepared for a bank of fog or drifting patchy fog ahead. Even if it seems to be clearing, you can suddenly find yourself in thick fog.

When driving in fog you should

- use your lights as required
- keep a safe distance behind the vehicle in front. Rear lights can give a false sense of security
- be able to pull up within the distance you can see clearly. This is particularly important on motorways and dual carriageways, as vehicles are travelling faster
- use your windscreen wipers and demisters
- beware of other drivers not using headlights
- not accelerate to get away from a vehicle which is too close behind you
- check your mirrors before you slow down. Then use your brakes so that your brake lights warn drivers behind you that you are slowing down.

You **MUST NOT** use front or rear fog lights unless visibility is seriously reduced as they dazzle other road users and can obscure your brake lights. You **MUST** switch them off when visibility improves.

Windy Weather

High-sided vehicles are most affected by windy weather, but strong gusts can also blow a car or motorcycle off course. This can happen at open stretches of road exposed to strong cross winds, or when passing bridges.

In very windy weather your vehicle may be affected by turbulence created by large vehicles. Motorcyclists are particularly affected, so keep well back from them when they are overtaking a high-sided vehicle.

Wet Weather

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 the steering becomes unresponsive, it probably means that 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.

Road Works on Motorways

When the 'Road Works Ahead' sign is displayed, you will need to be more watchful and look for additional signs providing more specific instructions. You should

- not exceed any temporary maximum speed limit
- use your mirrors and get into the correct lane for your vehicle in good time and as signs direct

- not switch lanes to overtake queuing traffic
- not drive through an area marked off by traffic cones
- watch out for traffic entering or leaving the works area but do not be distracted by what is going on there
- bear in mind that the road ahead may be obstructed by the works or by slow moving or stationary traffic.

Collisions

If you are involved in a collision or stop to give assistance you should

- 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 collision location and any casualties. (you can 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, if possible, 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
- 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.

Additional Rules

If your vehicle develops a problem, leave the motorway at the next exit. 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
- not attempt even simple repairs
- ensure that the 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 police. Use this in preference to a mobile phone
- give full details to the police; also inform them if you are a vulnerable motorist such as a woman 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 the left-hand door and lock all doors. Leave your vehicle again as soon as you feel this danger has passed.

CONTACTS

Further information on Road Safety may be obtained from the DOE Road Safety Education Offices located at the following addresses:-

Belfast Education and Library Board Area

c/o 40 Academy Street
Belfast
BT1 2NQ
Tel: 028 9050 8181

North Eastern Education and Library Board Area

County Hall
182 Galgorm Road
Ballymena
BT42 1HN
Tel: 028 2564 4311

South Eastern Education and Library Board Area

Hydebank
4 Hospital Road
Belfast
BT8 8JL
Tel: 028 9025 3123

Southern Education and Library Board Area

Library Headquarters
1 Markethill Road
Armagh
BT60 1NR
Tel: 028 3752 0773

Western Education and Library Board Area

Lisnagelvin Crown Building
2 Crescent Road
Lisnagelvin
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BT47 2NJ
Tel: 028 7131 9319