

CITY AND COUNTY OF CARDIFF

CODE OF GUIDANCE

DRIVING

This Code of Guidance is intended for all vehicle users and contains advice in the following sections.

- 1.0 General Driving
- 2.0 Travelling Alone
- 3.0 Motorway Breakdown
- 4.0 Winter Driving
- 5.0 Driving and Stress

1.0 General Driving

Regularly carry out a maintenance check of your vehicle.

- i. Clean your windscreen inside and out.
- ii. Ensure wing mirrors are clean.
- iii. Look for signs of wear on windscreen wiper blades and replace as necessary.
- iv. Check that lights and indicators are working.
- v. Check your tyres for sharp objects and worn tread.
- vi. Check your tyre pressure.
- vii. Carry out an oil check.
- viii. Ensure sufficient water is in the radiator and windscreen washer bottle.

Plan ahead for your journey. If travelling long distances consider having the following in your vehicle.

- i. Driving licence, MOT certificate, insurance document.
- ii. Supply of small change, phone-card.
- iii. Travel rug, umbrella, torch.
- iv. Safety can of petrol.
- v. First Aid Kit.
- vi. Fire Extinguisher.
- vii. Current Road Atlas.
- viii. Light snack in case you are held up in traffic or stranded due to bad weather.
- ix. If travelling in poor weather/snow take wellington boots, additional clothing, spade, flask of warm drink.

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2.0 Travelling Alone

- i. Always try to travel on main or well used roads.
- ii. If travelling after dark make sure someone knows your destination, estimated time of arrival and your planned route.
- iii. Keep doors locked in towns. Unlock on open roads as in the event of an accident it is easier for a rescuer to get into the car.
- iv. Park in well lit areas. If in a multi-storey car park, try to find a space near the exit.
- v. Never put possessions on the passenger seat when travelling in town. They may be snatched at traffic lights.
- vi. If you are a women driver try not to advertise the fact. Put spare shoes, bags etc. in the boot before vacating the car.
- vii. Always lock your car. When returning, enter the car swiftly. Check for intruders.
- viii. If your car starts to 'play-up' stop in a well-lit area, near a phone box or a well used area.
- ix. NEVER give lifts to strangers.
- x. Consider installing a car-phone if you do a lot of driving, particularly at night.

What to do if,

- i. **You see someone in difficulty, an accident, someone tries to flag you down, or another incident.**

Think first. Is it genuine, can you help?

It might be safer to continue and report what you have seen at the next telephone or nearest police station.

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ii. You are being followed.

Try these counter measures -

Keep calm, pull into the left-hand lane and slow down. Ignore the follower, chances are they'll get bored and drive past. Don't make eye contact.

If they persist Don't go home. Make sure all your windows are closed and doors locked, drive to a busy, well-lit public place, a police station, garage forecourt or similar place.

iii. You are forced to stop

Try to keep your engine running. Don't try to ram the other vehicle as you will probably stall and be unable to get away.

If the driver leaves the car and approaches you, check that there is enough space behind to reverse into and accelerate away, sounding your horn and activating your hazard lights.

If there is no room to manoeuvre make sure all windows and doors are locked and look around for something to protect yourself with. It is illegal to carry weapons in this country, but there are many everyday items that can be used to defend yourself, e.g. hairspray, shoes, bunch of keys etc. Continue to sound horn and lights.

3.0 Motorway Breakdown

The police run regular patrols on the motorway, but there is always the chance that they may be called away to attend an accident. If you just sit in the car and wait for assistance to arrive, you may find that there is a long delay. Also you cannot be sure that the Police know of your difficulties unless you have asked for help on one of the emergency telephones.

As soon as you are aware that you are in trouble you should pull over to the hard shoulder as far to the left as possible. You need not stop straight away, often you will be able to coast for quite a distance. Aim to reach one of the emergency telephones.

These telephones are available for use in an emergency by anyone - you do not have to be a member of the AA, RAC etc. to summon help. If you cannot stop right next to the telephone, look for one of the marker posts which will show you the direction to the nearest one. The telephones are only a mile apart, so you will never have to walk more than half a mile.

Never reverse on the hard shoulder or cross the carriageways. Telephones are always opposite each other. If they are out of order, whenever possible, extra police cars will be sent to patrol the motorway.

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Even if you have a car phone you should still use the emergency telephones to inform the motorway police, as these telephones pin-point your position exactly.

Once stopped:

- (1) Switch on you hazard lights.
- (2) Leave the passenger door wide open (unless you are leaving the car a distance from the telephone).
- (3) Lock all other doors and wind up windows.

Whilst using one of the emergency phones, stand behind it facing the oncoming traffic, this will enable you to see if anyone is approaching. You will not need any money to make the call and will be put directly in touch with motorway control. Inside the box you will find a list of all the information you will need to give Motorway Control.

If you are a woman travelling alone say and your call will be given priority.

Then give:

- Your name and address
- Make and Model of your car
- Year of manufacture
- Registration number
- Nature of the fault
- Brief details of the carriageway and marker post location
- Your membership number if you belong to one of the motoring organisations.
- The name of a specific garage that you require to provide help.

When you have made your call and are waiting for help, stand well back on the verge. You may feel that when waiting for assistance you would be better off inside your car, but 10% of all fatal motorway accidents involve vehicles parked on the hard shoulder. Assaults on people on the motorway, though well publicised, are actually extremely rare. If someone pulls up, quickly return to your car, lock yourself in and let the person know what help is on the way.

If someone pulls up while you are still on the telephone, give the police a brief personal description and the make and registration number of their car. Then return to your car and lock yourself in.

When the repair van arrives, get into the car and leave the window open just wide enough to call out and check that the mechanic knows your name.

4.0 Winter Driving

Driving in poor winter conditions need not be daunting as long as you and the car are properly prepared.

Take the following points into consideration

Speed:

- i. Don't drive as quickly as you normally do.
- ii. Don't be harried into faster driving by others.
- iii. Conditions mean that more time and distance is needed to pull up safely, or steer around a potential accident.
- iv. Look out for possible trouble, e.g. black-ice which is usually indicated by a 'lightness' feeling in the steering.

Gears:

- i. When driving on snow stay in the highest gear possible, for the best traction.
- ii. Keep the car moving on hills, maintaining momentum is all important.
- iii. Try to keep your speed constant but to avoid wheelspin do not accelerate too much.

- iv. When going down hills, select a lower gear and keep your speed down.
- v. If possible do not use the accelerator or brakes.
- vi. If you do need to brake, do so before your speed picks up.

Skidding:

Skidding is caused by excessive speed, misjudgement in steering, over-acceleration, sudden braking.

There are three types of skid, each requiring different methods of control.

- i. Front wheel skid - Usually caused by excessive speed at a corner. The car continues in a straight line instead of following the direction of the front wheels. This can be corrected by removing pressure from the accelerator and at the same time straightening the front wheels.
- ii. Rear wheel skid caused by excessive speed, misjudgement in steering or over-acceleration. Correct by removing pressure on the accelerator and at the same time turn the front wheels into the skid i.e. if the back of the car swings to the right, steer the car to the right (or vice versa), but do not prolong the action longer than is required to correct the skid or you may develop another skid in the opposite direction.
- iii. Four wheel skidding is caused by sudden braking. To get out of trouble lightly pump the brake pedal, off and on, as quickly as you can. This will keep the wheels moving so you can steer out of trouble. If your car has anti-lock brakes, it will carry out this action for you.

5.0 Driving and Stress

Driving, whether you're sitting in city centre hold-ups or travelling at speed down the motorway cause stress and physical discomfort.

When driving you move very little and your range of movements are restricted by the position of the hand and foot controls. This sustained sitting position together with poor posture is responsible for the many painful back, neck and shoulder problems experienced by drivers.

There are three things you can do to minimise the stress of driving.

- i. adopt the best position
- ii. learn how to reduce tension
- iii. know when to give yourself a break

(i) Adopt the best position

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Before setting off take the time to position yourself correctly in the car.

- Make sure the car seat provides support for the small of your back. It may pay to invest in a lumbar roll.
- Adjust the fore and after movement of the seat so that you can reach pedals and steering wheel without stretching. The knees should slight bent and the thighs supported by the seat cushion.
- Ensure that the seat belt goes comfortably across your body.
- Keep your hands a comfortable distance apart on the steering wheel and your arms slightly bent.
- Adjust the interior and exterior mirrors every time you enter the car to provide the best possible backward views (Gravity compresses the spine by up to $\frac{3}{4}$ inch during the day).

(ii) Reducing Tension

Reducing the tensions of driving can be achieved by following simple exercises when stopped at traffic lights or in a traffic jam.

- Tuck in your chin and stretch your neck to make it longer, then relax. Repeat two or three times.
- Turn the head slowly to one side as far as possible. Then turn to the other side, repeat two or three times.
- Hunch your shoulders towards your ears and relax. Repeat as above.
- Tighten the stomach muscles at frequent intervals. This helps support the internal organs and promotes good posture.
- Ensure you have a supply of fresh air into the car.

(iii) Take a Break

Some people suggest taking a break after two hours driving, others suggest a stop every hour - you will find your own level.

The important thing is to recognise when you need to stop and get out to stretch your legs, let fresh air in your lungs. Take a short walk to help your circulation and generally wake yourself up.

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