

DRIVING IN THE CITY

Information Fact Sheet



TWELVE STEPS TO A SAFE AND SENSIBLE LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

- 1 At times the hectic pace of city traffic can become overwhelming. If you feel like you're in the middle of a pack of Formula One drivers, just relax, maintain a comfortable speed and stay out of the right lane on multi-lane roads.

Knowledge & Technique

- 2 Your rear-view mirror is one of your best friends when driving in the city. You should check it every 10-20 seconds and especially when slowing for a red light or when preparing to make a turn.
- 3 When changing lanes, adjust your speed to merge as smoothly as possible with the traffic stream you are joining. Check your side mirror first, then look over your shoulder. Checking the side mirror alone is not enough as there is a blind spot next to your car which requires you to look over your shoulder and do an eye check to see if it is clear. When you have established it is safe to change lanes, indicate and change lanes without delay.
- 4 You're preparing to make a right turn. Keep the steering wheel at the straight-ahead position until you have looked in the rear-view mirror to see that there is no-one behind who may run into you. Many tragic crashes are caused by a stationary car being hit from behind in this situation. If your front wheels are pointed right, your car will be pushed into the oncoming traffic if hit from behind, so don't start turning until you are actually ready to execute the manoeuvre.
- 5 When turning left from a multi-lane road, get into the left lane to make the turn. Swinging right to give yourself extra room in the corner is poor driving and guaranteed to annoy those in the centre lane who have to avoid your incursion into their space.
- 6 Know the road rules about making turns from the right and left lanes. Unless a pavement arrow indicates otherwise, you must use the left lane to turn left and the right lane to turn right. Don't make illegal dual lane turns just because there is a queue of turning traffic.
- 7 Running red lights is life threatening and ultimately futile. There are times when it is not possible to stop for a yellow light as sudden braking might cause a crash. The light sequencing recognises this by holding yellow for quite a long time, however always aim to stop for the amber light if you have the space.
- 8 Make life easy for your car by not riding the clutch in a manual and if you drive an automatic, select neutral when stationary. In both cases, you'll prolong the life of the transmission and save fuel.

- 9 When approaching an intersection and the light turns green, don't assume those in the cross street are law-abiding citizens who will stop for a red light. When approaching any intersection, slow down a little and cover the brake. This means resting your foot, with just a delicate touch on the pedal in case you have to brake in a hurry. You will save half a second if this is the case, which could be the difference between a near miss and a catastrophe.
- 10 Any motorcycle rider will tell you that city streets offer as much grip as ice when it rains after a dry spell. All of the oil and fuel cars and trucks deposit on the bitumen floats on top of the water when it rains. Although your car's tyres are well designed to siphon water away, they can't help you if the road surface is greasy. Adjusting to wet conditions simply means braking and accelerating gently, slowing down and doubling the distance between you and the car in front.
- 11 If someone in the next lane needs to merge with yours, be considerate and allow them access. Take care also not to get stuck in a packed intersection blocking the green light traffic.
- 12 City driving involves driving on roads with different types of speed zones. Remember there are 60km/h zones; 50km/h zones on residential streets and 40km/h school zones. The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) is also introducing in some areas 40km/h zones in some areas of high pedestrian activity - look out for signage designating these new zones.

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