

# Road Rules Refresher

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## Road Rules Clarified

**Simple misunderstandings about road rules can cause a lot of grief, from near misses and minor crashes to serious injuries and lives lost.**

This guide clarifies some common road rules and highlights that road safety is a shared responsibility between all road users.

If you want to test your knowledge after reading this guide, or would like to encourage friends and family to test their knowledge, try the road rules quiz at [mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules](https://mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules).

You can also view online videos which demonstrate most of these rules in action.

The Australian Road Rules are continually monitored, with amendments taking into account changes in road safety policy, driver behaviour and technology.

Keep an eye on road rule changes and safe driving tips at [mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules](https://mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules).

Please visit [mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules](https://mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules) for more information

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Department for Infrastructure  
and Transport

# 1

## Giving way

**There is no such thing as having the right of way. There are many situations other than at GIVE WAY signs where you must give way. These include:**

- at STOP signs
- turning across the path of an oncoming vehicle at an intersection
- turning from a terminating road onto the continuing road at a T-intersection.

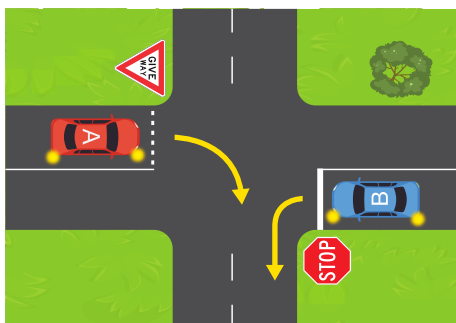
STOP lines and GIVE WAY lines on the road have the same meaning as STOP signs and GIVE WAY signs. This is in case a sign is missing, stolen or knocked down.

Remember, if you turn at an intersection, you must give way to pedestrians crossing the road you are entering.

### Giving way at intersections with two STOP or GIVE WAY signs

A STOP sign is not 'more powerful' than a GIVE WAY sign.

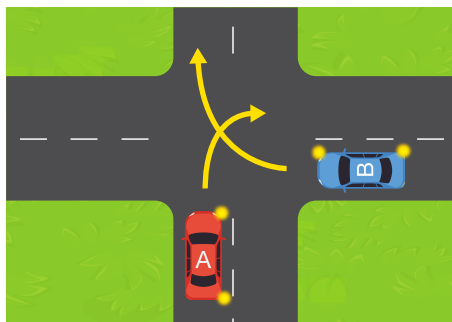
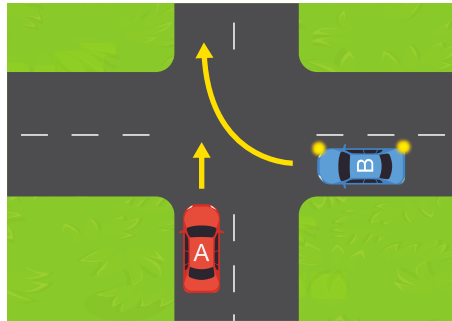
Once the vehicles below have given way to all other vehicles, they must then apply the give way rules to each other. Vehicle A must give way to vehicle B because it is turning right across the path of vehicle B.



### Giving way at uncontrolled intersections

An uncontrolled intersection is an intersection with no traffic lights, STOP or GIVE WAY signs or lines. At an uncontrolled intersection you must give way to the right.

In all these situations, vehicle A must give way to vehicle B.



### Giving way at a T-intersection

If you are driving on a road that ends at a T-intersection, you must give way to all vehicles travelling on the road you are entering (i.e. on the continuing road).

In the below situation, vehicle A must give way to vehicle B.

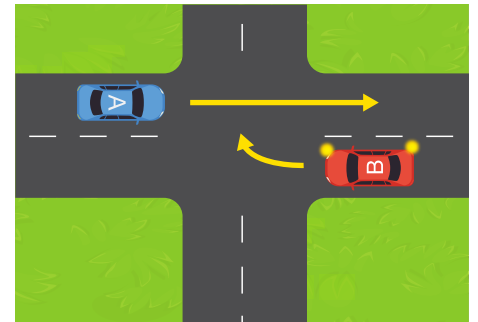


### Giving way when turning right

If you are turning right at an intersection, you must give way to vehicles coming from the opposite direction that are:

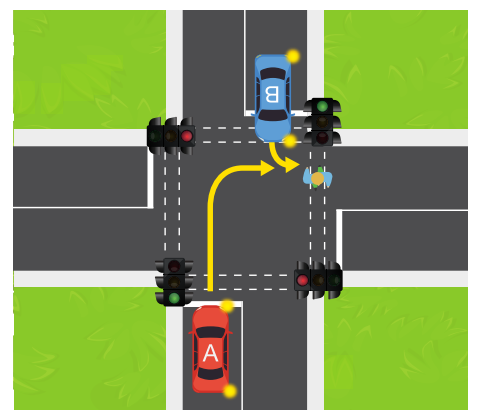
- driving straight ahead through the intersection
- turning left at the intersection.

In both cases, vehicle B must give way to vehicle A.



When turning right at traffic lights you must give way to other vehicles and pedestrians in the intersection, including turning traffic.

In the below situation, both vehicles must give way to the pedestrian and vehicle A must give way to vehicle B.

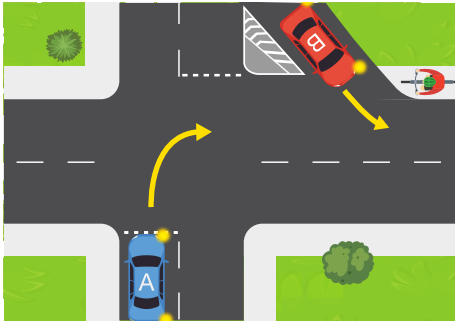


# 2 Roundabouts

### Turning from a slip lane

A slip lane is an area of road for vehicles turning left that is separated from other parts of the road by a painted island or traffic island.

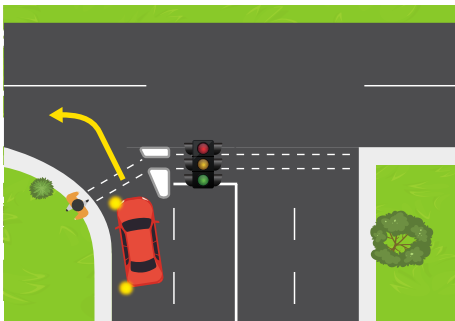
In the below situation, vehicle B must give way to vehicle A, as well as both pedestrians and cyclists that may be wishing to cross the slip lane.



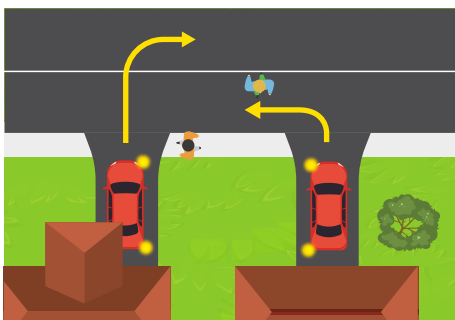
### Giving way to pedestrians and cyclists

When turning onto a road, whether it's a main road, side street or slip lane, drivers must give way to all pedestrians and cyclists on or entering that road.

In the below situation, the vehicle must give way to the pedestrian.



When exiting or entering a driveway or a car park, vehicles must also give way to pedestrians and cyclists.



**It is important to be in the correct lane at multi-lane roundabouts. Signs, marked lanes and traffic lane arrows help position your vehicle correctly and guide you in the direction of travel.**

Unless arrows on the road indicate otherwise, remember these rules:

- to turn left, use the left lane
- to turn right, use the right lane
- to go straight ahead, use either lane.

Drivers turning into a road should give way to any pedestrian or cyclist that may be crossing the road that the driver is about to enter from the roundabout.

### Left turn

1. Position your vehicle in the left lane well in advance, unless arrows on the road or signs indicate otherwise.
2. Signal using your left indicator.
3. Give way to all vehicles already in the roundabout.
4. Remain in the left lane as you complete your turn.
5. Continue to use your left indicator as you exit the roundabout. Stop indicating once you have exited the roundabout.



### Right turn or U-turns

1. Position your vehicle in the right lane well in advance, unless arrows on the road or signs indicate otherwise.
2. Signal using your right indicator.
3. Give way to all vehicles already in the roundabout.
4. When leaving the roundabout you should use your left indicator (if practicable). Stop indicating once you have exited the roundabout.

Do not turn right from the left lane unless arrows on the road indicate that you can.



### Straight ahead

1. Position your vehicle in either lane well in advance, unless arrows on the road or signs indicate otherwise.
2. Do not use your indicator until you are ready to exit.
3. Give way to all vehicles already in the roundabout.
4. When leaving the roundabout you should use your left indicator (if practicable). Stop indicating once you have exited the roundabout.



## 3 Continuous dividing lines and islands

**There are different rules for crossing continuous dividing lines, depending on what type of dividing line it is and what manoeuvre you are performing.**

You must not cross a single continuous dividing line to:

- overtake
- do a U-turn.

However, you can cross a single continuous dividing line (including if there's a broken line on the other side) to:

- enter or leave the road
- avoid an obstruction (i.e. a traffic hazard)
- park in angle parking on the opposite side of the road
- allow enough room to safely overtake a cyclist.

You must have a clear view of approaching traffic and be able to move over safely.



Remember, if there are two parallel continuous dividing lines, you are not permitted to cross them at all, unless you have to avoid an obstruction (i.e. a traffic hazard) or to allow enough room to safely overtake a cyclist.

Similar rules apply to painted islands. If the island is surrounded by one continuous line, you can drive on or over it for up to 50 metres in order to:

- enter or leave the road
- enter a turning lane that begins immediately after the island
- park in angle parking on the opposite side of the road
- allow enough room to safely overtake a cyclist.

If the island is surrounded by parallel continuous lines or if it separates traffic flowing in the same direction, such as where an on-ramp merges on to a roadway, you must stay off it, unless you need to avoid an obstruction (i.e. a traffic hazard) or to allow enough room to safely overtake a cyclist.

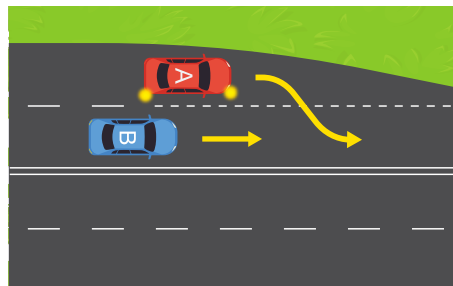


## 4 Merging

**There are two different give way rules for merging.**

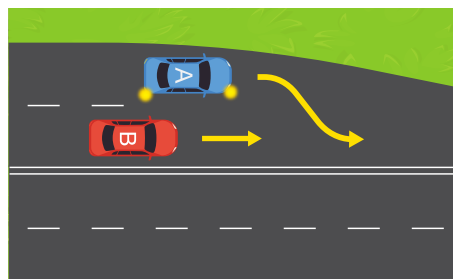
1. On roads where there are lines marked on the road, if your lane comes to an end, you must give way to traffic already in the lane you are moving into.

Vehicle A gives way to vehicle B.



2. On roads where there are no lines marked on the road, when lanes of traffic merge, you must give way to any vehicle that is ahead of you.

Vehicle B gives way to vehicle A.



## 5 Changing lanes

**When you change lanes you must give way to any vehicle in the lane you are moving into. This also applies when your lane is ending and you have to cross a lane line, such as entering a freeway.**

Before changing lanes you must indicate for long enough to give sufficient warning to other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Choose safe gaps before you move and do not take risks. Leave enough space for the vehicles behind you, as well as in front of you. Always check your blind spot.

## 6 Keeping left

**When the speed limit is above 80km/h on multi-lane roads you must not drive in the right hand lane unless you are:**

- overtaking
- turning right or making a U-turn
- avoiding an obstacle (i.e. a traffic hazard)
- driving in congested traffic
- driving in a special purpose lane.

This same rule applies to a road with a speed limit of 80km/h or less if there is a KEEP LEFT UNLESS OVERTAKING sign.

## 7 Keep intersections clear

If you do not have room to drive through an intersection because it is blocked, or the road ahead is blocked, you must not enter the intersection.

Vehicles that are stopped or queueing across an intersection cause congestion and gridlock, as well as creating a safety hazard for all road users, including pedestrians.

If the traffic lights are not operating, obey the Give Way to the Right rule or the Give Way at a T-intersection rule.

## 8 U-turns

There are different rules for U-turns.

### 1. At traffic lights

You must not make a U-turn at traffic lights unless there is a sign stating U-TURN PERMITTED.

### 2. Not at traffic lights

For example, at a break in the centre island or at an intersection with no traffic lights.

You must not make a U-turn:

- if there is a sign stating NO U-TURN
- across single or parallel continuous dividing lines or a continuous dividing line to the left of a broken line.

When you are making a U-turn, you must give way to all other drivers, cyclists and pedestrians, even if other vehicles are facing a GIVE WAY or STOP sign.

## 9 Overtaking

There are three situations where a driver may overtake to the left of another driver:

1. On a multi-lane road.
2. If the vehicle in front signals to make a right turn or a U-turn.
3. If the traffic on your right is stationary.

Overtaking on the left is not allowed in any other situation, apart from the three listed above.

Remember, whether you're overtaking on the right or left:

- it's never legal to exceed the speed limit
- you can only pass another vehicle if you have a clear view of the road ahead
- you must keep your vehicle wholly within a lane
- you cannot straddle dividing or lane lines except to allow for enough room to safely overtake a cyclist
- you cannot drive a motor vehicle in an operating bicycle lane or bus lane unless you are entering or leaving the road (always look out for cyclists).

## 10 Yellow traffic lights



**You must stop at a yellow traffic light if you can stop safely before reaching the stop line.**

A yellow traffic light is not an extension of the green light. It is the beginning of the red light.

When approaching traffic lights showing a green light you should be ready to stop if the lights change to yellow and you can stop safely before reaching the stop line.

As you approach the lights you should also check your mirror to see if there is a vehicle close behind, so that you know if it will be safe to stop suddenly.

## 11 Safe following distances

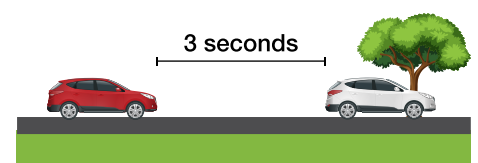
**You must drive a sufficient distance behind a vehicle travelling in front of you so you can stop safely to avoid a crash.**

Safe following distances vary depending on what speed you are travelling, what conditions you are driving in and what type of vehicle you are driving.

Suggested safe distances:

- a driver in a car should drive at least 3 seconds behind the vehicle in front in ideal conditions
- if towing a trailer or caravan, driving a heavy vehicle or if the road is unsealed you should allow a longer distance between you and the vehicle in front.

Always drive to the conditions.





# Road Safety

## Speed

Every motorist has a responsibility to know the speed limit and maintain a safe travel speed at or below the posted speed limit. Always consider the road conditions, for example poor weather, heavy traffic or unsealed (dirt) roads. The default speed limit on suburban roads is 50km/h and on rural roads 100km/h.

A 25km/h speed limit applies:

- in school zones
- when passing a school bus that has stopped to set down or pick up children
- when passing a stationary emergency services vehicle with flashing red or blue lights.

Learner drivers and provisional licence holders **must not exceed** the **100km/h** speed limit at any time.

## Seatbelts and restraints

You must wear a seatbelt when driving and ensure all passengers, including children are properly restrained. For children under the age of 16 years, the law is specific about the type of restraint to be used at different ages and where children must be seated in a vehicle.



Always use child restraints that are **Australian Standards approved**, correctly installed and properly adjusted and fastened to fit the child's body.

Children are safest when travelling in the back seat. Children should remain in a booster seat until they can wear a seatbelt safely.

## Mobile phones

Driving while using a hand-held mobile phone causes both physical and mental distraction, which impairs driving performance.



You **cannot** use a hand-held **mobile phone** in a vehicle **while driving**, even when the vehicle is at traffic lights or in a traffic jam.

You can only use a mobile phone if it is secured in a commercially made cradle affixed to the vehicle and not obscuring your vision, or is remotely operated (i.e. via Bluetooth), and is only used to make or receive calls. It is an offence to create, send or look at a text, video message or email on a mobile phone while driving, including setting your GPS. Entering destination details must be done before you move off. You must not touch the phone or manipulate the screen unless you are parked.

If you are a learner or hold a P1 licence, you must **NOT** use a mobile phone in a vehicle **AT ANY TIME** while driving, including hands-free technologies.

Taking your eyes off the road for 2 seconds doubles the risk of a crash.

## Country driving

Plan your travel to ensure you:

- include a break or rest stop every 2 hours
- avoid driving for more than 8-10 hours a day
- have a good night's sleep before driving, so you can start fresh
- start your trip early in the day, and avoid driving during the night, or straight after you finish work
- avoid driving at times when you are usually asleep.

## Alcohol and drugs

It is illegal to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including some over the counter and prescription medicines if they impair your driving ability.

The safest Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) for driving is zero, no matter what licence class you hold.



Learner, provisional and **probationary** licence holders must stick to a **zero Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)** – this means **no alcohol** at all.

Full licence holders **must not drive** with a BAC of **0.05 or more**.

The likelihood of a crash doubles for every increase of 0.05 above zero BAC. For inexperienced drivers, the risk at any BAC level will be even higher.

Driving under the influence of prescribed drugs including cannabis, speed or ecstasy is an offence. Random roadside drug tests are conducted to detect the presence of these drugs. The presence of any amount of the drugs tested for is an offence.

## Sharing the road

Road users and vehicles come in all shapes and sizes and include cars, vans, trucks and buses, motor bike riders, bicycles, pedestrians, mobility scooters and horses.

A driver approaching a **pedestrian** crossing must drive at a speed at which the driver can, if necessary, stop safely before the crossing.

**Trucks and buses (heavy vehicles)** are large (have blind spots and may not be able to see a driver, rider or pedestrian), are not very manoeuvrable (need more space to turn), generally take off more slowly and need longer distances to stop.

## Sharing the road *continued*

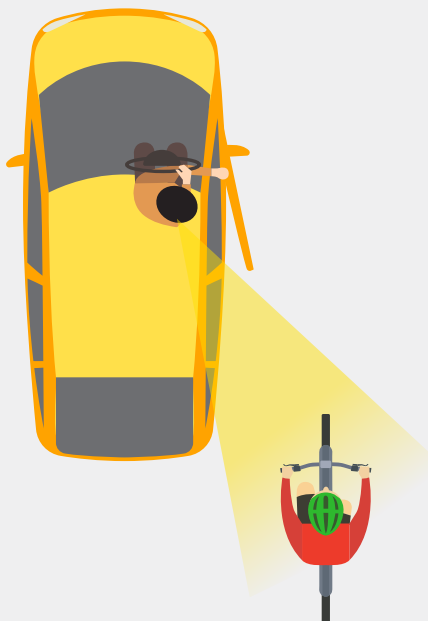
Therefore, it is important to be cautious, patient, keep a safe distance and give heavy vehicles enough room to stop or turn.

Drivers on country roads should take extra care when overtaking long vehicles. When following a heavy vehicle that you intend to overtake, stay well back from the rear of the vehicle while waiting for a safe overtaking opportunity.

In a **110km/h** speed zone it will take approximately **1km** to **safely overtake a B-double** truck travelling at **100km/h**.

Drivers can help make roads safer for **motor bike riders**, by always checking what is in front of their vehicle, behind it and to each side.

Before opening a vehicle door, look behind and over your right shoulder for **cyclists** and other road users. The “Dutch Reach” (outlined in the diagram) is a good way of opening the driver’s door with the left hand (the hand furthest from the door handle) so you can look over your shoulder to see if a cyclist is coming.

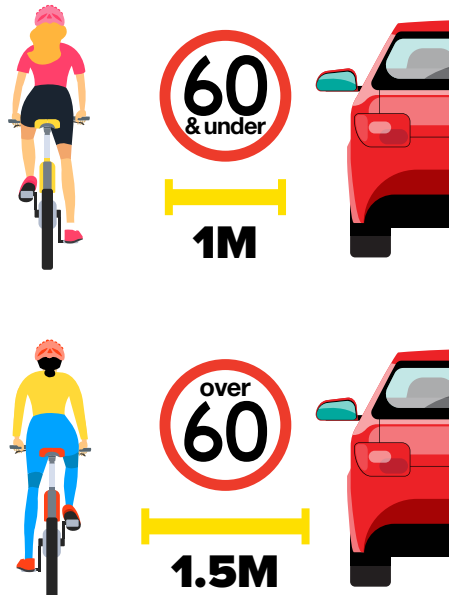


# Cycling Road Rules

Under the Australian Road Rules cyclists are treated like motorists and must obey the road rules just like motorists, including stopping at stop signs and traffic lights, riding on the left side of the road and giving way to pedestrians on crossings and at intersections.

Cyclists can ride safely across a marked foot crossing, a pedestrian crossing or a children’s crossing. You must obey the pedestrian or cyclist crossing lights and not enter the crossing once the symbol turns red. You should slow down on the approach to the crossing and keep a sharp lookout for pedestrians and vehicles.

Cyclists of all ages are allowed to ride on footpaths.



Drivers must give a minimum of 1 metre when passing a cyclist where the speed limit is 60km/h or less, or 1.5 metres when travelling over 60km/h.

Remember that cyclists can legally ride two abreast, so be patient as you approach and overtake only when safe to do so.

# Breakdown safety tips

Breaking down on a highway, freeway or expressway is potentially very dangerous and you should always be cautious. If your vehicle develops a problem, leave the high-speed road at the next exit or pull into a service area and turn on your hazard lights.

In the event of breaking down when travelling on a highway, expressway or freeway:

- stop as far to the left as you can with your wheels turned to the left and your hazard lights on
- if you have to stay in your vehicle, keep your seatbelt on
- if possible, exit the vehicle from the left (passenger) side
- assess the situation very carefully and do not put yourself in danger by attempting even simple repairs. If it’s not safe, call roadside assistance. If your vehicle presents a roadside hazard ring the Traffic Management Centre on 1800 018 313.

**NO STOPPING ON FREEWAY**

**Be cautious when passing an incident or breakdown.**

**For more information, including the road rules quiz and online videos visit**

[mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules](https://mylicence.sa.gov.au/roadrules)