



## Safe road use

- Sharing with other road users
- Driving safely in tunnels
- Stopping
- Hazards
- Driver fatigue
- Correct seatbelt and child restraint use
- Towing a trailer or caravan
- What to do at a crash

# Sharing with other road users

## Emergency vehicles

Police, fire and ambulance vehicles are emergency vehicles.

If an emergency vehicle is coming towards you and is sounding an alarm or showing flashing red or blue lights, you must move out of the path of the emergency vehicle as soon as you can do so safely – see *Giving way to emergency vehicles*.

You should:

- slow down
- move left to give the vehicle a clear run down the middle of the road. If you cannot move left safely, stay where you are and let the emergency vehicle overtake you
- not move your vehicle suddenly or make an illegal turn
- not drive into the path of the emergency vehicle.

You may drive onto the wrong side of the road or drive through a red traffic light to get out of the way of an emergency vehicle if it is safe to do so.

## Emergency vehicles at intersections

Emergency vehicles often stop or slow down when they enter intersections to check if they can pass through safely. You must give way to, and not drive into the path of, an emergency vehicle that is sounding an alarm or showing flashing red or blue lights, even if you are facing a green traffic light or arrow and the emergency vehicle appears to have stopped or slowed down.

Watch out for emergency vehicles by looking ahead and in your rear vision mirrors regularly.

## Move over, slow down laws - stationary emergency response vehicles

If a stationary *Emergency Response Vehicle* on a road (which includes a road-related area) is displaying a *flashing light*, you must leave at least one clear lane when passing.

You do not need to comply with the move over requirement if:

- it is not safe or practicable to leave a clear lane.
- when passing the *Emergency Response Vehicle* or person, there would not be sufficient distance to safely avoid a collision.
- there are roadworks on the length of the road.
- you are complying with a direction of an authorised officer, including police officers, transport inspectors and National Heavy Vehicle Regulator compliance officers.
- making a left or right hand turn on a multi lane road.

In these instances and on single lane roads, you must:

- ensure there is sufficient distance between your vehicle, the *Emergency Response Vehicle* and any person or vehicle in the immediate vicinity to avoid a collision
- drive at a safe speed that does not put anyone at risk.

You are not required to comply with the move over or slow down requirements if you are driving on the other side of the road to where the *Emergency Response Vehicle* is and you are separated by a median strip.

Bicycle riders present little danger to emergency workers so are not required to comply with this rule.

An *Emergency Response Vehicle* includes a vehicle being used (including while parked) for the following purposes:

- Transport Compliance
- Queensland Ambulance Service
- Queensland Fire and Emergency Service, including Rural Fire Brigade
- Queensland Police Service
- State Emergency Service
- National Heavy Vehicle Regulator
- motor breakdown service or tow truck.

## Heavy vehicles

You can share the road with heavy vehicles more safely by following a few simple tips.

### Overtaking a heavy vehicle

- Allow sufficient time to overtake.
- Stay back at the recommended minimum following distance, without crossing the centre line, when preparing to overtake – see *Safe following distance*.
- When it is safe to overtake, indicate, accelerate and overtake quickly, without exceeding the speed limit. Changing down a gear may give you enough engine power to get past.
- After overtaking, maintain your speed because slowing down too soon will force the heavy vehicle to brake.
- Do not overtake a heavy vehicle at an intersection when it is turning, unless it is safe to do so.

## Sharing the road safely with heavy vehicles

- Do not cut in front of a heavy vehicle because you will reduce the driver's braking distance.
- Be careful of blind spots, these are usually alongside, directly in front or behind a heavy vehicle – remember if you can't see their mirrors, they probably can't see you.
- Do not tailgate a heavy vehicle. You cannot see what is ahead of it and you won't be able to react in time.
- Remember that heavy vehicles accelerate slowly.
- When a heavy vehicle is turning, keep back from the intersection because the heavy vehicle needs more road space to turn than other vehicles.



- Give way to buses displaying this sign (left) when required to do so – see *Giving way to buses*.
- Heavy vehicles that show the sign DO NOT OVERTAKE TURNING VEHICLE are allowed to take up more than one lane to turn – see *Overtaking long vehicles*.
- If a heavy vehicle wants to pass you, do not speed up. Allow the heavy vehicle to maintain speed and pass safely.

## Pilot vehicles

If a heavy vehicle is wider than 3.5m, a pilot or escort vehicle will precede or follow it along the road. A pilot vehicle has yellow flashing lights and an OVERSIZE LOAD AHEAD sign on its roof. An escort vehicle has yellow flashing lights and yellow and white wigwag lights and an OVERSIZE LOAD AHEAD sign on its roof. In general, the bigger the vehicle and its load, the more pilot or escort vehicles it will have.

When you see a pilot or escort vehicle approaching with its warning lights flashing:

- slow down
- move over if necessary
- respond to directions given by the driver of an escort vehicle
- give way to the oversize vehicle.

If you are following an oversize vehicle, wait until the rear escort vehicle operator signals you can overtake. Pass both pilot or escort vehicles and the oversize vehicle in one manoeuvre within the speed limit.

Guidelines containing pilot and escorts requirements are available from [www.nhvr.gov.au](http://www.nhvr.gov.au).

## Motorbikes

Motorbike riders have the same rights and responsibilities as other motor vehicle drivers. Apply the same road rules, such as giving way, when you share the road with motorbikes.

### Sharing the road safely with motorbikes

- Always scan the traffic and check your blind spot for motorbikes – front, rear, left, right – especially when changing lanes and at intersections.
- Look out for motorbike riders lane filtering or riding on a road shoulder.
- Use your lights in poor visibility – it helps motorbike riders see you.
- Be aware that motorbikes can accelerate quickly.
- Motorbike riders may take up an entire lane. You must overtake a motorbike as you would overtake any other vehicle.
- Give motorbikes plenty of room – in good driving conditions, keep a two second gap between you and the vehicle ahead. For more information about maintaining a safe following distance – see *Safe following distance*.

#### Common myth

Motorbike riders must ride single file.

#### Truth

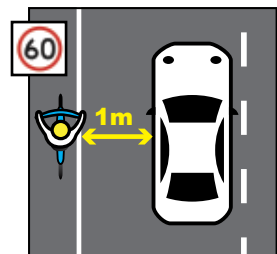
Two motorbike riders may ride side-by-side in one marked lane, as long as they are not more than 1.5m apart.

## Bicycles

Bicycle riders are legitimate road users with the same rights and responsibilities as other motorists. In the event of a crash, the limited protection offered by a bicycle means they could be seriously hurt or killed. For this reason you should take care around bicycle riders.

Remember, every person riding a bicycle means one less car on the road, which means reduced traffic and pollution.

- The give way rules apply to bicycle riders. You must give way to bicycle riders at intersections, just as you would give way to a car, and to bicycle riders riding across crossings.
- Bicycle riders can legally ride on the road and are not required to use a bicycle lane – only overtake when you can do it safely and leave the minimum passing distance.
- Leave a safe distance between your vehicle and a bicycle rider when passing or overtaking – you must leave at least 1 metre in a 60km/h or less speed zone and 1.5 metres if the speed zone is over 60km/h.



- Check for bicycle riders at intersections.
- Signal your intentions by indicating when required so bicycle riders can react.
- Check your blind spot for bicycle riders – look in mirrors and over your shoulder, especially when turning.
- Check for bicycle riders before opening your car door.
- Do not sound your horn at bicycle riders – it may startle them and make them fall.
- Anyone can legally bicycle on the footpath, so look for bicycle riders when entering or leaving a driveway.

#### Common myth

Bicycle riders must ride single file.

#### Truth

Two bicycle riders may legally ride beside each other on the road, as long as they are not more than 1.5m apart.

## Personal mobility devices

Personal mobility device (PMD) riders are legitimate road users. In the event of a crash, the limited protection offered by a PMD means they could be seriously hurt or killed. For this reason, you should take care around PMD riders.

### Sharing the road safely with personal mobility devices:

Drivers must give way to PMD riders crossing the road at an intersection or on or entering a slip lane.

Drivers should expect to see PMD riders using some bike lanes. These will include bike lanes on roads with a speed limit of 50km/h or less and all bike lanes that are physically separated from other lanes of traffic (for example, by bollards or raised median strip), regardless of speed.

Drivers must leave the minimum passing distance when overtaking a PMD rider on a road in the same way as currently applies to bike riders. The minimum passing distance is:

- 1m on roads with a speed limit of 60km/h or less
- 1.5m on roads on road with a speed limit of 70km/h or more.

Passing a PMD rider means that you (as a motorist) and the PMD rider are travelling in the same direction. This rule will apply regardless of whether the PMD rider is permitted to be on the road.

### Common myth

Personal mobility device riders must ride single file.

### Truth

Two personal mobility device riders may legally ride beside each other on the road as long as they are not more than 1.5m apart.

## Pedestrians

Always be aware of pedestrians. Pedestrians include people:

- walking
- using wheelchairs (including registered motorised wheelchairs)
- using rollerblades, skateboards, rollerskates and other wheeled recreational devices.

### Sharing the road safely with pedestrians

- When driving a vehicle or riding a bicycle or personal mobility device, you must give way to pedestrians when they're on or entering pedestrian crossings, children's crossings or marked foot crossings – see *Giving way at pedestrian and children's crossings*.
- When you are turning at an intersection, you must give way to pedestrians crossing the road you are turning into.
- You must give way to pedestrians in shared zones.
- Allow more time for people with a disability and senior pedestrians to cross the road.
- Lower your speed at night and be alert for people suddenly walking out on the road, especially around where alcohol may be served.
- Take care driving in areas where there are children, especially near schools and playgrounds. Watch out for children running out onto the road.
- If you see another vehicle stop or slow down near a pedestrian or children's school crossing, prepare to stop because pedestrians may be crossing.
- You must give way to pedestrians on or entering a slip lane.

### Common myth

At traffic lights, drivers who are turning on a green light do not have to give way to people crossing at a pedestrian crossing.

### Truth

Drivers turning must give way to pedestrians crossing the road that they are entering, even when the driver is facing a green traffic light or arrow.

## Schools

### School zones



You can identify school zones by signs near the school. Speed limits are lower in school zones on school days, generally in the morning and the afternoon. Lower speed limits reduce the risk of death or injury to pedestrians using the roads at these times. Speeds and times depend on the area, so you must always check the sign carefully.

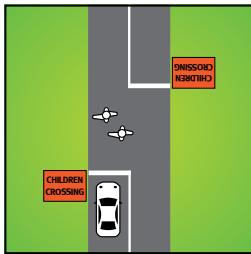
School zones at split campus schools generally apply for the duration of school hours.

For more information about speed limits in school zones, see *School speed zones*.

### Crossings at schools

There are two types of school crossings:

- single or dual children's school crossings with CHILDREN CROSSING flags
- zebra or pedestrian-activated signal crossings.



Some children's crossings are supervised by the Department of Transport and Main Roads crossing supervisors. Children's crossings are temporary, and are only in operation at certain times of the day when the CHILDREN CROSSING flags are displayed. Where supervised, a crossing supervisor will step onto the road and display the STOP sign.

You must wait until pedestrians and bicycle and personal mobility device riders have crossed the road and the crossing supervisor has returned to the

footpath.

If you come to a children's crossing, you must stop before the STOP line and wait while any pedestrian or bicycle rider is on or entering the crossing. You must not begin to accelerate until all pedestrians and bicycle riders are safely on the footpath on either side of the road. If a vehicle has stopped to give way to pedestrians or bicycle riders at a crossing, do not overtake the vehicle while it is stationary.

### School buses

Transporting children safely in school buses is part of school life.

Buses used only or primarily for taking children to or from school display either the words SCHOOL BUS or an image of two children. The signs have black letters or images on a yellow background.

School buses have flashing yellow warning lights fitted to the front and rear of the bus. The driver of a school bus must flash its warning lights when children are being picked up or set down.



You should slow down when approaching a school bus, especially when the yellow lights are flashing, and pass with care. Watch for children who may run across the road from in front of or behind the bus.

### Trams

A light rail (tram) system known as G:link operates on the Gold Coast. The area the trams run on is classed as part of the road and the Queensland Road Rules apply. Signs will show where the tramway begins and ends.



As a driver, it is important that you:

- obey all signs and traffic signals around tram tracks
- must not stop on the tram tracks or yellow painted cross hatching as this is classed as being part of the tram tracks
- only drive on or over the tracks at intersections that are controlled by traffic lights or signs
- do not queue across the tram tracks at any time.

Pedestrian access to tram stations is provided at signalised crossings. Pedestrians should use these facilities for their own safety.

## Sample questions – sharing with other road users

**1. If you are turning at an intersection, must you give way to pedestrians that are crossing the road you are turning into?**

- A. Yes.
- B. Only if the pedestrians are under 16 years of age.
- C. Only if the pedestrians are over 16 years of age.
- D. No.

**2. Which one of the following statements is true?**

- A. The speed limit in school zones does not apply if there are no children around.
- B. The speed limit in school zones only applies to children from within that school.
- C. The speed limit in school zones applies on weekends only.
- D. The speed limit in school zones applies on school days during designated times.



**3. An emergency vehicle (for example, ambulance or fire engine) is sounding its siren and quickly approaching your vehicle from behind. You must:**

- A. Immediately turn on your vehicle's hazard lights.
- B. Immediately sound your horn to warn other vehicles of the approaching emergency vehicle.
- C. Immediately accelerate.
- D. Move out of the path of the emergency vehicle as soon as you can do so safely.

**4. You may be faced with this sign, held by a school crossing supervisor, as you approach a school crossing. What should you do?**

- A. Slow down until all pedestrians are clear of your vehicle.
- B. Stop and remain stopped until the supervisor has returned to the footpath.
- C. Stop and remain stopped for children only.



**5. You are at a cross intersection without signs, road markings or traffic lights. A bicycle rider is approaching from your right. Which one of the following statements is true?**

- A. The bicycle rider must slow down so you can continue.
- B. The bicycle rider must give way to you.
- C. You must give way to the bicycle rider.
- D. If you wave the bicycle rider on, you should wait for them to pass, otherwise the bicycle rider must wait for you.

## Driving safely in tunnels

Things you need to be aware of when driving in tunnels:

- Remove sunglasses (except prescription) before entering a tunnel.
- Turn on your head lights, so that your vehicle is more visible.
- Turn your car radio on. Tunnels have re-broadcast systems that convey safety and traffic information to drivers via their radio and the tunnel public announcement system.
- Lane changing causes many crashes on busy arterial roads. Avoid lane changing and overtaking while travelling through tunnels.
- Stay out of closed lanes (signified by red crosses). Even if you can't see the problem, always obey signs and controller instructions.
- Do not stop in a tunnel except in an emergency or if directed by the tunnel controller. Try to drive out of a tunnel even if your vehicle is damaged or has a mechanical malfunction.
- Do not reverse in a tunnel.
- Check and obey variable message and lane control signs that provide important information about safety and traffic conditions.
- Tunnels usually have variable speed limits. Lower limits apply when traffic is congested or when an incident has occurred (e.g. a crash or broken down vehicle). Look for speed limit signs and stay within the limit in accordance with conditions. If Emergency Response Vehicles are in attendance, see *Move Over Slow Down* for information about the rules you need to follow.
- Do not enter a tunnel if your vehicle is very low on fuel.
- If you really need to overtake another vehicle (e.g. it is broken down) make sure you are clear of all other traffic and it is safe. Always use your indicators to show your intention to merge or change lanes.

# Stopping

## Safe following distance

If you drive too close to the vehicle in front of you, what will you do if they brake suddenly? You are likely to crash. Keep far enough back so that you can stop in time.

### How far should you travel behind?

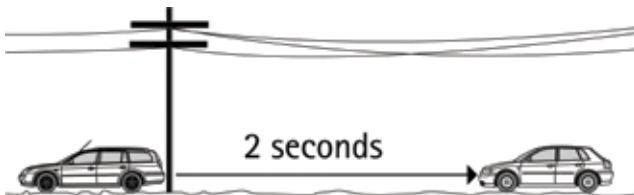
- A car should drive at least two seconds behind the vehicle in front in ideal conditions.
- A heavy vehicle should drive at least four seconds behind the vehicle in front.
- A vehicle towing a trailer or caravan should allow two seconds, plus one second for each 3m of trailer.

Double this following distance in poor conditions.

### Time-lapse method

Use the time-lapse method to keep a safe distance behind the vehicle in front.

1. Pick a mark on the road or an object close to the left-hand side of the road, such as a power or light pole.
2. When the rear of the vehicle ahead passes the object, count 'one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two' (this takes about two seconds). If the conditions are bad, count 'one-thousand-one, one-thousand-two, one-thousand-three, one-thousand-four' (this takes about four seconds).
3. If the front of your vehicle passes the object before you finish counting, you are too close, so leave more room.



## Braking

How quickly could you stop your vehicle in an emergency? The time for you to see and react (reaction distance) plus the time for you to apply the brakes to stop your vehicle (braking distance) may not be enough to avoid a crash.

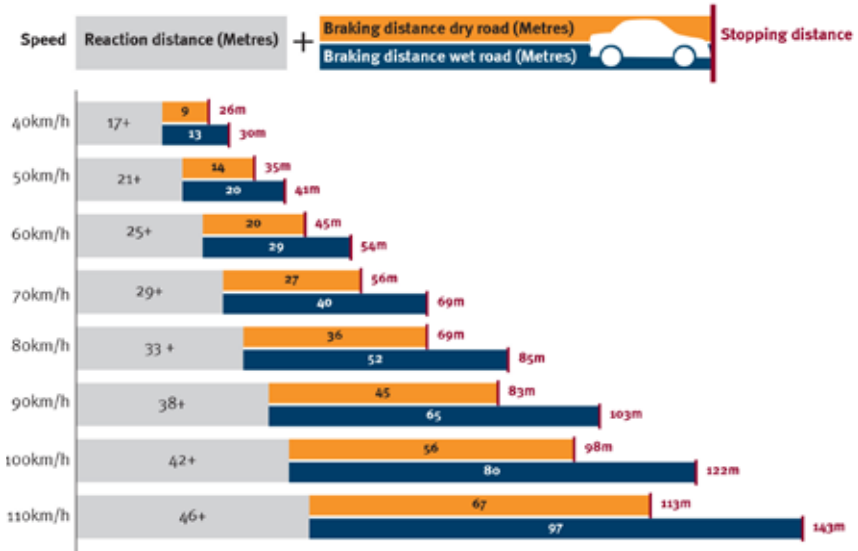
**Reaction distance + braking distance = total stopping distance.**

## Total stopping distance

The faster you go, the further you travel before you stop. The following graph shows how much quicker you stop if you travel at lower speeds and how much longer it takes to stop in wet weather conditions.

By the time a car travelling at 50km/h has stopped, a car braking from 60km/h would still be travelling at about 40km/h. If you hit a pedestrian at this speed, they have an almost 60 per cent chance of being killed.

### How long it takes to stop (driving an average family car)



This graph is a guide only.

Your vehicle's stopping distance is also affected by:

- your reaction time (average of 1.5 seconds)
- your experience and age
- average deceleration of your car
- physical condition of your car
- braking capacity of your car
- condition of the tyres
- nature of the road
- weather conditions
- your behaviour at the time of the incident.

Your stopping distance will increase when the road is wet, muddy, slippery, has a loose surface, or if you are travelling downhill, so always ensure you drive to the conditions.

**Note:** If your vehicle is fitted with an anti-lock braking system (ABS), you should refer to the owner's handbook to familiarise yourself with how the system operates.

# Hazards

## Approaching hazards

A hazard can be a physical feature or a situation such as an intersection, roundabout, or pedestrians or animals near a roadway.

Young and novice drivers do not detect hazards as well as experienced drivers. That is why the hazard perception test was introduced for novice drivers.

For information about the *Hazard perception test*.

Young drivers also react more slowly to avoid a hazard. However, if you follow the system of vehicle control, you will always be in the correct position on the road, travelling at the correct speed and in the correct gear so you can deal with any hazard safely.

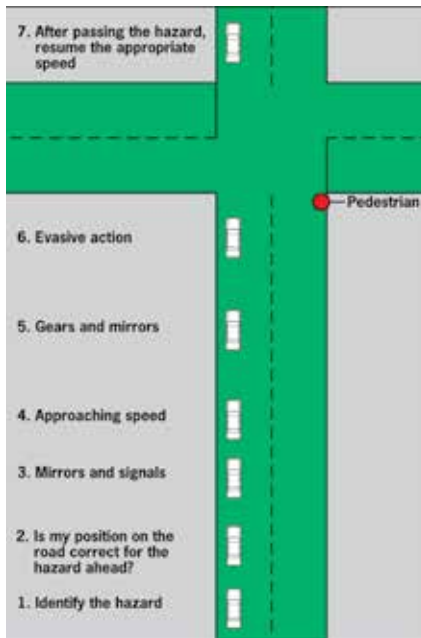
As a driver you should:

- recognise the hazard (scan continuously)
- know what action to take (system of vehicle control)
- act in time (give other drivers behind you ample warning).

## System of vehicle control

Use the following system when approaching any traffic situation.

- 1. Identify the hazard** (for example, an intersection or a pedestrian).
- 2. Ask**, 'Is my position on the road correct for the hazard ahead?'
- 3. Mirrors and signals** — check the rear vision mirrors to see where other vehicles are. If you need to indicate, do it now.
- 4. Approaching speed** — check your speed is appropriate. Reduce or increase your speed as necessary.
- 5. Gears and mirrors** — if you change speed, you may need to change gears. Check the rear vision mirrors again to see what other vehicles are doing.



**6. Evasive action** – just before you come to the hazard, check to see if it is still safe to drive in the way and direction you planned. Ask, ‘Do I have to take some action?’ This may mean stopping, slowing down or sounding the horn.

7. After passing the hazard, **resume** the appropriate speed.

### Hazardous situations

A hazardous driving situation includes, animals or debris on the road, tyre blowouts, skidding or aquaplaning.

In a hazardous situation, apply the system of vehicle control described above.

### Skidding

To prevent a skid, follow the ABC plan:

- accelerate smoothly
- brake smoothly
- corner smoothly.

Skidding is caused by one or a combination of these factors:

- driving too fast for the circumstances
- too much acceleration
- sudden or too much braking or faulty brakes
- turning the steering wheel too sharply or too much so that the tyres lose traction and the vehicle skids.

Wet surfaces, gravel roads and inadequate tyre grip increase the risk of skidding. Reduce your speed when driving in wet weather or on rough surfaces and always ensure your tyres are in good condition and have at least 1.5mm of tread depth all over the tyre’s tread.

## **Aquaplaning**

Aquaplaning or hydroplaning occurs when there is enough water on the road's surface to cause your vehicle to lose contact with the road. Reducing your vehicle's speed can assist in reducing the risk of aquaplaning.

## **Bad weather (rain, fog, dust)**

Only use your hazard lights if you are driving in hazardous weather conditions and you are driving slowly and likely to obstruct other vehicles, or your vehicle is stopped and is obstructing the path of other vehicles or pedestrians.

When driving in bad weather:

- keep your windscreen and all lights clean
- turn your headlights on when you cannot clearly see people or vehicles
- keep headlights on low beam – in fog you can see better on low beam than high beam
- during the day, you may drive in fog or other hazardous weather conditions without your headlights on if you turn on your front fog lights (if fitted)
- you may only drive with fog lights on if you are in fog or hazardous weather conditions causing reduced visibility
- use your air conditioner or demister to keep the windscreen clear
- slow down – remember the signed speed limit is the maximum safe speed for good conditions
- double your following distance to allow for longer reaction time and subsequent greater stopping distance – see *Safe following distance*.

## **Road closures due to flooding and wet weather**

- Flood waters can be fast moving. For your safety, don't drive on roads covered by water. If it's flooded, forget it.
- Plan your journey by checking [qldtraffic.qld.gov.au](http://qldtraffic.qld.gov.au) or by downloading the *QLDTraffic* App for current traffic conditions and road closures. Alternatively call **13 19 40** to check road conditions or report a road issue.
- Be alert for changed road conditions, especially any loose debris from surrounding vegetation and river banks.
- When floodwater starts to go down, don't drive over roads or bridges until they have been declared open again by the authorities.
- Due to increased driver concentration when driving in poor conditions, plan regular rest stops, especially on your longer journeys.
- Follow directions from roadworkers, transport inspectors and emergency service personnel.
- Do not ignore ROAD CLOSED signs. They are there for a reason. Penalties apply.



## **Tyre blowouts**

If a tyre blows out, your vehicle will pull to the side of the damage for a front tyre and sway to the sides for a rear tyre.

If this happens:

- do not panic
- grip the steering wheel firmly and compensate for any pull to one side
- do not immediately apply the brakes.

Once the vehicle is under control:

- let the vehicle slow down gradually
- look for a safe place to pull over and stop. If you are on a highway try to exit the highway before stopping — if you have to stop, stop in the emergency stopping bay or lane and move as far left as possible.

It is important to remember that different vehicles may behave differently depending on the conditions, so this advice should be used as a guide only.

## **Animals at night**

Animals can be hypnotised by the glare of your headlights. If an animal is on the road:

- slow down
- apply the system of vehicle control
- be prepared to brake
- flash your headlights
- sound your horn (if necessary)
- keep control of the vehicle and do not swerve.

**Note:** Watch for animals on the side of the road because they may cross the road without warning.

# Driver fatigue

Fatigue is a hidden killer – it creeps up on drivers who ignore their body's warning signs. Driving while tired is a factor in one in six crashes that result in serious injury or death. Driving without sleep for 17 hours is the same as driving with a breath or blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.05. Driving without sleep for 24 hours is the same as driving with a BAC of 0.10.

Fatigue related crashes are often on open roads at high speeds and occur during the hours of 1pm–3pm and midnight–6am, with a higher incidence on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Whether you travel long or short distances, stay alert at all times.

## How to avoid driving tired on long trips

- Take regular breaks – at least 15 minutes every two hours and an additional 30 minutes every five hours is recommended.
- Pull into rest areas, tourist spots and Driver Reviver sites when you can – see *Driver reviver sites*.
- Avoid drinking alcohol before and during the trip.
- Check with your doctor if any medications you're taking affect your driving ability.
- Eat properly – not too little, not too much. Big meals can make you drowsy.
- Get plenty of sleep before your trip – not getting enough quality sleep before your trip is dangerous.
- Don't drive for more than 8–10 hours in a day. If driving a heavy vehicle, demerit points and fines apply if you commit a fatigue offence.
- Get fresh air in the car and during breaks.
- Share the driving.
- Plan ahead – arrange stops and rest overnight.
- Check for warning signs of tiredness – see below.
- As soon as you feel tired, stop and rest.

## How to avoid driving tired on short trips

- If you feel tired before you start, consider not driving.
- Ask someone to drive you home or pick you up.
- Collect your car later when you are not tired.

## Warning signs

Wake up to the signs. Do not keep driving if you show these signs of tiredness:

- tired eyes
- yawning
- drowsiness
- loss of concentration
- your car wanders across the road
- fumbling gear changes
- daydreaming
- squinting
- blurred vision
- reduced concentration
- unintentional increases or decreases in speed
- dim or fuzzy vision
- sore or heavy eyes.

## Driver reviver sites



Driver reviver sites operate along major Queensland highways during busy holiday periods. You can rest while enjoying free tea, coffee and refreshments.

For operating times, visit the *Driver Reviver* section at [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au).

# Correct seatbelt and child restraint use

A seatbelt is your defence against serious injury or death in a crash. Without a seatbelt, you are almost 9 times more likely to lose your life if involved in a crash. You never know when a crash will happen, so why take the risk?

## Wearing seatbelts

Always wear your seatbelt correctly. An incorrectly worn seatbelt could cause neck, chest or abdominal injuries in a crash.

- Wear your belt with the buckle low on the hip, the sash running from the shoulder across the chest and above the stomach, and the lap part sitting across the pelvis and hips.
- Pregnant women must wear the seatbelt with the lap part sitting over the thighs, across the pelvis and below the baby. The sash should be above the stomach and between the breasts.
- Check the seatbelt is not twisted, frayed or loose.
- Everyone in the car must have their own seatbelt – do not share a seatbelt.
- Replace the entire seatbelt assembly if the vehicle is involved in a severe crash.

## Child restraints

It is a driver's responsibility to ensure that a child is restrained in an appropriate approved child restraint. A child could easily be killed or injured in a crash if they are not in a correctly fitted, Australian Standards approved child restraint.

You must ensure that a child is secured in an approved child restraint until the child turns seven years of age. Once a child turns seven, you must ensure that the child uses a properly fitted adult seatbelt. The type of approved child restraint that you must use will depend on the age and size of the child.

The rules recognise that some children may be too small or too large for a specific type of restraint. If your child is too small to move into the next level of restraint, you should keep your child in the lower level of child restraint for as long as necessary. If your child is too large to fit into a restraint specified, you may move your child into the next level of restraint. A child is too tall for a booster seat when the level of the child's eyes is above the level of the back of the booster seat.

The following table, *A guide to child restraints*, specifies the type of approved child restraint required for each age group.

## A guide to child restraints

It is the law for all children up to seven years old to be correctly restrained according to their age and size.

Age	Standard AS/NZS 1754	Child restraint
<b>0 to 6 months</b>	If your child has reached this age, they should still use the appropriate restraint until their shoulders reach the upper shoulder height marker.	Rearward facing infant restraint 
<b>6 months to 4 years</b>	If your child has reached this age, they should still use the appropriate restraint until their shoulders reach the upper shoulder height marker.	Rearward facing infant restraint  Forward facing child restraint with built-in harness  
<b>4 to 7 years</b>	If your child has reached this age, they should still use the appropriate restraint until their shoulders reach the upper shoulder height marker.	Booster seat with lap-sash H-harness or a booster seat with a secured adult seatbelt  

No restraint will work properly or prevent injury unless it is fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's directions. For information about child restraint standards, please visit [www.qld.gov.au/childrestraints](http://www.qld.gov.au/childrestraints).

A child under four years of age must not sit in the front row of a vehicle that has more than one row of seats, even if the child is three years of age and large enough to be seated in a booster seat.

A child four years old, but less than seven years of age must not sit in the front row of a vehicle that has more than one row of seats unless all the other seats

are occupied by children under seven years of age.

For example, if there are three children aged four to six years in a vehicle with two rows of seats and all the child restraints cannot fit across the back seat, the eldest child can sit in the front seat. They must all be appropriately restrained.

A child of any age can sit in the front seat if the vehicle has only one row of seats, for example a utility, and the child is properly restrained. If the vehicle has a passenger airbag fitted, a rearward facing child restraint should not be used.

Further information about child restraints is available at [www.qld.gov.au/childrestraints](http://www.qld.gov.au/childrestraints).

### **Children with a disability or medical condition**

If your child has a disability or medical condition and cannot be safely restrained under the Australian Standard - AS/NZS 1754, you may be prescribed a restraint under the AS/NZS 4370 *Restraint of children with disabilities, or medical conditions, in motor vehicles*.

The AS/NZS 4370 provides a safe restraint guide for children with disabilities and/or medical conditions who are required to use modified approved child car seats, imported speciality seats, postural harnesses, behavioural harnesses, or harnesses allowing children to lie across the back seat to travel safely in a vehicle.

To use a restraint approved under AS/NZS 4370, you will need to obtain a prescriber's certificate. A prescriber's certificate may be issued by a medical practitioner (general practitioner or specialist), occupational therapist, psychologist, physiotherapist or biomedical engineer. A prescriber's certificate may be issued for up to a seven year period, however, a 12 month review will be required.

Once you have the prescriber's certificate, you may have the restraint fitted in your vehicle and transport your child as instructed. You must carry the prescriber's certificate in the vehicle with the child and be able to present it to a police officer on request. An example of a prescriber's certificate may be found under appendix B in the AS/NZS 4370.

The rules for restraining a child in compliance with AS/NZS 4370 are specific to Queensland. If you are using this method to restrain your child in a vehicle and intend to travel interstate, you should enquire with the interstate jurisdiction(s) as to the legal requirements to restrain your child when driving in their state or territory.

For more information about AS/NZS 4370, please visit [www.qld.gov.au/](http://www.qld.gov.au/)

## **childrestraints.**

If your child is under seven years and has a disability or medical condition that prevents them from safely travelling in a rear or middle row of seats in your vehicle, you may obtain an exemption from complying with the road rules by getting a certificate from a health professional to verify this. A health professional may be a medical doctor (general practitioner or specialist), occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

The certificate must have an issue and expiry date and state how your child should travel or be restrained in the vehicle. When transporting your child, the driver of the vehicle must carry the certificate and be able to present it to a police officer on request.

The necessity to require a child under four years to travel in the front seat of a vehicle that has two or more rows of seats is a very rare occurrence. Therefore, the health professional's certificate should not be issued until the specific circumstances applying to the child have been considered and all other reasonable alternatives have also been considered.

For more information about child restraint exemptions, please visit [www.qld.gov.au/childrestraints](http://www.qld.gov.au/childrestraints).

## **The driver's responsibility**

The driver is responsible for ensuring that all people travelling in their vehicle are correctly restrained. If the driver or their passengers are not restrained correctly, the driver risks a fine and four demerit points. The driver will also be fined and get demerit points for each unrestrained or incorrectly restrained child in the vehicle.

Exemptions:

- Taxi, limousine, booked hire and tow truck drivers are exempt from ensuring passengers under the age of one year are restrained providing there is no suitable child restraint available, the passenger is seated in the lap of another passenger who is 16 years of age or older, and they are not seated in the front row of seats (where there are no alternative rows available).
- Taxi, limousine and booked hire drivers are exempt from ensuring passengers between one and seven years of age are restrained in a child restraint providing there is no suitable child restraint available and they are not seated in the front row of seats (where there are no alternative rows available). In the absence of a child restraint, the passenger must still wear a seatbelt.
- Bus drivers are exempt, child restraints are not required on buses.
- On medical grounds where a certificate is provided by a doctor.

# Towing a trailer or caravan

Towing a trailer or caravan requires extra concentration and skill. You should gain experience before trying to tow at high speed or in confined spaces.

## Before you start

Ensure your vehicle and trailer or caravan are safe to drive or tow. Check:

- tyres and tyre pressure
- wheel bearings and suspension
- brakes – an efficient braking system is needed for all trailers with a loaded weight of more than 750kg
- trailer coupling, including lights and safety chain. Couplings must be strong enough to take the weight of a fully loaded trailer and must be marked with the manufacturer's name or trademark and the rated capacity
- safety chains should be short enough to stop the front of the trailer hitting the ground if the couplings break
- loading – distribute the bulk of it over the axles.

Check the manufacturer's towing rating for your vehicle to ensure it can legally tow the weight of the trailer or caravan.

## How to tow safely

- When turning, allow additional space for the extra length and width of the trailer.
- Steer smoothly to avoid swaying, especially in wet or slippery conditions.
- Allow for a greater stopping distance and look ahead for any changes in road or traffic conditions.
- Avoid braking unnecessarily even if the trailer begins to sway or snake. Continue at a steady speed or accelerate slightly until the swaying stops.
- Keep left – don't hold up traffic unnecessarily.

See *Long vehicles*; *Parking restrictions for heavy and long vehicles*; *Following other long vehicles*; and *Towlines*, for road rules specific to towing trailers and caravans.

For more information about towing visit [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au).



## Restraining your load

As a driver, you have a legal responsibility to your passengers, other road users and yourself to ensure that all loads carried by your vehicle are securely restrained.

This is how you carry loads safely.

1. Choose a suitable vehicle to carry the load.
2. Position the load correctly, ensuring the load does not affect the vehicle's stability, steering or braking performance.
3. If your load is light material, for example bark chips or leaves, secure it properly. This may mean covering your load with a tarpaulin.
4. Use suitable restraints that are strong enough and in good condition.
5. Provide adequate load restraint to prevent movement of the load.
6. Drive carefully – be prepared for changes in the vehicle's stability, steering and braking capacity.
7. If your load overhangs at the front, back or sides, check the overhang is legal.

Further information about carrying loads is available in the *Load Restraint Guide*. The guide can be downloaded from the National Transport Commission website at [www.ntc.gov.au](http://www.ntc.gov.au).

## What to do at a crash

### What to do

You must stop if you are involved in a crash.

You must report a crash to the police immediately if:

- a vehicle involved needs to be towed away
- any driver involved in the crash does not give his or her particulars to any other drivers involved in the crash
- any person involved is killed or injured.

If the crash cannot be reported immediately, it must be reported within 24 hours of the crash occurring. There are additional obligations that apply if a person is seriously injured or killed in a crash.

If Emergency Response Vehicle/s are in attendance, see *Move Over Slow Down* for information about the rules you need to follow.

For more information visit [www.qld.gov.au](http://www.qld.gov.au).

## Tow trucks

There are laws governing tow truck licence holders, and it is important you know your rights when having your vehicle towed.

Queensland's tow truck regulations applies to towing from crashes, police seizures, and private property parking in regulated areas. Most major populated areas of Queensland are regulated areas. For a full list, see the *Tow Truck Regulation 2009*.

Tow truck licence operators must be licensed by the Department of Transport and Main Roads to tow any vehicle from a crash, police seizure or private property parking. The tow truck licence holder's name, business address and telephone number must be clearly marked on their vehicle.

### Organising your vehicle to be towed

- The accredited tow truck driver is the only person who is allowed to approach you about towing your vehicle from the crash. If you are injured and unable to make your own decisions, another person who is with you or an authorised person such as a police officer may act on your behalf as your agent.
- The tow truck driver must show you their certificate, even if you do not ask to see it.
- You or your agent must sign a towing authority form before your vehicle can be towed from the crash.
- Make sure the towing authority form is fully completed before you sign it. The form should include full details of the cost of the tow, the cost of any storage and the address of where you want the vehicle to be towed.
- A police officer or Department of Transport and Main Roads authorised officer may sign the towing authority form if you or your agent cannot sign the form. In this case, the tow truck licence holder must inform the department where your vehicle was towed within seven days.
- A tow truck licence holder must not charge more than the regulated towing fee for a standard tow. A standard tow includes:
  - loading and moving the vehicle to a place of storage (includes the first 50km from the incident scene – a fee per kilometre may be charged for each kilometre over 50km)
  - up to 60 minutes working time
  - cleaning the scene of the incident
  - storing the vehicle for up to 72 hours.
- If your vehicle is covered by comprehensive insurance, your insurance company may pay for the towing of the vehicle from the crash. Confirm this with your insurance company.

- In the case of a minor crash where your vehicle has not sustained any significant damage you may refuse to sign the towing authority if the vehicle is in a suitable condition to be driven or you wish to make other arrangements.
- It is important to note that the crash site be cleared quickly in the interest of public safety.
- A tow truck driver or assistant must not threaten, intimidate harass, insult or abuse you. They must not wilfully injure you, damage your property or hinder the delivery of first aid or medical treatment.
- Once your vehicle is in storage, it cannot be moved again without your permission.
- A tow truck licence holder must not charge you to view your vehicle during business hours when it is held at the storage yard, or to move your vehicle near the entrance of the yard for collection.
- A tow truck licence holder must keep a record of all property in your vehicle and keep the property in storage for you.
- A tow truck licence holder, must not disclose any personal information about the owner of the vehicle they have towed unless it is to be disclosed to the vehicle owner, their agent or to an authorised officer.

For more information about tow truck legislation, see the *Tow Truck Act 1973* and the *Tow Truck Regulation 2009* by visiting the Office of the Queensland Parliamentary Counsel website at [www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au).

For more information on regulated towing fees, visit [www.tmr.qld.gov.au](http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au) or call **13 23 80**.