

# A Handbook for Western Australian Road Users

This handbook is a guide to safe driving and an interpretation of the law.

It is NOT the law, but a simplified version of the road rules contained in the *Road Traffic Act 1974* and Regulations, including the Australian Road Rules that apply currently in Western Australia.

It does not include all the traffic regulations and is not intended to be used as a legal document.

The rules and regulations quoted in this book are those in force as at 30 June 2008.

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## A Message from the Director General of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure

This handbook is a comprehensive guide to the road rules that apply in Western Australia.

It is written in an easy to understand format and designed primarily to help new drivers prepare for a lifetime of safe driving. If you are a new driver, this book contains the information you will need to obtain your learner's permit.

The laws explained in this book are the major ones that are contained in the *Road Traffic Code 2000* and *Road Traffic (Vehicle Standards) Regulations 2002*. However, drivers should be familiar with all traffic laws and a copy of the relevant rules and regulations can be viewed on the Internet at [www.slp.wa.gov.au](http://www.slp.wa.gov.au) or purchased from the State Law Publisher.

To earn your driver's licence will require a great deal of effort and, most importantly, many hours of practical experience driving with a supervisor.

Those who have already obtained their licence will still need to refer to this handbook regularly and to the *Road Traffic Code 2000* to ensure that their understanding of the road rules is up to date.

While a good knowledge of traffic laws will help you drive more safely, research shows that human behaviour is a factor in over 90 per cent of road crashes, so it is important that the theoretical knowledge of the correct use of our roads is translated into responsible and careful driving. The big killers continue to be speeding, drinking and driving, failing to wear a seat belt and driving when tired.

Please take the time to learn the detailed information in this handbook, refer to it regularly and put into practice the safe driving behaviour that is the responsibility of us all.

Eric Lumsden

Director General

Department for Planning and Infrastructure

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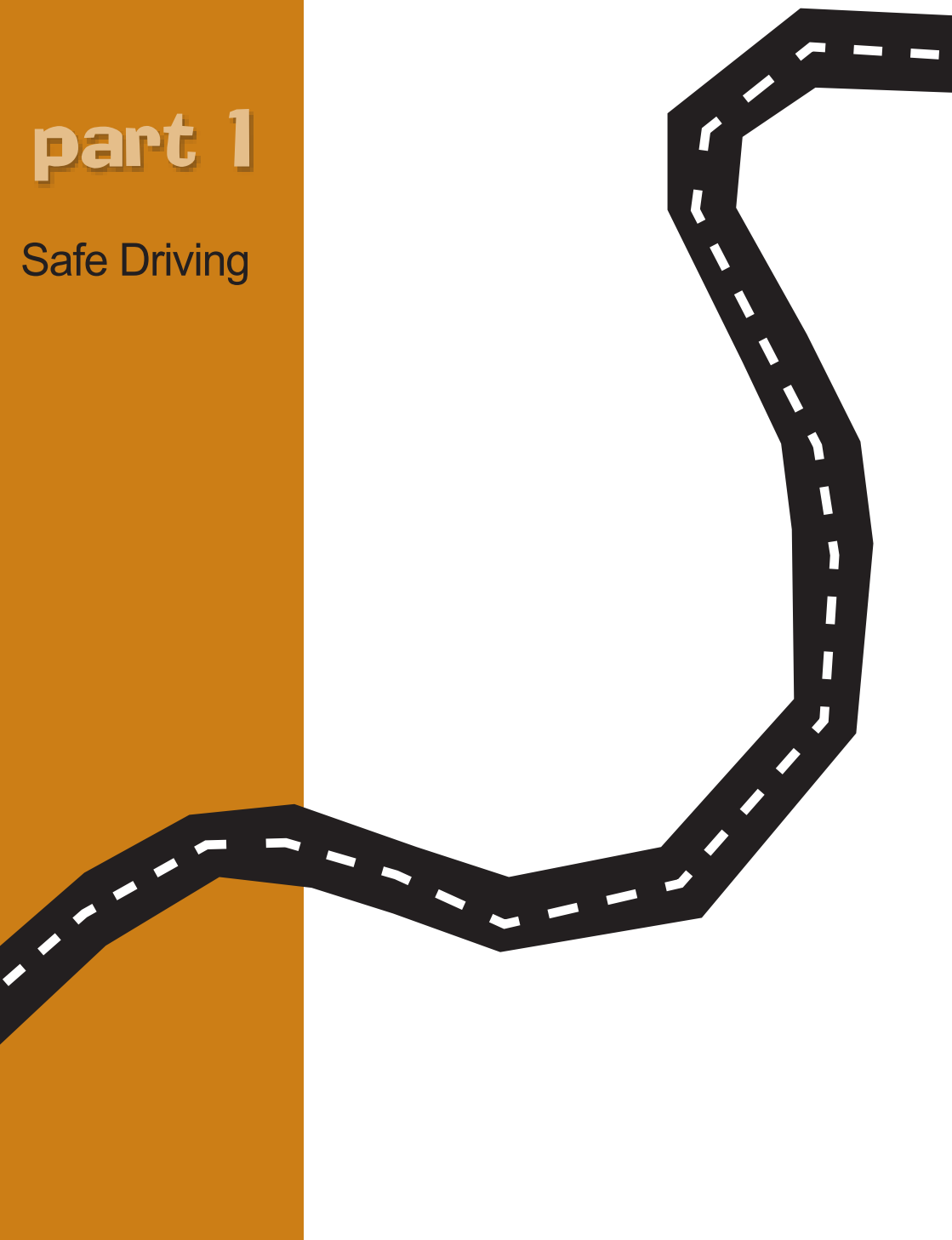
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# part 1

## Safe Driving





## 1.1 The High Cost of Road Trauma

Every death on our roads is a major tragedy causing enormous emotional pain and grief to family and friends. Even more distressing is the fact that many of those killed are young people. Statistics show that road users between 17 and 24 years of age make up just 15 per cent of the Australian population, but they account for around one-third of road deaths. In Western Australia, 20 per cent of drivers killed in road crashes are under 20 years of age, but this age group represents only six per cent of all drivers.

*The major contributions to serious road trauma are speeding, alcohol, driving when tired and the non-use of restraints.* All these factors are within the control of the driver, which means that almost all road deaths and serious injuries can be prevented.

Research also tells us that lack of driving experience is a major factor in crashes involving young people. That is why the process for obtaining a driving licence has such a focus on practical experience. New drivers now spend more time driving under supervision and twice as long driving with the restricted requirements of 'P' plates than previously. They also have to successfully complete a Hazard Perception Test.

The loss of life and the cost to the community are unnecessary burdens that can be reduced with greater care and more responsible behaviour by all drivers, both young and old.

## 1.2 Speed

Speeding increases the risk of being involved in a crash and of being seriously injured or killed. Speeding is **not** just driving faster than the speed limit; it is also driving too fast to suit the road, traffic, visibility or the weather conditions.

It is against the law to drive above the posted speed limit. If you are caught speeding you will be fined and you may accumulate demerit points. *If you have a provisional licence, you could have your licence cancelled.*

Under the 'Anti-Hoon' legislation people caught travelling at 45km/h or more above the posted speed limit can be charged with reckless driving, resulting in licence suspension or even cancellation. They can also have their vehicles impounded or confiscated, if they are racing or doing 'burnouts'.

### 1.2.1 Why is it more dangerous to drive fast?

It is more dangerous to drive fast because:

- injuries are more severe at high speed;
- you are more likely to be killed or kill someone else;
- it is harder to control a vehicle that is travelling at high speed;
- you have less time to react to hazards; and
- other drivers have less time to avoid a collision with you.

*Always travel at a speed that allows you to anticipate and react safely to sudden dangerous situations that can occur on the road.*

### 1.2.2 Choosing what speed to travel

A speed limit is the maximum legal speed at which you can travel on a road under ideal conditions. You must adjust your speed to suit the conditions and remember never drive faster than the speed limit. The speed limit can be shown on signs or be the limit that applies to 'built-up' areas or the State's maximum speed limit depending on where you are driving.

As a basic guide, you should drive slower when:

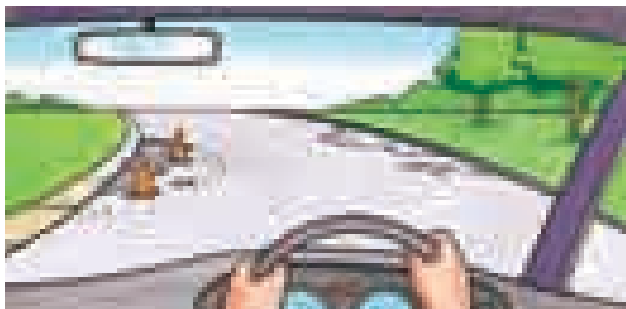
#### ■ The road is busy



If there are parked cars ahead, there is a chance that drivers may open their doors or pull out suddenly. People may also step out from between parked cars.

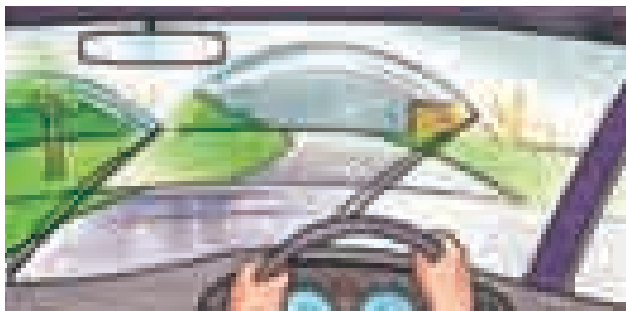
If the traffic control signal ahead of you is green, it may turn yellow or red by the time you get there, and you must be able to stop safely.

### ■ Road conditions are poor



Be careful if there are potholes in the road. It is always wise to slow down when there is loose gravel or sand on the road, particularly at bends. If road works are being carried out, slow down and do not exceed speed limits that are displayed on signs.

### ■ Visibility is poor



Slow down if you cannot see clearly because of rain, fog, smoke, bad light, dazzling lights or the sun shining in your eyes.

### ■ There are pedestrians and cyclists around



Pay attention when you see cyclists and pedestrians, especially near shopping centres or schools. Pedestrians may forget to look before they cross the road. Give cyclists more space – don't 'squeeze' them off the road.

Your speed helps determine how much time you have to react safely to a particular situation. The higher your speed, the less time you have to spot the hazard and react to it.

## 1.3 Alcohol and Drugs

If you drive after drinking alcohol or taking other drugs you are more likely to be involved in a crash. Alcohol or drugs by themselves are dangerous but the combined effect can be deadly.

Enforcement of drink driving and drug driving saves lives. Remember that every police vehicle is a 'booze bus' and the probability that you will be randomly breath tested is high.

Your licence is a valuable privilege. Don't risk your licence, your life or the lives of others by driving after you have consumed alcohol and/or taken any drugs that affect your driving.

*IT IS NOW AN OFFENCE TO DRIVE OR ATTEMPT TO DRIVE WHILE IMPAIRED BY DRUGS.*

### 1.3.1 The effects of alcohol on driving

Alcohol is absorbed quickly into the blood and travels rapidly to all parts of the body. It affects your brain's ability to make judgements and process information. It also impairs your consciousness and vision.

No amount of coffee or soft drink will sober you up – only time can do that.

If you drink alcohol and drive, you will find it difficult to:

- judge the speed of your vehicle;
- judge the distance between your car and other cars;
- notice traffic control signals, pedestrians and other potential hazards;
- concentrate on the task of driving;
- keep your balance, especially on a motorcycle (or on a bicycle, or as a pedestrian);  
and
- stay awake when you are driving.

Alcohol also gives you a false sense of confidence. You may take more risks than you would normally – but remember, alcohol slows down your reaction time to road hazards.

### 1.3.2 Blood alcohol concentration (BAC)

Blood alcohol concentration is the quantity of alcohol in the body. It is measured by the weight in grams of alcohol present in 100 millilitres of blood. A person's BAC can be determined by analysing a blood, breath or urine sample.

*As soon as you start drinking, your BAC begins to rise and could take up to two hours to reach its highest concentration, especially if you have eaten a substantial meal at the same time. Even though you may not have had a drink for an hour or more, your BAC may still be rising.*

### 1.3.3 What is the legal limit?

It is an offence for a Novice Driver (a driver, who has not held a drivers licence for a period of 2 years or aggregate periods adding up to 2 years) to drive, or attempt to drive, with a BAC that exceeds 0.00 per cent.

Drivers with a full licence commit an offence if they drive, or attempt to drive, with a BAC exceeds 0.05 per cent.

Drivers who have been disqualified from driving for certain alcohol offences and then had their licence re-issued, must not drive with a BAC equal to or exceeding 0.02 per cent for a period of three years. Refer to Appendix 3 for details of penalties. Drivers and riders should be aware that these penalties may change from time to time.

Drivers holding an extraordinary licence must not drive with a BAC equal to or exceeding 0.02 per cent.

### 1.3.4 How much alcohol takes you over the legal limit?

#### 0.00 per cent BAC

You must not drink any alcoholic drinks at all if you intend to drive

#### 0.02 per cent BAC

To be sure that you do not reach 0.02 per cent, you should not drink any alcoholic drinks at all when you intend to drive.

#### 0.05 per cent BAC

BAC levels vary from person to person. The amount of alcohol you can consume before reaching the legal limit depends on factors such as:

- **your size and fitness level.** If you are unfit or of small build, it may take you less than the standard number of drinks to exceed the legal limit;

- **your gender.** Alcohol is soluble in water. Men's bodies generally have a higher proportion of water than women's. Therefore, consuming the same amount of alcohol will usually cause a higher BAC in a woman than a man of a similar size;
- **the amount of alcohol still in your blood from drinking the night before or earlier in the day.** If you still have traces of alcohol in your blood, your BAC will be higher than normal after one standard drink; and
- **the amount of food in your stomach.** Food slows down the absorption of alcohol. If you have not eaten a substantial meal before drinking alcohol, your BAC may reach the legal limit more quickly than if you have had something substantial to eat.



### What is a Standard Drink?

*Any drink containing 10 grams of alcohol is called a standard drink.*

One standard drink will raise an average person's BAC by about 0.01 per cent (grams of alcohol per 100ml of blood), depending upon the factors mentioned. A measurement of 0.05 per cent BAC means that your body contains 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.

The Department of Health advises that to stay below 0.05 per cent BAC:

- an average sized, healthy woman should have no more than one standard drink in the first hour of drinking and then no more than one standard drink per hour after that; and
- an average sized, healthy man should have no more than two standard drinks in the first hour of drinking, then no more than one standard drink per hour after that.

### 1.3.5 How long does alcohol stay in your body?

The body breaks down alcohol very slowly. *A healthy person will take about one hour to get rid of the alcohol from one standard drink.* So, if you have four standard drinks in an hour, it will take about four hours to get it all out of your system.

Remember, no amount of coffee or soft drink will speed up the breakdown of alcohol in your body.

To ensure you stay below 0.05 per cent BAC, limit your drinking to one standard alcoholic drink per hour. The Department of Health recommends that, for the sake of your health, you should limit your alcohol intake to four standard drinks a day if you are a man and two standard drinks a day if you are a woman.

Always follow these three rules when drinking alcohol:

- limit yourself to one standard drink per hour;
- drink plenty of water and other non-alcoholic drinks; and
- eat something substantial while drinking.

### 1.3.6 Effect of alcohol and other drugs on driving

Many prescribed and non-prescribed drugs and medicines can seriously affect your driving ability. Drugs such as sedatives or tranquillisers may impair your concentration, make you drowsy and slow down your reaction time. Medications for the common cold or travel sickness can have the same effect. These side effects may last several hours. If you are taking any drugs or medications, check with your doctor or chemist about the effect they may have on your driving ability.

#### **Never combine alcohol and drugs.**

The effects of alcohol and drugs vary and can become much stronger when they are used in combination. This can be very dangerous and even deadly.

### 1.3.7 Random breath testing (RBT)

Police may stop motorists and require them to take a breath test. It is a serious offence to refuse a breath test. To pass the test you must be under the limit of 0.02 per cent BAC for provisional drivers and extraordinary driver licence holders, or 0.05 per cent BAC for drivers with full licences.

### 1.3.8 What to do if you want to drink

Don't drink and then drive. If you want to drink, plan ahead. Your options include:

- arranging a lift with a friend who isn't drinking;
- arranging to stay the night after a party;
- hiring a minibus, if it is for a group;
- appointing a skipper;
- using public transport;
- phoning someone to come and collect you; or
- taking a taxi.

*One way to avoid drinking too much alcohol is to alternate your alcoholic drinks with water, non-alcoholic or low alcohol drinks.* Do not get involved in 'shouts' requiring you to buy rounds of drinks.

Don't drive with a BAC greater than the legal limit. In doing so, you face an increased risk that you will:

- lose your life or cause others to lose their lives;
- injure yourself or someone else;
- be charged by the police;
- lose your licence;
- be fined or imprisoned;
- have your vehicle confiscated; or
- damage your car or someone else's property.

**If you have a crash while you are over the BAC level, or you are impaired by drugs, you will not be covered by insurance.**



## 1.4 Seat Belts

Seat belts save lives. Always wear one!

### 1.4.1 How do seat belts work in a crash?

There are two types of collision in any road crash:



- The **car collision** is the first collision. The car hits something and then comes to a stop. The part of the vehicle that receives the first impact of the collision stops immediately. In most cases, the engine bay or the boot absorbs some of the impact. The driver/passenger compartment sometimes remains comparatively undamaged.



- The **human collision** is the second and more dangerous collision. In this collision, occupants are thrown about inside the car, or even out of the car.

If you are not restrained by a seat belt, you will keep moving inside the car if it comes to a sudden stop.

If you are travelling at 100 km/h on impact, your body will still be moving at that speed after the collision.

If you are not wearing a seat belt, you will hit some part of the car or the other people in the car. The higher the speed, the greater the force with which you will be thrown around inside the car or out of the car.

**It is the human collision that injures and kills people.**

*Seat belts can help prevent injury and death.*

### 1.4.2 Why you should wear a seat belt

**Seat belts prevent the human collision.**

Wearing a seat belt will protect you from being thrown about in the driver/passenger compartment – hitting parts of the car, other occupants or being thrown from the vehicle.

### **Good drivers have crashes too.**

Although some people are safer drivers than others, all drivers run the risk of being involved in a crash. People who drink, drive fast, are tired, discourteous or inexperienced, have a higher risk of having a crash. You never know when you may encounter a dangerous or careless driver – so don't take a chance, always wear your seat belt.

### **People are rarely trapped because of seat belts.**

Some people are afraid that they will be trapped in the car if they are wearing a seat belt and their car catches fire or falls into water after a crash. Statistics show that it is very rare for this to happen. Wearing a seat belt will increase your chances of being alive and conscious after a crash so that you can escape from the fire or water.

### **Seat belts save us money.**

We all pay the costs of hospital and medical treatment, legal costs, invalid pensions and higher insurance rates in one way or another. Preventing injuries to yourself and to others by wearing a seat belt is in everyone's best interest.

#### **1.4.3 Who does not have to wear a seat belt?**

Legally, you do not have to wear a seat belt if you are:

- the driver of a vehicle travelling in reverse;
- in possession of a current medical certificate authorising exemption;
- doing work which requires getting in and out of the vehicle frequently, and the vehicle does not travel faster than 25 km/h;
- under the age of 12 months and in a taxi, if there is no suitable child restraint available; or
- a taxi driver carrying passengers after dark.

#### **1.4.4 Who must wear a seat belt?**

*By law, all drivers and passengers must wear seat belts if they are fitted in the vehicle.*

Seat belts are designed to be used by only one person at a time. 'Doubling up' – fastening a seat belt around two people – is both illegal and unsafe.

### **Seat belts work just as well in the back seat.**

You must wear a seat belt when sitting in the back seat. If you don't and the vehicle you are travelling in is involved in a crash, you may hit some part of the vehicle or other people in the car.

### **Seat belts must be worn on short, as well as long trips.**

Many crashes occur within a close distance to the driver's home. Even if you are just going to the local shops, you must wear your seat belt.

### **Seat belts must be worn by pregnant women.**

Seat belts must be worn by pregnant women unless they have a current medical certificate exempting them from this requirement. A seat belt worn correctly across the hips (below the baby) is unlikely to cut into the unborn child. The baby is much more likely to be injured in a crash if the mother is not wearing a seat belt.

### **Children need protection too.**

Children and babies who are not restrained can be injured when the driver has to brake hard. An adult's lap is not safe enough for a child when there is a crash. Even if the child is small, an adult will not be able to hold onto the child in the event of a crash. Children under 12 months must wear a suitable child restraint. Children over one year old may use a seat belt however, a suitable child restraint is recommended. Before you purchase or install a child restraint, make sure it complies with Australian Standards.



### **Never ride in the back of a utility, panel van or station wagon.**

It is illegal to ride in the back of a utility or other 'open load' space. If you are travelling in the open load space of a utility or in the back of a panel van or station wagon you face a greater risk of serious injury or death, particularly if there is a crash or if you fall out of the vehicle. Carrying passengers in the tray of a utility, truck or other vehicle that is fitted with an approved roll-over protection device has not been legally permitted since the 31 December 2005. And it is illegal to carry any passengers in the tray of utilities or open load space of any vehicle, even if it has a roll-over protection device fitted.



#### **1.4.5 What if your passengers do not wear a seat belt?**

*Drivers are legally responsible for ensuring that children up to the age of 16 years are suitably restrained in a vehicle.*

If a child under the age of 16 is not wearing a seat belt or a suitable child restraint, then you, as the driver, risk being fined and incurring demerit points. You must not drive the vehicle with unrestrained children in it if there are positions with seat belts available.

#### **1.4.6 What is the correct way to wear a seat belt?**

A seat belt is legally required to be properly adjusted and securely fastened. Your seat belt should be tight but comfortable. The buckle should be at your side and there should be no twists or knots in the straps. Properly working retractable seat belts will self-adjust.

#### **1.4.7 What should I do if my seat belt is in poor condition?**

It is not only illegal, it is also unsafe to have a worn, frayed, faded or damaged seat belt. You must have it replaced.

## 1.5 Driver Fatigue

Driver fatigue (driving when you are tired) is a major road safety hazard. Fatigue related crashes tend to be severe because sleepy drivers don't take evasive action. The risk of serious injury to a driver, passengers or the occupants of other vehicles in this type of crash is very high.

### 1.5.1 What is driver fatigue?

Fatigue is a common term that refers to mental and physical tiredness. Fatigue causes loss of alertness, drowsiness, poor judgement, slower reactions, reduced driving skill and may cause you to fall asleep at the wheel.

If you are a driver and you become drowsy, you can drift into 'micro-sleep', which is a brief nap that lasts for around three to five seconds. At 100km per hour your vehicle can travel over 100 metres in that time, which is enough time for it to run off the road into a tree, another vehicle or a pedestrian.

### 1.5.2 The main causes of fatigue

#### Body Clock Factors

Your body runs on a natural biological cycle of 24-26 hours – often called your 'body clock'. Your body clock programs you to sleep at night and to stay awake during the day.

Your body clock is controlled partly by light and dark and partly by what you do. If you normally work from 9am to 5pm, some of the things that happen to you as a result of your body clock are:

- the morning light tells your body clock to make you more alert (wakes you up);
- during the morning your body clock keeps you alert;
- after lunch, your body clock will turn your alertness down for a couple of hours;
- your body clock will make you most alert and aware in the late afternoon and early evening;
- darkness in the evening tells your body clock to turn your alertness down again so you can get ready to sleep; and
- after midnight your body clock will turn your alertness right down so that you are 'switched off' between 2am and 6am. At this time all your body functions are at their lowest level.

What all this means for you as a driver, is that you will usually be at your best, most alert and safest when driving during the morning, the late afternoon and early evening.

You will usually be at your worst between midnight and 6am when the body clock turns your alertness down. This is a dangerous time for drivers.

Information from road crashes shows this is true. Although there are fewer drivers on the road between midnight and 6am, statistics show they can be up to 20 times more likely to have a crash during those hours.

### **Sleep Factors**

There is only one way to prevent fatigue, and that is to get enough sleep.

Seven and a half hour's sleep is generally recognised as an average and normal need. If you get much less than this you will suffer fatigue. You will feel tired during the day but you will feel much worse at night when your body clock turns your alertness down.

You will also be a danger to yourself and others on the road. If you have not had any sleep for 17-18 hours, your ability to drive will be the same as if you had a BAC of 0.05 per cent.

Not only is that way over the 0.00 per cent BAC limit for a novice driver, but it also means your crash risk doubles.

You may like to go out at night and stay out, until the early hours of the morning. Just be aware that if you drive when you have not had enough sleep you are taking a big risk. If you crash because you are not alert, you are likely to be held responsible.

### **Work Factors**

Long working hours or study hours or physically tiring work can affect your ability to drive. If you are a shift worker then you need to take extra care.

*Research shows that shift workers are six times more likely to be involved in 'fatigue-related' road crashes than other workers.*



## Health Factors

There are a number of medical factors that can prevent you from getting the long periods of sleep that you need to feel refreshed and alert.

If you had enough sleep during the night but you still feel tired and drowsy during the day you should consult your doctor. Look after your health and fitness. The healthier and fitter you are, the better you will sleep and the more alert you will be when driving.

Don't take stimulant drugs to keep you awake – these only delay sleep. When they wear off there can be a sudden onset of sleepiness, which is very dangerous, especially if you are driving.

### 1.5.3 What are the warning signs of driver fatigue?

There are a number of warning signs to indicate that you are becoming too tired to drive safely. Some of the warning signs are:

- you keep yawning;
- your eyes feel sore or heavy;
- you start daydreaming and not concentrating on your driving;
- your vehicle wanders over the road;
- you start hallucinating;
- your reactions seem slow; or
- your driving speed increases or decreases unintentionally.

Be honest with yourself. If you have any of these warning signs while you are driving, stop immediately and take a break.

### 1.5.4 Ways to reduce driver fatigue

Here are some tips to help you keep alert at the wheel:

- get plenty of sleep before you start driving on long trips;
- provide adequate time for sleep, rest and food during long trips;
- take regular breaks (at least every two hours) to walk and have a stretch;
- get fresh air into your vehicle (smoke and stale air can contribute to drowsiness); and
- learn to recognise the signs of sleepiness and pull over as soon as possible for a short break.

*Once fatigue sets in, there is nothing you can do about it except stop immediately and take a break or a nap.*

## 1.6 'Anti-Hoon' Legislation

Under 'Anti-Hoon' legislation, drivers and motorcyclists who endanger lives through reckless behaviour can have their vehicles impounded or confiscated. People caught racing or doing 'burnouts' can lose their vehicles for 48 hours. If a second offence occurs, the vehicle can be impounded for up to 3 months and their driver's licence suspended. On a third offence, the vehicle can be confiscated altogether and the driver's licence permanently disqualified.



## 1.7 'Hand-held' Mobile Phones

It is illegal for a driver to make or receive calls using a 'hand-held' mobile phone while the vehicle is moving or stopped in traffic. This includes the very dangerous practice of 'SMS texting' or using the phone for any other function such as games. All such uses can distract you and cause you to crash. *The risk of being involved in a fatal crash while using a mobile phone is up to nine times higher than when paying full attention to your driving.* Even though using a hands-free kit is safer than holding a phone, the best option is to let your calls go through to your voice mail.

## 1.8 Other Road Users

### 1.8.1 Pedestrians

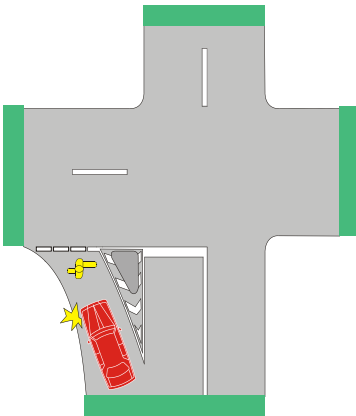
Always keep a look out for pedestrians and be ready to stop for them. Some of the places to look out for pedestrians are:

- at pedestrian crossings;
- intersections;
- between parked cars or behind buses;
- near schools and playgrounds;
- near shopping centres; and
- near hotels, taverns or clubs, where people have been drinking alcohol.



*Drivers and riders must give way to pedestrians (including people in wheelchairs) who are:*

- crossing at an intersection in front of your turning vehicle; or
- crossing at a pedestrian crossing (zebra) or children's crossing; or
- crossing at a marked foot crossing (traffic signal controlled crossing for vehicles and pedestrian lights for pedestrians) when a light facing vehicles is flashing yellow or red; or



The vehicle turning in the slip lane must give way to the pedestrian crossing the slip lane

- crossing in front of your vehicle at a slip lane (a left turn lane at an intersection where there is an island between that lane and lanes for other traffic).

At children's crossings you must stop before the crossing when the crossing attendant extends the flags. You must not start to move until the attendant withdraws the flags signalling that you can go.



### 1.8.2 Parallel walk crossings

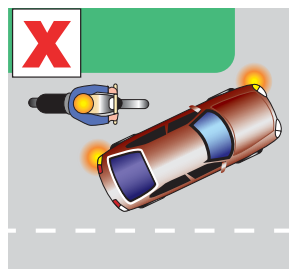
These are intersections controlled by traffic signals for vehicles and pedestrian lights for pedestrians to use to cross the road. Parallel walk crossings are those where pedestrians are permitted to walk on the green pedestrian signal, parallel with the flow of traffic. At these crossings the lights for pedestrians turn green a few seconds before drivers are given their green light to proceed and turning vehicles must give way to pedestrians crossing with the pedestrian lights.



### 1.8.3 Cyclists and motorcyclists

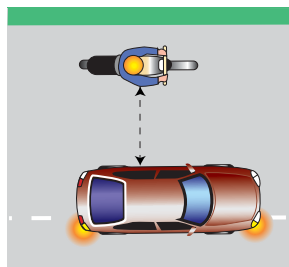
Cyclists and motorcyclists have an equal right to use the road as other vehicles. Share the road with them and allow them plenty of room. Be courteous and take extra care when there are riders on the road by:

- being careful not to cut riders off when you are **turning left**. The motorcyclist in the diagram is in danger because the car turning left is cutting the rider off. **DO NOT** turn in front of cyclists or motorcyclists – wait for them to ride past;



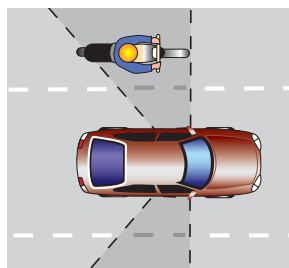
turning left

- taking extra care **when overtaking** riders because they are much more likely to be injured in the event of a crash. Keep a safe distance from them and give them at least one metre clearance from the side of your vehicle when you are overtaking. If it is not possible to overtake with one metre clearance, slow down and do not overtake until it safe to do so; and



when overtaking

- **checking your blind spots for riders**. You do not have all round vision from within your vehicle. There are blind spots at the sides and rear. Check your blind spots by glancing over your shoulder before you move left or right.



checking your blind spots  
for riders

Cyclists may legally use the whole lane on roads with lane markings. They are allowed to ride two abreast (side-by-side).

## 1.9 Motorcyclists

Being smaller than other vehicles, motorcycles are sometimes not easily seen. In addition to the road rules that apply to all road users, there are special rules to help protect motorcyclists.



### 1.9.1 Motorcycle safety

*The risk of being killed or injured on a motorcycle is far greater than in a car.*

All motorcyclists and their passengers must wear an approved safety helmet. If you do not wear one you will be fined and incur demerit points

In the interest of safety, a motorcyclist should also:

- **Wear protective clothing.** To reduce the risk of sustaining severe injuries, you should always wear protective clothing as shown in the diagram.

**The minimum clothes you should wear include closed shoes (not sandals or thongs etc), long pants and a jacket, as well as a helmet.**

*Wear appropriate protective clothing for your practical riding assessment as there have been instances of learners falling off and being injured during the assessment.*

Many lightweight items now available will protect you just as well as heavier clothing.

- **Take extra care when you carry a passenger.** You may carry one passenger on your motorcycle provided you have a pillion seat and separate footrests. The passenger must wear an approved helmet, sit behind the rider, face forward and have both feet on the footrests at all times. If the passenger cannot reach footrests they are **not** allowed to be carried.

Carrying a passenger adds weight to the motorcycle, making it slower to respond. Adjust your riding techniques to allow for the extra weight.

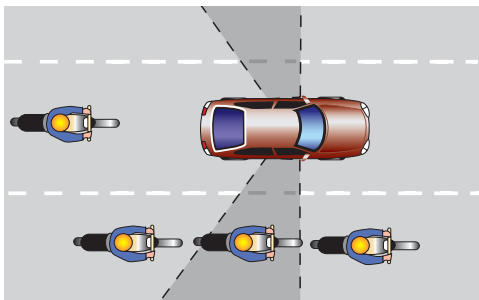
Your passenger should also wear appropriate protective clothing. Talk to your passenger as little as possible as it can distract you and increase your reaction time to hazards on the road.



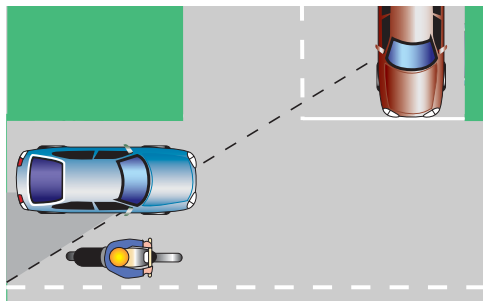
### 1.9.2 Ride to be seen by other road users

Smaller vehicles such as motorcycles appear further away and seem to be travelling slower than they actually are. Here are some ways that you can assist other road users to notice you:

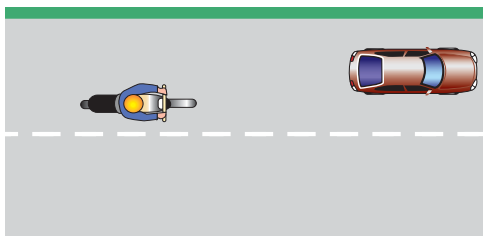
- turn on your headlights at all times – oncoming traffic will be able to see you much more easily;
- be ready to use your horn when passing another vehicle or whenever you are unsure if a driver is aware of your presence;
- flashing indicators or hand signals make you more visible – always use them;
- be visible – stay within the line of sight of other drivers:
  - do not ride in a driver's blind spot. If they cannot see you, they may make a manoeuvre such as moving into another lane, without making allowance for your motorcycle;
  - if you wish to travel at the same speed as another vehicle, travel behind or in front of it. This helps you to be seen; and



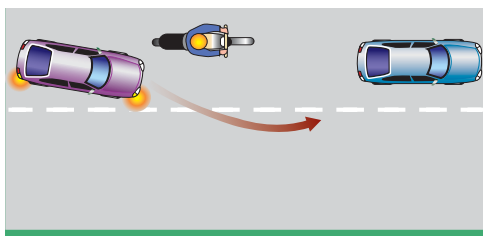
- at intersections, drivers may not see you. Do not assume that they have. Ensure you can be seen by all road users.



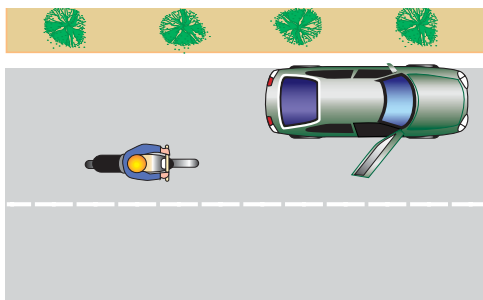
- always allow a 'cushion of space' on all sides of you (see Part 3.2):
  - in front of you – do not follow too closely behind another vehicle;



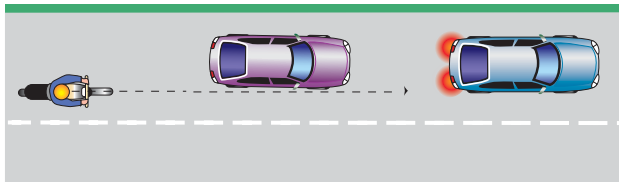
- behind you – if another vehicle is following too closely, slow down and allow the vehicle to overtake you;



- to the side of you – when passing parked cars, be alert and allow plenty of room as someone may open a car door or a pedestrian may step out in front of you. When you are being overtaken, move to the left.



- when turning or diverging or changing lanes, indicate/signal for sufficient time to warn other drivers and pedestrians of the direction you are taking. Glance over your shoulder as well as checking your mirror - it is the only way to make certain there is no traffic behind you in your blind spots;
- use your mirrors frequently to check the traffic situation behind you;
- always look well ahead; and
- always practice correct braking techniques.



It is wise to make a habit of using your motorcycle's front and rear brakes every time you slow down or stop.

You will need to use both front and rear brakes in an emergency stop. To ensure that you develop the habit and skill of using them together, you should use both brakes for all stops.

Apply both brakes gently but firmly. Squeeze the front brake and press down on the rear brake. Do not 'grab' at the front brake or jam your foot down on the rear brake. This can cause the brakes to lock, resulting in serious control problems.

Always reduce your speed before entering a bend or making a turn. If you enter a bend or turn too quickly, you may lose control of your motorcycle.

## 1.10 The Ten Rules to Safe Driving

Road safety experts believe that if every driver followed these Ten Rules to Safe Driving, the road trauma rate would be dramatically reduced. The Ten Rules to Safe Driving are:

1. **Drive at a safe speed;**
2. **Don't drink and drive;**
3. **Obey the road rules;**
4. **Concentrate at all times and be prepared;**
5. **Be patient, and when in doubt, don't proceed;**
6. **Plan your moves well in advance;**
7. **Give correct signals;**
8. **Be alert particularly at intersections;**
9. **Know your vehicle; and**
10. **Be polite and considerate toward other road users.**

## 1.11 Pre-Driving Checks

### Is your car in safe working order?

Before you drive, take some time to check that your car is safe to be on the road. Some of the things you should look at are:

#### ■ Tyres

Tyre tread should be at least 1.5 mm deep (about the thickness of a match head) over all parts of the tyre surface that normally comes in contact with the road. Smooth tyres can cause you to skid and they can be very dangerous in wet conditions.

Tyres should be inflated to the vehicle manufacturers' specifications. This is particularly important when you are driving long distances or when you are carrying a full load. Check the tyre pressure when your tyres are cold;

#### ■ Brakes

Have your brakes checked regularly by a qualified person. Faulty brakes will significantly increase your stopping distance;

#### ■ Steering

Ensure that your steering assembly is in good condition because faulty steering can cause your car to wander on the road;

#### ■ Lights

Make sure that all lights, including headlights, brake lights, indicator lights and parking lights are operating correctly. If your lights are not working properly, other drivers may not be able to see you or may not understand your intentions;

#### ■ Horn

Only use your horn to warn other road users of danger – it is an offence to use it for other purposes;

#### ■ Windscreen and windscreen wipers

A dirty windscreen is dangerous. It is easier to see through a clean windscreen, especially when driving into the sun, at night or in the rain.

You should replace faulty or damaged windscreen wipers because they prevent you from seeing clearly when it is raining; and



## ■ Mirrors

You are legally required to have a mirror on your car and it is illegal to have anything hanging from it. Even with mirrors, your car has 'blind spots' or areas you can't see without looking over your shoulder. Other cars and especially motorcycles and bicycles can be completely hidden in your blind spots.

Make sure that your interior and exterior rear view mirrors are correctly adjusted.

These mirrors are intended to help you see what is on the road next to you and behind you. You should do this adjustment when you are in the correct driving position.

### The following are tips for adjusting your mirrors

**interior rear view mirror** – adjust the mirror so that you have a clear view of the road behind; and



**exterior rear view mirrors** – adjust the rear view mirrors so that you can just see the tip of your door handle in the lower edge of the mirror.



To check that all mirrors are in the correct position, let a vehicle pass you on the right. As it passes out of your vision in the interior mirror, its front bumper should appear in your exterior mirror.

