

Safe driving behaviour

Beware of speed

For safety reasons it is important to respect speed limits when driving: speed limits take account of road, traffic and weather conditions.

Remember that:

on motorways, maximum speed permitted is 130 km/h, on dual carriageways 110 km/h, on open roads is 90 km/h, while in towns is 50 km/h, except on those stretches where signals expressly display a 70 km/h speed limit.

Besides increasing the risk of accidents, exceeding these limits is subject to both criminal (arrest and fine) and administrative sanctions (driving disqualification), and, in more serious cases, your driving licence can be revoked. If you exceed speed limits by 10 km/h you could collect penalty points on your driving licence.

Correct road positioning

In general, the Traffic Code recommends to take up the right lane without any other particular obligations, while on two-lane, two-way roads you are obliged not to shift from the right white line in three basic circumstances:

- when you are overtaken;
- when visibility is poor;
- when you are driving a bicycle or a moped.

Keep in mind that if you drive on the left lane, when the right lane is free you can be fined and collect **4 penalty points on your driving licence**.

Sometimes though, it is unadvisable to drive too close to the right edge of the road:

- when there's a warning sign "**soft shoulder**" indicating problems on the right verge of the road;
- if **the road is icy** and it is dangerous to drive too next to the right verge of the road;
- **in high wind**, because you may plunge off the road.

During overtaking, it is compulsory for overtaken cars not to speed up and to remain near the right verge of the road. However, you should always **ease overtaking** by reducing speed and giving way, especially when the overtaking vehicle is performing a rushed manoeuvre. Before overtaking, you must check overtaking is permitted and is not a hazard, verifying you have enough **space and visibility**. If you are unsure don't overtake!

It is important that overtaking is done **as fast as possible** in order not to occupy the lane for too long; on motorways, if there are slow cars in the fast lane and the right lane is free, wait for them to shift, maybe by flashing so that they can understand they are in the wrong lane, but do not overtake them on the right; it is dangerous.

Safety distance

An appropriate safety distance avoids accidents or at least reduces their consequences: it is closely linked to speed and concerns all **unexpected events** which may occur ahead of your car while driving.

the driver's psychological and physical conditions. Also take into account the way of driving of the vehicle in front of you, since this can allow you to adjust your **speed**, avoiding crashes. Another element to be kept in mind is the reaction time between **hazard** perception and the moment you start braking, since in that lapse of time you cover a further distance.

Emergency stop

Some simple tricks for a safer emergency stop: if possible, stop out of the carriageway, signalling your vehicle or making it visible. To signal a **stationary car** you can use, by day, the red warning triangle, and, by night, sidelights or hazard lights or, if they do not work, the red warning triangle placed at a distance of at least **50 m** from the vehicle.

Those carrying out emergency operations should make themselves visible by wearing reflective safety jacket or braces, as required by the Traffic Code; during emergency operations, look out for cars coming from behind, so to perceive possibly **hazardous situations** beforehand and avoid them. In poor visibility get out of the vehicle and keep on its right side to avoid being involved in crashes.

08/04/2011