

**MOST ASKED
ABOUT ROAD RULES**



GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



ROAD SAFETY
COUNCIL

TOWARDS ZERO

SPEED AND RED LIGHT
CAMERA FUNDED PROJECT

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Understanding road rules helps achieve our *Towards Zero* target

Each day unsafe driving behaviour on our roads places everyone at risk. With about 2,170 crashes in Western Australia resulting in either death or serious injury each year, everyone using our roads has an opportunity to make a simple commitment to drive safely and help reduce road trauma.

This easy to use guide is a great educational tool for both novice drivers and those who need to brush up on their skills, explaining some of WA's most asked about road rules. It will also assist individuals to change the way they think and act on the roads to help reduce the burden of road trauma in our State.



Hon. Liza Harvey MLA

Minister for Police; Road Safety; Training and Workforce Development; Women's Interests

Whether you're a driver, passenger, motorcyclist, cyclist or pedestrian, sharing the roads and knowing and using WA's road rules ensures everyone's safety. So I invite you to read this guide to improve your knowledge of the most asked about rules. Remember, road safety is everyone's responsibility.



Prof. Murray Lampard APM

Chairman of the Road Safety Council

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1. ROUNDABOUTS

Roundabouts help manage traffic flow and improve safety by slowing the speed of vehicles. Whether you're turning left or right, going straight, or making a full-turn at a roundabout – here's what you need to know:

When entering a roundabout, always give way to any vehicles already in the roundabout. On multi-lane roundabouts, obey the directional arrows on the road.

Turning left

On approach, indicate left from the left lane. Stay in the left lane and exit the roundabout from this lane.

Driving straight ahead

You don't need to indicate on approach. Enter in either the left or right lane, stay in and exit from the same lane. Indicate left when you've passed the last exit before the one you intend to use.

Turning right or making a full turn

On approach, indicate right from the right lane. Stay in the right lane and exit the roundabout from this lane. Indicate left when you've passed the last exit before the one you intend to use.

You can change lanes within a roundabout, but you must indicate and give way to other vehicles.



Penalties

Failing to give way at a roundabout = **3 demerit points and \$150 fine.**

In multi-lane roundabout, failing to enter the roundabout in the correct lane for exiting = **\$100 fine.**

All other offences for not using a roundabout correctly = **2 demerit points and \$100 fine.**

2. MERGING

Do you know how to correctly merge in traffic? Some merging rules do depend on whether there are lane lines on the road or not – here's what you need to know:

Where two lanes merge into one (i.e. lane lines end) the vehicle in front has the right of way.

If there are multiple marked lanes and one ends, give way to the vehicles in the lane you are moving into.

Remember:

- Always use your indicator to signal your intentions to other drivers when merging;
- Keep a safe distance between your vehicle and the vehicle in front of you and take turns to merge if there are long lines of merging traffic;
- Try to match the legal speed of the road you're merging into, but don't speed up to get your vehicle ahead of others.



Penalties

Failing to give way when merging = **2 demerit points and \$100 fine.**

Failing to give way when changing lanes = **3 demerit points and \$100 fine.**

3. MOBILE PHONES

There are now specific rules surrounding the use of mobile phones and GPS while driving. Do you know the law?

Whilst driving you can only use a mobile phone to make or receive a phone call if the phone is secured in a mounting or can be operated without touching it. (e.g. using voice activation, a Bluetooth hands-free car kit, ear piece or headset).

Whilst driving, it is illegal to create, send or look at a text message, video message, email or similar communication, even when the phone is secured in a mounting or can be operated without touching it.

The GPS function of a phone may be used by a driver whilst driving if it is secured in a mounting and no touch of the keypad or screen is required.



Penalties

Using a hand held mobile phone whilst driving = **3 demerit points and \$400 fine.**

Creating, sending or looking at a text message, video message, email or similar communication, whilst driving = **3 demerit points and \$400 fine.**

4. U-TURNS

There is a right way to make a U-turn. Here's how:

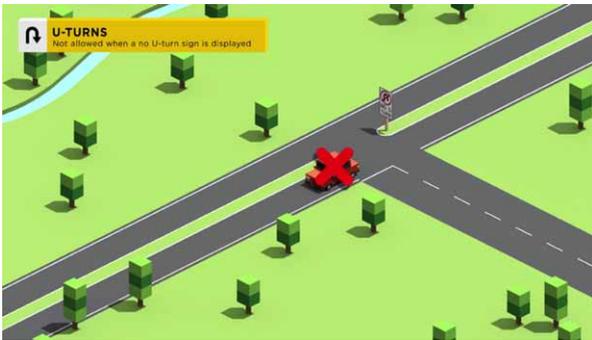
When making a U-turn, you must:

- ensure it can be done safely;
- use your indicator to signal your intentions to other drivers;
- give way to all other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians on the road you are turning into.

You **MUST NOT** make a U-turn:

- when you do not have a clear view of approaching traffic or it interferes with other traffic;
- at traffic lights (unless there is a 'U-turn permitted' sign);
- where there is a 'no U-turn' sign;
- on freeways, including on and off ramps.

In Western Australia only - U-turns are allowed over a continuous white line.



Penalties

Making a U-turn where not permitted = **2 demerit points and \$100 fine.**

Failing to give way when making a U-turn = **3 demerit points and \$100 fine.**

5. KEEPING LEFT

Keeping left on higher speed roads helps traffic flow. Here's what you need to know:

On single lane roads you must drive as far to the left as practical (except motorcyclists). On multi-lane roads if the speed limit is 90km/h or more you must drive in the left lane. This same rule applies to any road where there is a 'Keep Left Unless Overtaking' sign. On these roads you can only drive in the right hand lane if:

- you're turning right or making a U-turn;
- you're overtaking;
- the left lane is a special purpose lane, e.g. bus lane, bicycle lane, slow vehicle turnout lane;
- the left lane is a turning lane and you are going straight ahead;
- you're avoiding an obstruction;
- you're not driving a vehicle of a type that is prohibited from the right lane by way of signs (i.e. trucks);
- the other lanes are congested with traffic.



Penalties

Failing to keep left in a multi-lane road = **2 demerit points and \$50 fine.**

6. UNCONTROLLED INTERSECTIONS

Navigating intersections without traffic signals, stop signs or give way signs is all about knowing who has the right of way. Here we shed light on how to correctly approach such intersections:

As a rule, at an uncontrolled intersection, always give way to the right, to oncoming vehicles (including bicycles) and pedestrians.

Specifically:

- If going straight ahead - give way to vehicles on your right;
- If turning left - give way to vehicles to the right and pedestrians crossing the road you're entering;
- If turning left using a slip lane - give way to vehicles on your right and pedestrians crossing the slip lane;
- If turning right - give way to vehicles on your right, any oncoming vehicles/bicycles who are going straight ahead or turning left, and any pedestrians crossing the road you're entering.



Penalties

Travelling straight ahead OR turning left in a slip lane - failing to give way to vehicles to the right or pedestrians = **3 demerit points and \$200 fine.**

Turning left or right - failing to give way to vehicles to the right or pedestrians = **3 demerit points and \$300 fine.**

7. CROSSING CONTINUOUS LINES

Line road markings are there as a guide to how to use that road. There are edge lines, lane lines and centre lines. Do you know what they mean? Here's what you need to know:

There are three types of single continuous (unbroken) lines:

1. Edge Lines

Are used to mark the edge of the road.

You can only cross over an edge line when entering or leaving the road or passing a vehicle on the left that is turning right or making a U-turn.

2. Lane Lines

Are used to define multiple lanes travelling in the same direction.

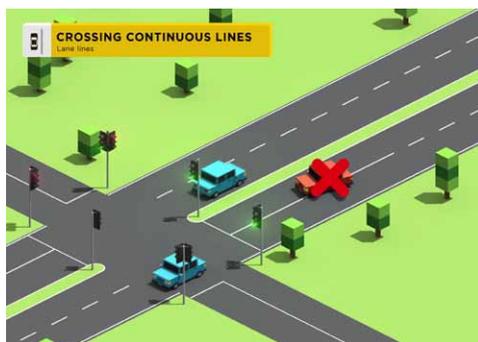
If the lane line is continuous, don't cross the line to change lanes.

3. Centre/Dividing Lines

Are used to separate lanes travelling in different directions.

If the centre/dividing lines are continuous on your side, do not cross that line unless you are turning right (i.e. leaving or entering the road) or making a U-turn. The same applies if there is a continuous line on the left of a broken or dotted centre line.

Exception - If you need to avoid an obstruction, you may cross the continuous centre line(s), lane line or edge line providing you have a clear view of any approaching traffic.



Penalties

Crossing the edge line of a road = **\$100 fine.**

Crossing a continuous line when changing lanes = **2 demerit points and \$100 fine.**

Crossing a continuous centre line = **3 demerit points and \$150 fine.**

8. OVERTAKING

To overtake safely, there are specific road rules that apply. Here's what you need to know:

Overtaking can be dangerous. When overtaking, make sure you have a clear view of oncoming traffic and use your indicator to signal your intentions to other drivers.

Overtaking on the left

Permitted when:

- driving on a multi-lane road;
- directed by an authorised person (e.g. police officer);
- the vehicle(s) in the right lane is stationary and it is safe to do so;
- a vehicle is indicating that it is turning right or making a U-turn.

Overtaking on the right

This is permitted when you're both travelling in the same direction and you are not crossing a continuous white line.

Overtaking a vehicle on the right is NOT permitted:

- at a railway, pedestrian or children's crossing;
- at an intersection;
- where there is a 'no overtaking' sign;
- where there are single or double continuous centre lines;
- where you do not have a clear view of approaching traffic.

Motorists are required to overtake cyclists at a safe distance. It is recommended that cyclists are overtaken by at least a metre up to 70km/h and two metres at higher speeds.

If you're being overtaken - keep left; don't increase your speed; and don't prevent the vehicle from overtaking you.





8. OVERTAKING Cont.

Penalties

Failing to overtake at a safe distance = **4 demerit points and \$400 fine.**

Overtaking at a railway/pedestrian/children's crossing = **4 demerit points and \$400 fine.**

Overtaking on continuous white line = **3 demerit points and \$200 fine.**

Exceeding speed limit when overtaking = **this will vary depending on speed.**

9. EMERGENCY VEHICLES

On Western Australian roads you must clear the way to allow every emergency vehicle using blue or red flashing lights and/or sounding an alarm to easily pass. But do you know the correct way to do this?

Emergency vehicles include police, fire and ambulance services.

When an emergency vehicle is approaching:

- stay calm and check to see where it is;
- give way to it by moving as far to the left of the road as possible;
- if you can't move left, slow down, indicate left and let the emergency vehicle drive around you;
- use your indicator to signal your intentions to the driver of the emergency vehicle;
- if you are in the left lane, allow other vehicles from an adjacent lane to move into your lane if they need to.

When giving way to an emergency vehicle **DO NOT** break the law (e.g. drive through a red light, or speed).



Penalties

Failure to give way to an emergency vehicle = **4 demerit points and \$400 fine.**

10. FOLLOWING/HEADLIGHT DISTANCES

The laws for safe following and headlight distances exist with safety in mind. Here's what you need to know:

Safe following distance

A safe following distance depends on your speed, driving conditions and the type of vehicle you are driving. In good conditions, you should drive at least two seconds behind the vehicle in front of you.

To determine the two seconds - watch the vehicle in front as it passes a landmark, such as a tree, sign, power pole or overpass. As it passes the landmark, start counting 'one thousand and one, one thousand and two' (this takes about two seconds). If you pass the same landmark before you finish counting to two seconds, you're too close.

It is important to increase your following distance to at least 3 – 4 seconds if the weather or road conditions are poor, if you're driving a heavy vehicle or towing a trailer.

Headlight distance

High beam headlights are not permitted:

- if you're driving less than 200m behind a vehicle;
- if an oncoming vehicle is less than 200m away.

In foggy conditions:

- drive slowly;
- turn on windshield wipers;
- don't use high beam headlights.

Fog lights can be used in foggy conditions, dust storms or heavy rain. You are not permitted to drive with both headlights and fog lights on at the same time.



10. FOLLOWING/HEADLIGHT DISTANCES Cont.



Penalties

Failing to follow a vehicle at a safe distance = **2 demerit points and \$200 fine.**

Inappropriate use of headlights/fog lights = **1 demerit point and \$100 fine.**

11. CYCLISTS

Cyclists share the same rights and responsibilities as drivers and must obey the road rules.

Cyclists are vulnerable road users, so for their safety extra precautions and awareness are required from both cyclists and drivers.

Drivers:

- When overtaking cyclists, it is recommended to do so at a distance of at least one metre;
- Must give way to cyclists if crossing an on-road bicycle lane;
- Before opening a car door, ensure there isn't a bicycle rider in the way;
- When turning left - if a cyclist is in front, allow them to pass before making a turn;
- Must not enter the green bicycle boxes (at some intersections).

Cyclists:

- Must wear a helmet that is properly fastened;
- Must have at least one brake and a warning device (bell/horn) working;
- Must use a front white light and rear red light which can be seen for 200m during the night and in conditions of poor visibility. A rear reflector visible for 50m is also required;
- Can ride two abreast (side-by-side) on the road, with up to 1.5m between riders;
- Can't ride less than 2m behind a vehicle;
- Are not allowed to pass on left of a vehicle that is turning left;
- Must give way to vehicles exiting a roundabout;
- Should ensure visibility by wearing reflective or fluorescent clothing;
- When travelling on the road, can be on the left of the edge line.



11. CYCLISTS Cont.

Penalties

Not wearing a helmet = **\$50 fine.**

Failure to have at least one effective brake and working warning device (e.g. bell) = **\$100 fine.**

Failure to have correct lighting for visibility = **\$100 fine.**

Bicycles can ride two side-by-side with up to 1.5m between riders. Failure to do so = **\$50 fine.**

Riding less than 2m behind a vehicle = **\$100 fine.**

Passing on the left of a vehicle that is turning left = **\$100 fine.**

Penalties – Drivers

Failing to overtake a bicycle at a safe distance = **4 demerit points and \$400 fine.**

Entering a green bicycle box (at some intersections) = **2 demerit points and \$200 fine.**

12. PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians share the roads with drivers and cyclists and must obey the road rules.

Pedestrians are vulnerable road users, so extra care is needed from all road users (including pedestrians themselves).

Drivers

Drivers should give way to pedestrians:

- when turning;
- when making a U-turn;
- at all intersections and stop signs;
- slip lane with a 'stop' sign or 'stop' line.

Pedestrian crossings are marked by white or yellow stripes on the road and are usually signed. As a driver, approach a pedestrian crossing at a speed which allows you to stop safely if needed.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians crossing at traffic lights must obey the signals. If a traffic control signal shows a steady or flashing red pedestrian light, and you have not already started to cross, then you must not do so until the pedestrian light changes to green.



12. PEDESTRIANS Cont.

Penalties – Drivers

Failing to give way to a pedestrian:

- at a designated crossing = **3-4 demerit points and \$300 fine.**
- at an intersection = **3 demerit points and \$300 fine.**
- when entering a road = **3 demerit points and \$200 fine.**
- when exiting a road = **3 demerit points and \$300 fine.**

Penalty – Pedestrians

Crossing on a red light at an intersection = **\$50 fine.**



**For more information on WA road rules go to
www.roadrules.rsc.wa.gov.au**