



# Institute of Advanced Motorists

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## Fact Sheet 01/001

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### DRIVING ABROAD

Driving abroad is different and can often be difficult, particularly if you don't drive abroad regularly. Follow these simple IAM guidelines and your driving should be safe and more relaxing.

- Driving on the right hand side of the road will seem strange at first so concentrate all the time you are driving. Make sure you know the rules of the road in the country that you are in and obey them. Many rules and traffic regulations will be the same as in the UK, but some countries do have particular rules and regulations. They are often enforced with greater firmness and being a tourist may not get you off the hook. For example, French autoroute police can calculate your average speed between toll booths, issue a ticket on this evidence alone and impose on-the-spot fines.
- In some countries, again France for example, vehicles approaching from the right usually have priority. Local people will usually expect everybody to comply with this rule.
- Make sure that you understand the meaning of all road signs and obey them. Most of them will be familiar to you and the meaning of those that are not should be fairly obvious. Remember the general rule:- **triangles warn, circles prohibit and rectangles inform**.
- In most European countries, it is a legal requirement that drivers carry a red warning triangle in case of breakdown or accident. If you do break down or have an accident, put the red triangle at least 50 metres (164 ft) before the obstruction and on the same side of the road; 150 metres (492 ft) on the hard shoulder of motorways. At night or in poor visibility do not stand behind your vehicle or let anyone else do so, it could prevent other drivers seeing your rear lights.
- Say "**Think Right - Look Left**" to yourself every time you start to drive or approach a roundabout or road junction. This will put you in the right place on the road, travelling in the direction of the traffic flow and looking in the direction from where the first danger is most likely to come. Saying "**Think Right - Look Left**" to yourself will also help to avoid your natural inclination to want to drive on the left side of the road.
- Do not drive too far without a break - tiredness can kill. Take a break every two hours and, if possible, change drivers regularly. Plan your route and make sure you have an up-to-date map.
- Overtaking is a difficult and potentially dangerous manoeuvre. You must always be sure that your overtake is going to be safe. Driving a right-hand drive car on the "other" side of the road means you are not in the best position to see ahead. Always remember, the decision to overtake is yours - do not rely on the judgement of the passenger in the front seat.

- Make sure that the car you are driving is roadworthy and that the headlights have been properly adjusted, if that is necessary.
- You must tell your insurance company if you intend to take your own car abroad. You should also ask your insurance company if you need an International Driving Licence, Green Card or Bail Bond.