



Institute of Advanced Motorists

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Fact Sheet 04/001

MOTORWAY DRIVING

Motorways are our safest roads, mainly because everyone is driving in the same direction and there are no traffic lights, roundabouts or pedestrians. But motorway driving can be monotonous and if you let your mind to wander, the risks can escalate sharply.

Follow these simple IAM guidelines and your motorway driving should be safe and less tiring.

- When joining a motorway, assess the traffic by glancing over your shoulder to check the blind spots and consider a right turn signal before you move onto the motorway. Traffic already on the motorway has priority. Use the slip road to accelerate to a speed that matches the flow in the left-hand lane.
- Remember the two essential rules of motorway driving: maintain a safe following distance (two seconds between you and the vehicle in front is the *minimum* safety gap) and exercise good lane discipline. Traffic on motorways usually travels faster than on other roads, so you have less time to react. Look much further ahead than usual and use your mirrors early and regularly.
- Take extra care when overtaking large goods vehicles in heavy rain or high crosswinds.
- Always signal in good time before you change lanes and remember, a signal is an indication of an intention, it doesn't give the right to carry out the manoeuvre unless it's safe. Remember, it's **Mirror, Signal, Manoeuvre**.
- Only overtake only on the right, unless traffic is moving more slowly in queues on your right. In these circumstances you can overtake on the left to keep up with the traffic in your lane.
- Tiredness or stress affects your ability to concentrate. Take a twenty-minute break from driving every two hours, even if you don't feel tired. Some exercise and light refreshments during the break can help too.
- If you break down, stop on the hard shoulder and use the nearest emergency telephone to contact the Police Motorway Control. Don't stop on the hard shoulder unless it's an emergency.
- Move to the left-hand lane in good time when preparing to leave a motorway. Be careful not to underestimate your speed when approaching the end of an exit slip road. Check your speedometer as you leave the motorway to ensure that you have slowed down sufficiently.