

What your parking says about you...

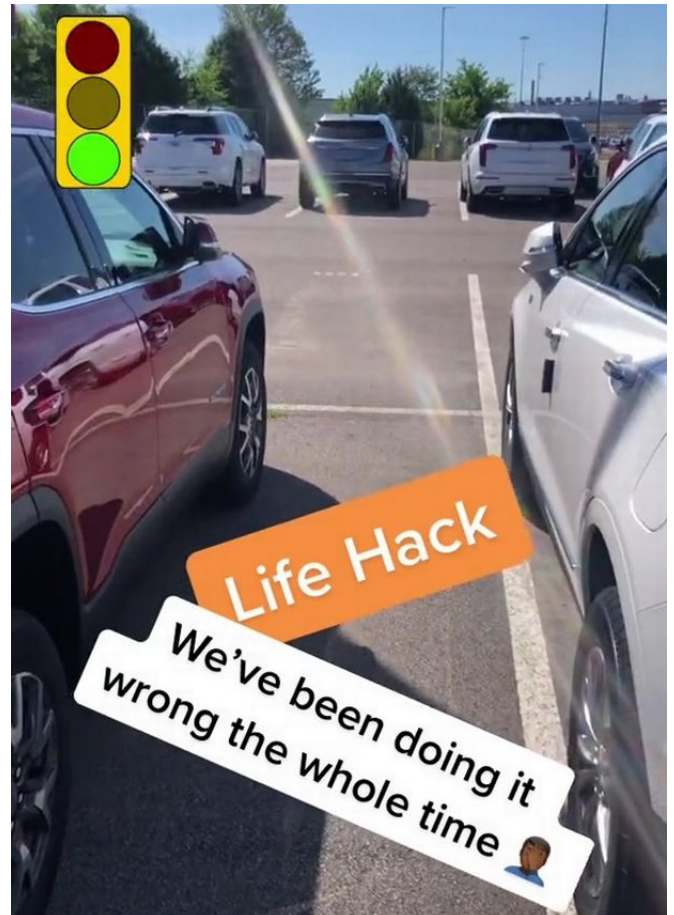
I'm sure that this editorial will ruffle a few feathers - what are your thoughts?. I live opposite a parking area for a couple of local shops. This area is pretty standard, offering on road parking with the normal caveats of '1 hour no return' for free during the hours of 0800 to 1700 Monday to Saturday. Traffic wardens rarely visit – normally only on Bank Holiday Mondays where they hope to catch someone who has out stayed their welcome.

You might say, why do I call it a parking area rather than parking bays? Simply because it is a section of road with no double yellows, and the area isn't divided up into 'car-sized' sections, it just has the standard white dashed line around the perimeter.

It is large enough to comfortably fit four cars, however, far too often for my liking you see a car pull up and park really inconsiderately. If the area was free of other vehicles, they might pull in and stop 4 or 5 feet short of the either the start (or end) of the area, thus wasting that space as no one else is going to be able to fit a car in. Sometimes you see this thoughtless style of parking at both ends, meaning you can fit a 3rd car in the middle, but only if you are up on your parallel parking skills and own a small car! I am sure that we will all draw the same conclusion about the motorists who don't park considerately – quite possibly they are the same one who don't understand the purpose of indicators (let alone know how to enable them at appropriate times)...

When I have to park in a public carpark, I have to confess to being "one of those people" who parks generally at the far end of the carpark and away from other cars. The ideal parking spot is the end of a row, up against the edge – thus maximising space between my car and the next should someone park next to me (which invariably you know someone will).

I read an America-based article a couple of days ago



talking about a new life/parking hack (oddly published in the Mirror – must have been a slow news day). Essentially it was suggested that you should always park on one side of the parking bay. Now in theory it won't leave any more difference between the neighbouring cars, assuming that everyone is capable of parking centrally and parallel in the bay. Maybe where it could help is with the alignment issue – the drivers have a line to park against. However, the argument here should probably be to learn how to park properly in the first place. What would happen if you are parking somewhere without white lines neatly painted on the ground, such as any off-tarmac parking, like forests or national trust venues? It might all go to pot then!

Matt Ames
Newsletter Editor

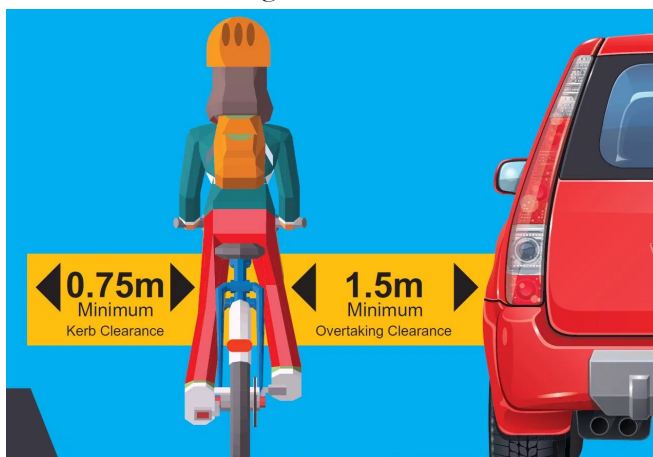
Cycling UK welcomes national day of action on close passing

www.cyclinguk.org

A co-ordinated day of Operation Close Pass exercises will see officers in England, Wales and Northern Ireland spend time in the saddle to make roads safer

- England, Northern Ireland and Wales take part in first national day devoted to educating drivers who close pass cyclists
- UK charity provides tools and equipment to help all forces
- Campaign inspired by pioneering and successful work begun by West Midlands Police five years ago

On the 14th April police officers from 39 of the 43 forces in England and Wales and Police Service Northern Ireland, are out cycling on busy roads as part of a national day of action to identify people who drive too closely to cyclists and increase awareness around safe overtaking.



Part of the National Roads Policing Operations and Intelligence (NRPOI) unit 2Wheel week of action (12 – 18 April) will be working to educate drivers and make the roads safer for cyclists.

The nationwide action builds on an initiative started by West Midlands Police force in 2016 where under-

cover cycling police officers would pull over drivers who gave less than 1.5 metres (the width of a car) space. The offenders would then receive a short instructional session on how to overtake cyclists safely.

The campaign saw a 20% reduction in cycling casualties, and was backed by Cycling UK. Since 2016, the cycling charity has provided every police force in the UK with educational tools including a virtual reality film showing drivers unaware how threatening or dangerous close passing is.

Keir Gallagher, Cycling UK's campaigns manager said: "It's been amazing to see the growth of Operation Close Pass from being developed by one police force five years ago to now being part of a dedicated national day of action for the first time, with support from police chiefs a national level. In that time, the roads have undoubtedly been made safer for everyone thanks to initiatives like this which aim to educate drivers.

"Most drivers don't intend to intimidate other road users and, often just don't realise how dangerous it can be if they leave little space between their car and the person on a bike. Roadside education backed by enforcement is key to changing people's behaviour."

"[Operation Close Pass has] enabled us to educate road users on the dangers of overtaking too close, prosecute those who risk lives, and ultimately see fewer vulnerable road users killed or seriously injured on our roads"

Sgt Jon Butler, West Midlands Police

Sgt Jon Butler, from the West Midlands Police Road Harm Prevention team, said: "Our primary aim is to maintain the safety of vulnerable road users, while promoting sustainable travel and shared space road use. Operation Close Pass is a vital approach in helping us to do that.

“The force was the first in the country to proactively target road user behaviour in this way, and we’re proud to see others are now following the example set by PC’s Mark Hodson and Steve Hudson, who launched the operation.

“It has enabled us to educate road users on the dangers of overtaking too close, prosecute those who risk lives, and ultimately see fewer vulnerable road users killed or seriously injured on our roads.”

Current advice in the Highway Code under Rule 163 is vague saying drivers “should give motorcyclists, cyclists and horse riders at least as much room as you would when overtaking a car.”

Following campaigning by Cycling UK a newly revised Highway Code is expected to be published later this year. The new wording will clarify a minimum safe passing distance, and will advise when overtaking people cycling to give between 1.5m at speeds below 30mph, and more above.

The NPCC national day of action is also supported by NRPOI (The National Roads Policing Operations and Intelligence).

Towing a trailer checklist

The Government have published a checklist for towing - be that for small trailers or caravans. With the summer season approaching it is likely that trailers will have been standing over the winter/since before COVID, so it is worthy to take on board. A quick check and/or bit of maintenance in advance of a journey is better than sitting on the side of the road with your caravan in pieces over the carriageway!

Checks you should carry out every time you tow a trailer, caravan or horsebox with a car, to make sure you’re towing safely and legally.



Checks before you tow

Carry out the basic safety checks shown in this video to make sure that your vehicle and trailer are safe and legal. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JBv-Dj-i2Qk>

Tow ball and connections

- the trailer is correctly coupled to the towball or pin - follow the manufacturer’s advice
- the coupling height is correct
- the 7 or 13 core cable and plug is not damaged

Breakaway cable

Use a breakaway cable or secondary coupling. This engages the trailer’s brakes (if fitted) or stops the trailer if it becomes detached from the car.

- the cable is not worn or damaged
- there’s enough slack in the cable so that it does not accidentally apply the brakes
- the cable will not drag on the ground when you’re driving

Follow the manufacturer’s advice to make sure it’s connected correctly.

Wheels and tyres

Check that the tyres on both the car and trailer:

- do not have any cuts or bulges
- are inflated to the manufacturer’s specification for the load being carried

Check that each tyre has a tread depth of at least 1.6mm:

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June Newsletter - 2021 (edition 74)

- across the central three-quarters of the breadth of the tread
- around the entire circumference of the tyre

Check that the wheel nuts and bolts are tightened to the correct torque.

Check that mudguards are fitted to the trailer and they're secure.

Lights and indicators

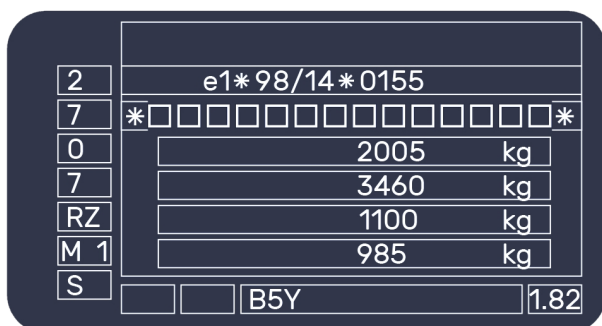
Check that there's no damage to the lights, and that they're all working correctly.

Load and weight limit

- the trailer is not overloaded
- the load is distributed evenly
- the load is secure

Find your car's weight limit

The vehicle manufacturer's plate gives information about weight limits for your car. Check the car's handbook if a plate is not fitted.



An example of a vehicle manufacturer's plate.

Weight	Description
Weight 1	Maximum weight of the car on its own
Weight 2	Maximum weight of the car and trailer combined
Weight 3	Maximum weight for the front axle of the car
Weight 4	Maximum weight for the rear axle of the car

The maximum weight includes passengers, other loads, and fuel.

Trailer with no braking system

The loaded trailer:

- must not weigh over 750kg
- should not weigh more than 50% of your car's weight

Trailer with braking system

The car and loaded trailer must not weigh over the second weight shown on the car manufacturer's plates.

When you're driving

You must not drive faster than the speed limit for the type of road you're on.

If the trailer starts to snake or swerve, ease off the accelerator and reduce your speed gently. It's a sign that either:

- you're going too fast
- the trailer is loaded incorrectly

Do not brake harshly on a bend, as it makes the trailer unstable. Reduce your speed in plenty of time when approaching any hazard.

Motorways

You must not drive in the right-hand lane of a motorway with 3 or more lanes.

Get a free safety check

You can get a free safety check for a trailer (<https://ntta.co.uk/suppliers/free-trailer-safety-checks/>) up to 3,500kg through the National Trailer and Towing Association's (NTTA) free safety checks scheme.

The check will highlight issues that you need to address.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/tow-a-trailer-with-a-car-safety-checks>

Volunteers' Week: IAM RoadSmart CEO recognises commitment from members during June #MonthofCommunity from the IAM RoadSmart Newsroom

IAM RoadSmart, the UK's largest independent road safety organisation, is saying a big thank you to its amazing volunteers during Volunteers' Week (1-7 June).

Tony Greenidge, Chief Executive Officer, "This time last year we were recognising the commitment and dedication of our network of volunteers as restrictions from the first lockdown eased. We didn't envisage that, a year on, we would only just be starting to re-emerge with on-road coaching. Unfortunately, this is still not across the whole of the UK. One positive the pandemic has provided is the opportunity to strengthen our online courses and webinars which have been beneficial and well received by our members."

Volunteers Week is the perfect opportunity to pay tribute to the thousands of active volunteers who, through their work in local communities across the country, make a significant contribution towards IAM RoadSmart's charitable mission to reduce the number of people killed and injured on roads in the UK.

Tony continued: "We are so proud and appreciative to all our volunteers who throughout the Coronavirus pandemic have utilised their skills and time in the community to help those in greatest need."

During this very difficult time our members have turned their hands – and their driving and riding expertise – to activities including local blood runner services, pharmacy deliveries to people shielding at home and joining the NHS Volunteer Responders.

Tony said: "Our volunteers are central to our work to improve driver and rider skills and I have been inspired by the positivity of our members who have been actively seeking out new opportunities to help their communities.

"I would like to say a big thank you to all our amazing volunteers, on behalf of everyone who has benefited from their coaching and local group activities. I am enormously grateful for the many voluntary hours, the passion and expertise they provide to help others make improvements to their driving and riding. They really are the lifeblood of our organisation."

Advanced drivers and riders can expect to save money on fuel, insurance and vehicle wear and tear. Using advanced driving and riding techniques can reduce a vehicle's carbon footprint, improve driver and rider wellbeing, increase enjoyment, and reduce stress on the roads.

IAM RoadSmart will be marking June as the #MonthofCommunity and Volunteers' Week on social media encouraging members to share stories and in a personal thank you open letter sent to all our 180+ groups from the CEO, Tony Greenidge.

Driver Habits See Effects Of Covid from the IAM RoadSmart Newsroom

- 500 offences detected during a police road safety operation over the Bank Holiday weekend.
- 61% of UK drivers believe they are 'COVID Drivers' with car accidents increasing sharply by 22% over the late May Bank Holiday.
- 44% of drivers feel nervous about taking long-distance drives post-lockdown.
- 47% admitted to picking up bad habits during Lockdown which they are now taking onto the road.
- 26% of drivers said they feel more pressure driving now, due to busier roads.

A nationwide study by Nextbase, market-leader of in-car technology, has revealed that UK drivers believe the lockdown has massively impacted their driving habits and that they are sure they would FAIL their

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June Newsletter - 2021 (edition 74)

driving test if they had to take it again today. With 47% admitting to picking up bad driving habits during lockdown which they are now taking onto the road.

And these habits have only worsened during lockdown. The study also found that 29% of UK drivers said they are worrying about motorway driving now. When questioned about habits they have picked up whilst driving during the pandemic, more than one in five (22%) said they steer one-handed, 12% confessed to getting easily distracted when in the car, while 15% said they drive far too quickly.

Nextbase aims to get UK motorists back on the road safely this summer, that's why they have recently partnered with the UK's leading road safety charity, IAM RoadSmart to develop their Driving Intelligence e-learning modules.

The post COVID study further found that 44% of motorists said they were feeling nervous about driving long distances post lockdown. This extended break from driving might lead to some hairy moments on the road, according to the data, 38% of surveyors expect to see an increase in road rage due to a traffic increase post lockdown.

42% of the 1,500 UK motorists polled confessed their driving skills were more than a little rusty following a decrease in their time spent on the road, while more than one in 10 (14%) say they have completely forgotten how to drive their car.

When questioned about their driving knowledge, over one in ten (11%) of those polled insisted they cannot remember a single thing from their theory test and 14% admitted they see signs on the road every day which they do not understand.

The Nextbase and IAM RoadSmart Driving Intelligence e-learning modules are free of charge with the purchase of any Nextbase dash cam. The modules help drivers learn about managing their speed and its im-

pact on stopping distances, smart motorways and – via a simple quiz – important driving safety facts.

Tony Greenidge, CEO of IAM RoadSmart concludes: “It was inevitable that Lockdown would leave many drivers and riders with confidence issues, stress and rusty skills due to their enforced break from the roads. With any skill you learn, you need to improve and refresh it to remain top of your game. Driving and riding is no different. Our on-road courses and e-learning modules are designed to help boost confidence, improve existing skills, and widen knowledge. These proactive interventions help create more considerate road users and ultimately our goal is to make driving and riding enjoyable, fun and safe.”

Do not miss out! Available on a first come first served basis only! Visit <https://www.nextbase.com/driving-intelligence/> to find out how you can download the Driving Intelligence modules with your dash cam purchase.

Bryn Brooker, Head of Marketing at Nextbase, which commissioned the study, said:

“As rules change over time and roads get busier it is understandable that people start to feel less confident on the roads. It is important, whether you are a new driver or have been driving for years, that you keep on top of your driving skills, and use everything at your disposal to assist you in driving safely and responsibly.”

He continued to say:

“At Nextbase we pride ourselves on helping people on the roads feel secure and protected. “If you are looking to get your confidence back when out of the road the Driving Intelligence modules are a great place to start your revision. Additionally, a dash cam offers many solutions not just in the event of an incident, but as a deterrent – we've found that 54% of people will adjust their driving to be less aggressive if they see dash cams in the cars around them.”