

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

APPROACHING A GREEN LIGHT

Anticipate a green light change to amber.

Stop on amber unless you are so close to the stop line when it changes that you can't stop safely. Often drivers ask themselves: Can I make it? The question ought to be: Can I safely stop? Having the wrong mental question means that drivers often go through the amber light when they should have stopped. This may make it difficult for another driver to clear the intersection safely.

Stop on the amber light unless it is unsafe to.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

STOPPING AT TRAFFIC LIGHTS

Be prepared to stop as you approach a green light.

1. Be at a safe speed.
2. Look at the last point on the road that you think you could brake to a safe smooth stop. If the road is wet you might increase your distance by fifty percent compared with a dry road, if it is heavy rain, you might double it; if there is a larger vehicle close behind, you might triple the distance.
3. If the lights change before you reach your point on the road, brake to a deliberate smooth stop, if you have passed the point, accelerate and watch for other traffic, especially oncoming vehicles that are turning right.

Take care, as you approach traffic lights.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

RIGHT TURN / ONCOMING

A most dangerous situation in traffic is when a vehicle is turning right through a stream of traffic.

If there is a vehicle coming straight towards you with its right signal on, change your speed so that you don't both arrive at the intersection together. If you are forced to arrive at the same time, check your mirror and get ready to brake if the other driver makes a mistake.

Being alert to a specific threat often means that you can control it.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

VEHICLE ENTERING FROM ANGLE

A very dangerous traffic situation exists when a vehicle is entering traffic from a side angle.

The vehicle may be coming out of a side street, a service station or a drive way. That driver may have a restricted view or make a bad judgement if the driver is still thinking at the speed of a pedestrian because they have just commenced to drive. Change road position or prepare to brake.

Be alert and wary as you drive.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

BICYCLE HIDDEN IN THE CORNER OF THE WINDSCREEN

It is easy to not notice a bicycle at a crossroad.

When you approach a give-way sign and you are travelling at a similar speed to a bicycle on the other road, it may remain hidden from your view behind the corner pillar of your windscreen. Move your head forwards and backwards so that you can see around the corner pillar whenever you approach an intersection.

Be very alert to your vehicle's blind spots.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

CHECK SPEEDO WHEN SLOWING FOR A CORNER

Make sure you are slow enough for a corner, after you have been travelling at highway speeds for a time.

Drivers tend to adapt to a speed after travelling consistently at that speed for around half an hour; and therefore underestimate the amount of braking that they have done to prepare for a corner. Make sure you have slowed enough for the corner by glancing at the speedometer, rather than relying on your judgement.

Coming into intersections too fast can be devastating at the worst and embarrassing at the least.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

BRAKE SMOOTHLY

Use your brakes progressively and smoothly.

If you want people to enjoy riding with you there are three simple things to make into habits. Prepare to brake by pressing your left foot onto the footrest and lean back in your seat. Commence your braking early and light enough so that your braking is spread over a greater distance with a consistent pressure. As you come towards the end of your braking area, lighten the pedal to about half the pressure.

Three steps: Prepare by using left foot support, progress from light to the required pressure and hold, then lighten at the finish.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

DRIVING AT DUSK

Driving at twilight is more dangerous than driving during the daylight.

Drivers overestimate their ability to see at twilight. Shadows increase the difficulty of judging the speed and distance of other vehicles. Fatigue becomes an important issue in the evenings.

Let your speed go down with the sun.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

DRIVING IN VERY HEAVY RAIN

When you are driving in very heavy rain you have two extra problems: you can't see as far and your car has less grip on the road.

Turn your air conditioner on, with the recirculating on and the heat adjusted up. This will dry the fog off the inside of the windows, and the drips of rain from your clothes. Turn the wipers on fast and your head lights on [low beam] and the gear "power-shift" on. Keep your eye roving through the rain; resist the natural temptation to stare at it.

Drive at a speed that would enable you to stop in the distance you can see through the rain

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

BROKEN EDGE OF THE BITUMEN

Avoid placing your tyre on the edge of the bitumen.

When it is necessary to place one wheel on the gravel verge, keep it about half a metre from the jagged edge of the bitumen. Running your tyre on the bumpy edge of the sealed surface damages the tyres and steering mechanism. Also, your tyres damage the edge of the bitumen.

Make decisive moves out onto the gravel verge when you need to, and come back with all your wheels onto the seal when you can.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

FOLLOWING ANOTHER VEHICLE

Keep a safe gap to the vehicle ahead

Rear-end collisions are the most common of all crashes. The most successful method of calculating a safe gap is when the vehicle ahead passes a fixed object, like a sign post, count two seconds by saying: ‘one-thousand-and-one, one-thousand-and-two’. If the front of your car reaches the object before you complete the count, you are travelling too close. You will need three seconds if you are travelling slower than thirty kilometres per hour.

The only piece of road that you can control is the free space ahead of your vehicle. With this you are allowed to be greedy!

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

FOLLOWING AN UNSAFE LOAD

Keep a bigger than normal gap behind a loaded truck.

Especially if you are unsure if the load is safe. Terrible accidents have happened when part of a load has fallen from a truck and entered the vehicle behind. When part of a load hits the road it can stop so suddenly in your path that it is impossible for you to avoid it.

If you are in doubt about the load on the vehicle ahead, keep at least four seconds behind it.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

HILL CREST APPROACH

Approach hill crests at a speed that you would be able to stop within the distance that you can see ahead.

On narrow country roads keep all your wheels on the same surface. This will enable you to steer either way or brake safely. It isn't a good idea to place two wheels on the gravel verge because it may make your vehicle unstable if you need to brake suddenly, or steer to the right around a bicycle.

So, keep as much to the left as is reasonable and be at a speed that would enable you to stop.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

“CROSS-WINDS”

High gusty winds can move your vehicle from its intended path.

Be careful not to over react to the wind gusts. Hold the wheel lightly with both hands, and move the steering slowly and deliberately, ‘tacking’ the vehicle into the wind. Anticipate steering corrections when the wind is screened by trees, buildings, large vehicles, etc.

Keep your body relaxed, your eyes where you want the vehicle to go and your hand movements slow and gentle.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

ANIMAL ON THE ROAD

React deliberately when you first see an animal on the road.

Look behind the animal, because it will usually go forwards. Keep your steering straight while you brake as firmly as you can. Sound your horn and turn your light to park-lights if you can. Park-lights will allow you to steer without dazzling the animal.

Keep your eye off the animal and steer around it only when you have full control of your speed.

CLASS-DRIVING TIPS - SECTION TWO – JUDGEMENT

COUNTRY PARKING

Think carefully about where you park on country roads.

Because there is often less traffic, we may become complacent when we park on a country road, but because the traffic speed is faster it may be more dangerous. Park away from the road's edge so that an opened door will be at least a metre clear of passing traffic. Avoid parking near hill-crests, bends or intersections.

Park well off the road, in a position that can be clearly seen by approaching drivers.