

# Best Practice Guide

## Braking



### **Before You Start.... Learn To Stop!**

Braking is one of the BASIC elements of safe driving - and one of the most important.

Getting it wrong can lead to dangerous situations, such as:

- Skidding
- Loss of control
- Rear-end collisions

SMOOTH braking helps you stop safely, and is better for the environment too!

## Look after your brakes

You cannot expect your brakes to work effectively if you do not keep them in good condition. Check your brakes weekly before setting out on a trip.

To check brakes:

- Choose a safe place such as a driveway.
- Check mirrors and blind spots to make sure you are safe to proceed.
- Drive forward slowly.
- Press the brake pedal firmly.

## Be a smooth operator

Accelerate and decelerate gradually to reduce engine wear, reduce fuel use, and prolong the life of your brakes. All of these will save you money!

Braking SMOOTHLY has multiple benefits including:

- Reduced chance of losing control and crashing.
- More comfortable trips.
- Less impact on the environment.



## Corner correctly

Corners and curves can be hazardous if tackled incorrectly. If you are traveling too fast and brake while in the corner, you will lose grip and are likely to skid out of control.

When approaching a corner:

- Apply brakes SMOOTHLY on the approach until

- your vehicle is at an appropriate speed.
- Release the brakes BEFORE you begin to turn.

## Watch out for others

Rear-end collisions are common at intersections/junctions and traffic lights.

When approaching a stationary vehicle at an intersection/junction or traffic lights:

- Slow down gradually by braking SMOOTHLY.
- Stop far enough behind the vehicle in front so that you can see its rear TIRES and can also see TARMAC on the road behind.

## Drive on the defensive

To avoid emergency braking situations, remain aware of what is happening around you at all times and stick to an appropriate speed. Ensure you:

- Drive to the speed limit or below, to suit conditions.
- Scan the area around you regularly to look for 'clues' about the environment.
- Leave a safe following distance behind the vehicle in front.
- Ease off the accelerator when driving near to potential hazards.
- Stay on high alert for unexpected hazards.
- Be prepared to brake if necessary.

## Know your stopping distance

All drivers should be aware of their braking and stopping distances. Braking distance is the distance it takes your vehicle to stop once you apply the brakes. Stopping distance is the total time it takes your vehicle to stop, including thinking and braking time.

On average, the STOPPING distance for cars in good conditions is:

- 12 metres/40 feet at 20mph (32km/h)
- 23 metres/75 feet at 30mph (48km/h)
- 53 metres/175 feet at 50mph (80km/h)
- 96 metres/315 feet at 70mph (112km/h)

## Be aware of the weather

Bad weather conditions such as rain, snow and ice have a MASSIVE effect on braking. Not only do stopping distances increase dramatically (up to twice as long in the wet and 10 times as long on ice) but it is easy to lose control.

When driving in icy or snowy conditions:

- Get into a higher gear earlier than normal.
- Increase and decrease speed gradually.
- Apply the brakes SLOWLY and SMOOTHLY.



## If the worst happens

Provided you keep your vehicle well-maintained, you should never have to deal with brake failure. However, it is an extremely frightening situation to be in, so it makes sense to be prepared.

If brakes fail:

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Pump the brakes - this might create enough pressure for you to stop.
- Move into a lower gear.
- Use your handbrake / parking brake SLOWLY and STEADILY
- Stay in control of the steering wheel and put on hazard lights/emergency signals to alert others that you have a problem.
- If all this fails then use any method you can to slow down. Drive through gravel or sand if possible or aim for a stretch of road that climbs upwards. As a last resort it may be necessary to gently sideswipe barriers or railings or look for a "safe" spot to crash, away from pedestrians and other road users.

- B** Brake slowly, smoothly and steadily.
- R** Regularly check that your brakes work.
- A** safe following distance can help prevent rear-end collisions
- K** Know your braking and stopping distances.
- I** In cases of bad weather take extra care.
- N** Never speed - and look out for hazards.
- G** Go slow for corners.

### **WARNING!**

Traveling too close to the vehicle ahead is one of the most common examples of bad driving behavior. Leave at least a three-second gap (more in bad weather) to give you plenty of time to brake and stop safely.