

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 all kinds of dangerous situations, such as:

- Skidding.
- Loss of control.
- Rear-end collisions.

There are three S's of braking: SLOWLY, SMOOTHLY and STEADILY! Remembering these techniques will reduce your chances of encountering any problems when coming to a stop.

Look After Your Brakes

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

To check brakes:

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

Learn To 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!

Applying the three S's of braking has other benefits including:

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



Corner Correctly

Corners can be hazardous if tackled incorrectly. If you are travelling 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 to the

corner until your vehicle is at an appropriate speed.

- Release the brakes BEFORE you begin to turn.

Don't Rear-End Others

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

When approaching a stationary vehicle at traffic lights or a junction:

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

Drive On The Defensive

To avoid emergency braking situations, try to be aware of what is happening around you at all times and always drive at an appropriate speed.

Remember to:

- Stick to the speed limit or below if necessary.
- Scan the area around you regularly to look for 'clues' about the environment.
- EASE off the accelerator when driving near to potential hazards.
- Keep 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 BRAKING distance for cars in good conditions is:

- 6 metres at 20 mph / 32 kph.
- 14 metres at 30 mph / 48 kph.
- 38 metres at 50 mph / 80 kph.
- 75 metres at 70 mph / 112 kph.

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 low gear earlier than normal.
- Allow your speed to slow 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 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** Avoid rear-end collisions.
- K** Know your braking distance.
- I** In cases of bad weather take extra care.
- N** Never speed - and look out for hazards.
- G** Go slow for corners.

WARNING

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