



## Driving safely during the Easter break

With a combination of school holidays and the first of the Spring-time bank holiday weekends, the Easter break typically see many of us travelling for holidays and family gatherings. With an influx of travellers on our roads here are a few tips and tricks to help you stay safe and comfortable on your Easter travels.

### Planning and preparation

With busy schedules that run up to the start of your long weekend or holiday away, it is still important that you make time to prepare and plan for your journey.

**Plan your route** – you may be travelling a well-known route or venturing somewhere new. By planning your route, this enables you to prepare for any road closures and identify rest and recharging stops, as well as knowing how far the next toilet is. Particularly on longer journeys, it is strongly advised to take regular breaks to rest and get refreshments. The Highway Code<sup>1</sup> recommends that drivers take a minimum 15-minutes rest after every two hours of driving. And allow flexibility in your plan in case of hold-ups and delays.

**Weather forecast** – check the anticipated weather before travelling and adjust your plans accordingly.

**Prepare your vehicle** – advocated by the National Highways TRIP campaign (top-up, rest, inspect, prepare)<sup>2</sup> getting yourself and your vehicle prepared to travel is an essential part of your planning. Whilst you're filling-up the fuel tank, many fuel stations will have facilities for you to check your tire pressures too. It is your legal responsibility to ensure your vehicle is safe to drive, you can [find out more about the required checks on the UK Government website](#). If you are not confident to carry out checks yourself, you could arrange a quick vehicle safety check with your local garage, or certain national garages and motoring retailers offer packages.

**Passenger entertainment** – if you are travelling with passengers who will require entertainment, make sure any music playlists are agreed and available, and/or any devices are fully charged and set-up before you start driving. Remember it is illegal to operate handheld devices whilst driving<sup>3</sup>.

**Medication** – if you or your passengers require medication such as inhalers, EpiPens or insulin remember to keep this with you and accessible. Don't inadvertently place any bag containing lifesaving medication in the boot because the car is full. If anyone in your party is diabetic, allow plenty of time for stops and refreshments. If you need to operate an insulin pump, remember it is dangerous and illegal to use a handheld device whilst driving, treat your journey planning as if you would to administer an insulin pen.

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code/rules-for-drivers-and-motorcyclists-89-to-102>

<sup>2</sup><https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/trip/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.gov.uk/using-mobile-phones-when-driving-the-law>

**Antihistamines** – whilst it's spring, it's allergy season. Consider the type of medication you are taking before driving. Antihistamines can cause drowsiness, therefore read the packaging carefully. Driving with allergy symptoms is also not advised as these could impair your senses.

**Take your time** – when planning your journey, make sure to leave plenty of time. Roads will likely be busier and more heavily congested around the bank holiday weekend. Time pressures can lead to stress and the temptations to speed and drive with less caution.

## On the Road

**Relax** – yes, heavy traffic and traffic jams are frustrating, but sometimes inevitable so relax and be calm, it's better to arrive late than not at all.

**Share the roads** - there will likely be more cyclists, motorbikes, towed caravans and motorhomes on the roads too. Be mindful of these other road users and give them space to travel safely. Always check your blind spots and use your turn signals when changing lanes. You can find out more about better driving habits through National Highways 'Little Changes'<sup>4</sup>.

Not everyone is travelling for leisure, so be considerate of commercial drivers too.

**Be flexible** – if you experience delays to your carefully made plan, it may mean stopping to rest nearer than expected. Listen to your body, and to your passengers, to accommodate everyone's needs and avoid creating a stressful vehicle environment.

## Don't drink and drive

Whether you're relaxing on holiday or celebrating with friends and family, sharing a drink together is not uncommon. Whilst it may be obvious not to get behind the wheel immediately after consuming alcohol, it can also remain in your system for a number of hours, with one standard drink taking on average an hour to be metabolised<sup>5</sup>. If you are planning to drive the next day, consider what time you will need to stop in order to drive safely and legally. The aftereffects of drinking alcohol (i.e. the hangover) can also impact your senses and cognitive functions. Top tip, avoid alcohol before driving entirely, or (if driving the next day) keep it to a minimum and make sure you have plenty of time to recover and rest.

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<sup>4</sup><https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/little-changes/>

<sup>5</sup><https://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/how-long-alcohol-stay-system/#:~:text=Blood%3A%20Alcohol%20is%20eliminated%20from,hours%20via%20the%20traditional%20method.>

