



Holiday driving safety tips

Road trip season is upon us and, as the warmer weather draws in, we want to highlight a few safety tips for driving to make sure your journey goes as smoothly as possible.

Plan ahead – Whether you're taking a familiar route or a new one, planning remains essential. Even routes you frequent with can present unforeseen obstacles, like road closures, changes to service station opening hours, etc, that can disrupt your journey. Make sure to plan ahead and include petrol stations (recharging stations if necessary) and toilet facilities in your plans, too.

Be flexible – Even the best-laid plans can fall apart, so make sure to allow for hold-ups and delays when you are planning. Remember – frustration and rushing can compromise road safety. Be flexible and factor in extra time to prevent stress.

Take regular breaks – The Highway Code states drivers should take at least one 15-minute break every two hours to rest and get refreshments.¹ If you need to stop more regularly, then make sure to do so.

Check the weather forecast – It's true that the weather can be unpredictable, but checking the weather forecast allows you to have a rough gauge of what to expect.

Keep distractions to a minimum – Make sure you bring something to keep all passengers entertained for long journeys. Ensure all devices are fully charged and playlists are sorted before you depart. Using handheld devices whilst driving is illegal. It's not just skipping a song – it's breaking the law.²

Keep medication to hand – If you or any of your passengers need medication, make sure you have these close to hand in case of emergencies – do not pack these in the boot. Think inhalers, EpiPens and insulin pumps. As mentioned earlier, it is important to stop regularly for refreshments and this is particularly important if anyone in your travel party is diabetic.

If the driver takes antihistamines for allergies, read the packaging carefully as some medications can cause drowsiness.

Be respectful of other road users - Careless driving can work as a catalyst for others to drive dangerously, too. Cyclists, motorbikes, caravans, buses, HGVs, etc, are all entitled to use the road too so give them space to travel safely. Check your blind spots, maintain a safe distance between yourself and other vehicles, indicate at the appropriate time and make sure not to be a "lane hogger". You can brush up on your driving skills with [National Highways' 'Little Changes'](https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/trip/)³ before you go too.

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

²<https://www.gov.uk/using-mobile-phones-when-driving-the-law>

³<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/road-safety/trip/>

Abide by the law – This one almost goes without saying but be mindful of alcohol consumption limits. In England, Wales, and Northern Ireland the limit is 80 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood⁴, however in Scotland it is even stricter at 50 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood⁵. If you have consumed alcoholic drinks recently, make sure you give yourself enough time for the alcohol to leave your system fully.

Ensure your vehicle is roadworthy – It is your legal responsibility to ensure your vehicle is safe to drive. Failure to do so can result in a £2,500 fine, three penalty points on your license, and being banned from driving.⁶ The government has listed in detail the checks you should carry out on a regular basis. If you are unsure on how to do these or would prefer a professional's opinion, arrange a vehicle safety check at your local garage before you travel.

⁴Alcohol and drug driving | Metropolitan Police

⁵Drink driving and the legal alcohol limit | Drinkaware

⁶<https://www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-safe>

