



# road safety

## **KEEP YOUR CHILD SAFE USE THE RIGHT CHILD RESTRAINT**

Children under 7 years must be restrained in an approved child restraint or booster seat whenever they are travelling in a car.

Always use the right child car restraint appropriate for your child's age and size.

Northern Territory road users are three times more likely to suffer an injury or fatality on our roads than any other state or territory in Australia. In the 10 years from 2002 to 2011, an average of 50 people died and 509 people were seriously injured each year on Northern Territory roads.

A road 'accident' is never an accident. It is the result of the combination of road user, road environment, risk factors and decisions made that result in a crash that, in turn, results in trauma.

Crashes are not uncontrollable events but have definite causes and, by implication, can be avoided; 90% of all road crashes are the result of driver behaviours, not the vehicle or environment.

Key factors that contribute to crashes and the severity of crashes include vehicle safety, roads and roadsides, vehicle speeds and road user behaviour (usually seatbelts, alcohol and fatigue).

### Are you the safest driver that you can be?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have a current and valid drivers licence for the type of vehicle you will be driving?
- Do you have any medical condition or are you taking any medication that could affect your ability to operate a vehicle?
- Are you familiar with the vehicle you will be driving?
- Have you had any alcohol or taken any substances that could affect your driving?

- Are you capable of driving in unusual or hazardous conditions, such as off-road?
- Is your vehicle roadworthy and registered?
- Have you checked the road conditions?
- For longer journeys, do you have a trip plan and have you thought about how you will manage fatigue?

Do a self-assessment each time you drive and if you are not fit to drive, **don't!**

## Distractions

Driving or riding is a complex task that requires the use and coordination of many skills. There is much more to driving or riding than being able to make a vehicle go, stop or turn a corner.

It is important to stay focussed while driving and avoid becoming distracted. If you become distracted while driving you could cause a crash.

Distractions can include talking with passengers, using a mobile phone, tuning the radio or changing CDs, listening to music, smoking, eating or drinking, shaving, applying cosmetics and reading a map. Drivers can also become distracted by events happening outside the car.

## Mobile phones

You must not use a hand-held mobile phone while driving, even if you are stopped at traffic lights.

You can use a hand-held mobile phone while your vehicle is parked in a designated parking place.

Learner and provisional licence holders are not permitted to use a mobile phone in any form while driving. This includes hands-free or loudspeaker options and texting.

## Television receivers and visual display units

You must not drive a vehicle that has a television or visual display unit operating and visible to you or drivers of other vehicles. This does not apply to a driver's aid, such as vehicle systems equipment, dispatch system, ticket issuing machine, navigational system or rear view screens linked to reversing cameras.

## Speeding

Speeding is travelling at a speed greater than the sign posted speed limit.

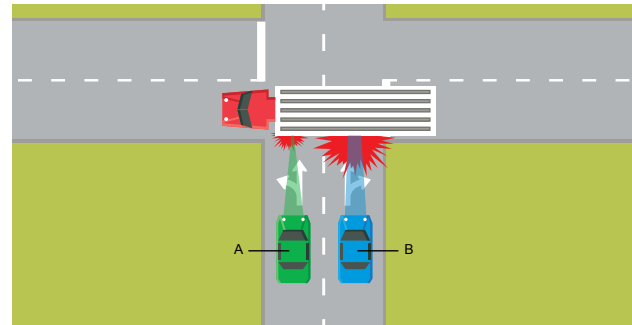
You can also be speeding if you are travelling too fast for the driving conditions. If conditions are less than ideal, for example, rain, heavy traffic or at night, you could be speeding even if you're driving at or below the sign posted speed limit.

There is no such thing as 'safe speeding'. Some people think that exceeding the speed limit by 5 to 10 km/h is 'acceptable' speeding. This is a dangerous way to think. Research has shown that even a small increase in speed can greatly increase the risk of a crash.

### 5 km/h faster means 32 km/h on impact

Two cars are travelling on a road with a speed limit of 60 km/h. One car is travelling at 65 km/h and the other 60 km/h. A truck unexpectedly appears across the road 38 metres ahead and both drivers apply the brakes at the same point.

The vehicle travelling at 65 km/h will hit the truck at 32 km/h and will likely suffer extensive damage. The slower vehicle will be travelling at 5 km/h on impact and will suffer much less severe damage.



The green car (car A) was travelling at 60 km/h, the speed limit, and hits the truck at 5 km/h. The blue car (car B) was travelling at 65 km/h and hits the truck at 32 km/h

### Speed limit signs

Speed limit signs show the maximum speed you are allowed to drive in good conditions. You must not go faster than the speed limit, but you can drive slower if you wish.

Driving needlessly slower than the sign posted speed limit and conditions can be just as dangerous as speeding and is an offence.

### Slow down in poor conditions

Driving conditions vary and can change quickly, so it is important to slow down when road, weather and light conditions are poor. These conditions also include:

- road surfaces that are affected by gravel, oil, sand, ice, mud or water
- the time of day, the light, at night and in fog
- crests or curves and when vision is limited.

On rural and outback roads and highways, look out for stock and wildlife that can, and do, wander onto the road.

### Driving on unsealed roads

Take extra care when driving on unsealed roads (dirt and gravel). Vehicles take longer to stop and are harder control on unsealed roads. In these conditions, all vehicles are at risk of skidding, sliding or rolling over.

Dust on unsealed roads can severely reduce visibility and hide ruts and potholes. Putting your headlights on will help other vehicles to see you through the dust.

Maintain a low speed because the road conditions can change quickly and without warning.

For more information on specific speed limits, see Section 5 General Road Rules.

### Alcohol, drugs, medications and driving

Alcohol, drugs and medications can significantly affect your driving skills and increase your risk of having a crash.

It is illegal to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including some over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

There is a great similarity between the drinking driver and the 'drugged' driver. Both are usually not aware of any impairment to their driving skills, alertness, capability, vision or reactions.

As a driver, you need to be alert and able to concentrate on what you are doing so that you can react to whatever is happening on the road around you.

When your doctor prescribes a drug you should ask whether it could affect your driving.

Read the label on prescription medication and over-the-counter products to check that they do not contain alcohol (also known as ethanol) or a warning about possible effects on your driving ability.

### How alcohol affects driving skills

No one can drink alcohol without it affecting their ability to drive a vehicle or ride a motorcycle or bicycle. You do not have to be drunk to be dangerous on the road. Although you might feel or look all right, your driving ability will be affected if you have been drinking alcohol.

Alcohol is quickly absorbed into the bloodstream, where it travels to all parts of the body, including the brain. When it reaches the brain, alcohol acts like an anaesthetic. It slows down and gradually dulls parts of the brain that are needed for driving. Once alcohol is in the bloodstream, its effects on the brain cannot be stopped or controlled.

The only thing that will reduce a person's blood alcohol concentration is time.

#### Effects of alcohol include:

- **Slower reaction time** to triggers requiring action (e.g. a car approaching from a side street, traffic lights changing or people crossing the road).
- **Poor judgment** about your speed and the speed of other vehicles and in judging distances (e.g. other cars might seem further away than they really are).
- **Observation skills, such as visual attention and hearing, are reduced.** After drinking alcohol, drivers tend to focus on the road straight ahead and ignore what is happening in their side vision (e.g. they won't hear or see things like cars approaching from side streets or people crossing the road).
- **Poor coordination** when trying to do more than one thing at a time, especially in an emergency.

- **Confidence up, judgement down**, leading you to believe you are OK to drive. You might take risks that you would not normally take. This can be extremely dangerous because you may not be aware how much your skills have deteriorated.

Some people might show these effects after drinking only small amounts of alcohol; others might display little or no change in their appearance or behaviour. Regardless of this, no one can drink alcohol without it affecting their ability to drive in some way.

### Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)

The level of alcohol in your blood can be measured. This measure is called Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC), and it is measured by analysing a sample of blood or by using a breath analysing instrument ('breathalyser') to measure the level of alcohol in the breath.

The results are expressed as a ratio of the mass of alcohol (in grams) per volume (100 millilitres) of blood. In other words, a BAC of 0.05 means that there is 0.05 of a gram of alcohol in each 100 millilitres of your blood.

### Breath Alcohol Concentration (BrAC)

Just like BAC, the level of alcohol in your breath can be measured. The measure is called Breath Alcohol Concentration (BrAC) and is measured by analyzing a sample of your breath.

The results are expressed as a ratio of the mass of alcohol (in grams) per volume (210 litres) of exhaled breath. In other words a BrAC of 0.05 means that there is 0.05 of a gram of alcohol in each 210 litres of breath.

### How to calculate your alcohol level

There are a number of reasons why it is difficult to have a general rule to determine a person's blood alcohol level without testing.

People register different blood alcohol concentrations depending on:

- their body size and shape
- whether they are male or female
- how quickly they drank the alcohol
- how quickly their body gets rid of the alcohol
- if they have eaten any food.

One person drinking a set amount of alcohol can also reach a different BAC/BrAC on different occasions.

As a guide, males drinking more than two standard drinks in the first hour could cause their BAC/BrAC to go over 0.05, and only one standard drink per hour after that will keep it above 0.05. For females, any more than one standard drink per hour could cause their BAC/BrAC to go over 0.05.

Remember that the estimated BAC/BrAC for a standard drink is only a rough guide. The effect of one standard drink on someone's BAC/BrAC will vary from individual to individual.

### How quickly does your BAC/BrAC fall?

Approximately 10% of the alcohol passes out of the body, unchanged, through breath, urine and sweat.

Most of the alcohol in the bloodstream (more than 90%)

is broken down by the liver. As a general rule, it takes the liver about one hour to dispose of the alcohol in one standard drink. This means that the BAC/BrAC drops by about 0.015 per hour. While this amount differs from person to person, a BAC/BrAC of 0.05 will take approximately three to four hours to reach zero.

There is nothing you can do to make the liver work any faster – only time will help you to sober up. Nothing can speed up this process. It is a myth that black coffee, a cold shower, exercise, fresh air, vomiting or home remedies will make a person more sober.

### What is a standard drink?

A standard drink contains 10 grams of alcohol; the amount an average healthy liver can break down in one hour.

Cans, bottles and casks state on the label how many standard drinks they contain.

Care should be taken when drinking because glass and container sizes vary and, therefore, the number of standard drinks can vary.

### Mixing alcohol with other drugs

The worst thing you can do when using any type of drug, including prescription and illegal drugs, is drink alcohol.

Many drugs will have a different and often worse effect on your ability to drive if you take or use them and drink alcohol at the same time. The effects of combining drugs and alcohol vary depending on a person's physical condition, activity level, the type of drug and the amount of alcohol and drug consumed.

When alcohol is combined with drugs, the effects can be completely unpredictable and dangerous.

### When can you be breath tested?

The police can breath test drivers at any time. Police can also test drivers who:

- have been involved in a crash
- have committed certain traffic offences
- approach a random breath testing station
- behave in a way that indicates a driving impairment.

Generally, the police will first require the driver to blow into a breath screening device, often referred to as a breathalyser, which will indicate if alcohol is present.

If you have a positive reading, or if it appears that you are obviously affected by alcohol, you will be required to submit to a formal alcohol evidentiary test. You may also be requested to provide a blood sample for further testing.

If you refuse the tests or are over the legal BAC/BrAC limit you could be charged with:

- Driving Under the Influence (DUI)
- exceeding the legal BAC/BrAC limit
- refusing a breath/blood test.

### How does the breath test work?

If there is any alcohol in the bloodstream, a small amount passes through the lining of the lungs into the breath and is exhaled. As this bears a fixed relationship to the amount of alcohol in the blood, the BAC/BrAC can be easily calculated by taking and measuring a breath sample.

There is nothing that will reduce the effectiveness of breath testing by these devices. Some people try to lower their BAC/BrAC reading by 'covering up' the smell of alcohol on their breath (by using breath fresheners, smoking or eating mints). However, this does not change the amount of alcohol in their breath and their BAC/BrAC will not be reduced.

## Fatigue

Fatigue is a term used to describe the feeling of being sleepy, tired or exhausted. It can lead to impaired judgement, slower reaction times and decreased ability to control a vehicle.

This is your body's way of telling you that you need to stop and rest or sleep. The best way to avoid driver fatigue is to make sure you have plenty of sleep before you set off. The only way to treat driver fatigue once you have already started driving is to stop and rest until you are refreshed.

Driver fatigue can be just as dangerous as drink driving or excessive speeding.

Although it is difficult to identify and measure fatigue in fatal crashes, it is widely believed that fatigue is under-recorded as a factor in road fatalities.

### Facts about fatigue

**Fatigue fact 1:** Fatigue is generally associated with the hours when you would normally be asleep. The risk of having a fatal fatigue crash is four times greater between the hours of 10pm and 6am because this is when your body is programmed to sleep. Your core temperature falls and your blood pressure drops so that at night and, to some extent, during the afternoon, your ability to perform

tasks can be severely impaired. This includes your ability to drive. Your circadian rhythms (natural sleep pattern) cause this type of fatigue and there is nothing you can do to stop it. If you drive at night or early in the morning, your risk of driver fatigue is increased.

**Fatigue fact 2:** The average person needs about eight hours of sleep each night to function normally. Teenagers need even more. When you reduce the number of hours you sleep at night you start to accumulate what is called a 'sleep debt'. The only way to treat your sleep debt is by sleeping.

**Fatigue fact 3:** Fatigue is caused by how long you have been awake. It is estimated that the risk of crashing after being awake for 17 hours is equivalent to having a BAC/BrAC of 0.05. After 24 hours it is equivalent to a BAC/BrAC of 0.10, which increases your risk of having a crash by 10 times.

**Fatigue fact 4:** You have a high risk of suffering from fatigue after you wake up when you are still feeling groggy. This is called 'sleep inertia' and generally lasts between 15 and 30 minutes. Wait until you have overcome sleep inertia before you drive.

**Fatigue fact 5:** The risk of driver fatigue increases with the amount of time you have spent driving. To reduce fatigue you should aim to stop for 15 minutes every two hours. But remember, the only cure for fatigue is a good night's sleep.

### Signs of driver fatigue

Driver fatigue severely impairs your concentration and judgement-it slows your reaction time. In fact, some of

the effects of fatigue are as dangerous as the effects of alcohol on your driving. As you drive, watch for early warning signs of driver fatigue:

- yawning
- poor concentration
- tired or sore eyes
- restlessness
- drowsiness
- slow reactions
- boredom
- feeling irritable
- making fewer and larger steering corrections
- missing road signs
- having difficulty staying in the lane
- not remembering the last few kilometres or minutes of driving.

If you notice these signs, it is time to **Stop. Revive. Survive.** Regular breaks every two hours will help avoid fatigue.

### Passenger safety

Passengers can be a positive influence in your vehicle by helping you to identify hazards and risky situations. They can change CDs or act as a navigator when you are travelling somewhere new.



Two or more passengers, however, could have a negative influence and affect your driving. The noise and behaviour of passengers can distract you from the task of driving. Some passengers might encourage you to take risks like speeding or breaking road rules and try to pressure you into high-risk behaviour.

It is your responsibility to drive safely and to obey the road rules. This could mean limiting the number of passengers you carry to make sure you stay in control. You could also discuss your expectations with your passengers before you set off.

### Keeping inside the vehicle

All occupants of a vehicle must keep all parts of their body inside the vehicle at all times. The only person allowed to extend an arm out of the window is the driver and only if they need to give a hand signal to change direction, stop or slow down.

You should only use hand signals if your indicators are not working, not clearly visible or your vehicle does not have indicator lights.

### Do not drive if:

- any part of a passenger's body is outside the vehicle
- there are passengers in or on a trailer, including a caravan or boat
- any part of your body is outside the vehicle, unless you are giving a hand signal to change direction, stop or to slow down.

**It is illegal to ride in the back of utilities and trucks or in the boot of a vehicle.**

### Overcrowding is dangerous

It is dangerous and illegal to have too many people in your vehicle, such as people sitting on the floor or on other people's laps.

The number of passengers in a vehicle cannot be more than the number of seatbelts in the vehicle.

All passengers must be seated and wearing seatbelts or other approved restraints.

### Seatbelts

Drivers are responsible to make sure all passengers are properly restrained in a seatbelt or approved child restraint. There are fines and demerit points for a driver who is not wearing a seatbelt or who does not ensure that passengers use seatbelts where available.

Passengers aged 16 years and over who do not use a seatbelt will also be fined.

### Child restraints

Child restraints help to prevent serious injury and death to children involved in a crash.

All children under the age of seven are required to travel in a Standards Australia-approved child restraint suitable for their age and size. It is mandatory when carrying a child in

a vehicle to have the correct restraint for the child. See section 5 **General Road Rules** for the legal requirements on child restraints.

**Never use a booster seat with just a lap seatbelt unless the booster seat has a harness.**

## Night driving

When driving at night you need to be able to see and to be seen clearly by others. Compared with daylight driving, visibility at night is extremely limited. Even with the best street lighting combined with the most efficient headlights; your ability to see at night is significantly reduced.

Before driving at night, make sure you have:

- good lights
- clean windows.

Isolated patches of light and then dark areas will strain your eyes and cause them to constantly adjust, which makes it difficult to see.

In poorly lit areas, always reduce your speed and maintain a careful look out for both pedestrians and cyclists.

If there is no street lighting and no other vehicles close by then you can use your high beam. You must change to low

beam as soon as you see an approaching vehicle so you do not dazzle the driver.

If the light of an approaching vehicle dazzles you, slow down and look at the edge of the road until your eyes have adjusted or the vehicle has passed. If a vehicle approaches you from behind with their high-beam lights on, you can adjust your internal mirrors to avoid being dazzled.

## Duty of care

No matter what the circumstances, the responsibility of each road user is to avoid crashing or causing a crash.

A road user can be held accountable for a crash even if a road rule was not broken.

The traffic laws and regulations are designed to ensure that the traffic moves in an orderly and safe manner.

People (road users) must not walk, drive or ride (a motor vehicle, bicycle or animal):

- without due care
- without consideration for other persons.

If you are involved in a court proceeding, it is your responsibility to show that you took every reasonable care to avoid a crash or that you were proceeding in a reasonable manner.

All road users have a duty of care. We share the roads, we share the safety.

## If you are involved in a road crash

If you are involved in a crash that causes injury to a person or animal or that results in damage to property, you must take the following action:

### Stop immediately

It is against the law to fail to stop after a crash. Penalties can include licence disqualification and prison.

### See if anyone is injured

A person involved in a crash must stop and render all possible assistance, and, if necessary and possible, get a message to Police, Fire and Emergency Services (call 000).

### Prevent further crashes

- Unless it is necessary to avoid further injury (like danger of fire, explosion, traffic or burns from hot pavement), do not move seriously injured or unconscious people until trained help arrives.
- Note or mark the position of your vehicle on the roadway, then move it clear of traffic if you can.
- Ask bystanders to warn approaching vehicles.
- Personal safety: do not stand on the roadway. Always move to the footpath or to a place of safety.

### Give the required particulars to other people

Give your name and address, the registration number and any other information necessary to identify the vehicle you were driving/riding, and the name and address of the owner of the vehicle if it is not yours, to:

- any police officer
- any other driver/rider
- any injured person
- the owner of any damaged property
- any representative of these people.

### Obtain all details of the crash

Including:

- estimated speeds of all vehicles
- road and weather conditions
- description of the damage and injuries
- diagrams of positions and directions of vehicles
- the names and addresses of witnesses.

### Report the crash to police:

- if any person is killed or injured
- if damage to any property (including an animal) is caused
- if, for any reason, you do not give the required particulars to other people
- if another driver's/rider's particulars are not given to you.

Reports to the police must be made as soon as possible and, only in exceptional circumstances (such as having to go to hospital), not later than 24 hours after the crash:

- You must give the same information to the police as you have to give to other people involved, as well as the date, time and place of the crash.
- The police will also ask for details of other people and property involved.
- The police are entitled to ask you questions about the positions and speeds of vehicles before and at the time of collision, You are required to answer these questions unless doing so would incriminate you of any offence.

### If you witness or see a road crash

During your lifetime as a driver it is likely that you will see crashes happen or be first to arrive on the scene of a crash. Your actions on these occasions are vital-you might be able to save a life, prevent further injury, phone for help or provide valuable assistance as a witness.

While there is no legal requirement to stop unless you are involved in the crash, all drivers should lend assistance as responsible citizens and road users.

If the situation is clearly in hand, keep going at a safe speed. Do not stop or slow down to have a look; this is extremely dangerous! People that stop at crashes or slow down unnecessarily can add to the congestion, get in the way of others providing assistance or cause another crash.

### Important things to remember if you are first on the scene of a crash:

- **Do not** remove a person from a vehicle unless they are in immediate danger (e.g. if there is risk of explosion or fire).
- Check injured people's breathing and, if necessary, clear their airway by clearing any obstructions and draining any fluid from their mouth and gently tilting their head back.
- Control bleeding by applying direct pressure on the wound (use a clean cloth or clothing, if possible).
- Remember the possibility of spinal injuries; keep the patient as still as possible.
- Keep the patient as comfortable as possible (provide shade, warm blanket etc) until medical assistance arrives.
- Call **000** for emergency services assistance.

## First Aid and further assistance

Early intervention can save lives and lessen the impact of injuries.

That makes First Aid skills valuable in road crash situations, as well as if someone is involved in an accident elsewhere.

First Aid courses are available from the Northern Territory branches of both St John Ambulance and the Red Cross.

St John Ambulance NT has also developed First@Scene, an online First Aid course specifically to teach the skills required to apply First Aid at the scene of a crash.

You can learn the basic skills and test your First Aid knowledge at [www.firstatscene.com.au](http://www.firstatscene.com.au)

While you must stop if you are involved in a crash, if you come upon a crash and do not wish to stop and help hasn't already arrived, phone 000.

## Sharing the road with pedestrians

As a driver, you are legally required to give way to pedestrians at crossings and when entering or leaving a driveway. However, you should always be prepared to stop for pedestrians.

### Particularly vulnerable pedestrians are:

- the elderly
- children
- pedestrians affected by alcohol or drugs.

### Remember to drive slowly and be prepared to stop:

- at and near pedestrian crossings or traffic lights
- wherever you see children walking, playing or riding bikes
- when entering or leaving a driveway
- near clubs, hotels and restaurants
- near shopping centres and other busy places
- near schools, particularly when children are arriving or leaving
- where there are parked cars or stopped buses, especially school buses
- at intersections where pedestrians cross
- where special events are being held
- when visibility is poor, such as in rain, fog, at night or dawn or dusk
- when approaching a stationary bus and passengers are getting off or crossing the road

- when pedestrians cross the road away from pedestrian crossings
- when pedestrians gather in large crowds.

#### **Safety tips for pedestrians:**

- before crossing the road – **stop, look, listen and think**
- never assume that an approaching vehicle will stop for you
- avoid crossing between parked cars or in front of buses
- cross at pedestrian crossings or traffic lights if possible
- keep to the left side on shared bicycle/pedestrian paths
- do not block out all surrounding sounds with head/ear phones
- wear light or bright coloured clothing at night or in reduced visibility conditions
- children up to eight years old should hold an adult's hand on the footpath, in the car park or when crossing the road
- children up to 10 years old should be supervised in the traffic environment and hold an adult's hand when crossing the road
- if you have been drinking, arrange a Sober Bob rather than walking
- do not cause a traffic hazard or unreasonably obstruct the path of a road user or other pedestrian.

Pedestrians must use footpaths and nature strips where they are provided. Where this is not possible, keep to the side of the road and walk in the direction that faces oncoming traffic.

### **Sharing the road with motorised wheelchairs**

A person using a motorised wheelchair that cannot travel over 10 km/h is defined as a pedestrian.

Drivers should be aware that motorised wheelchairs have the same rights and responsibilities as pedestrians.

Motorised wheelchairs can be difficult to see because they are generally below the height of an average pedestrian. Although they can move faster than pedestrians, they are much slower than other motorised vehicles using the road. As a driver, you should allow for these differences and take extra care.

## Sharing the road with trucks and buses

Trucks and buses are usually much larger than a standard vehicle. They are longer, heavier and more powerful. To share the roads with them safely, keep the following basic principles in mind.

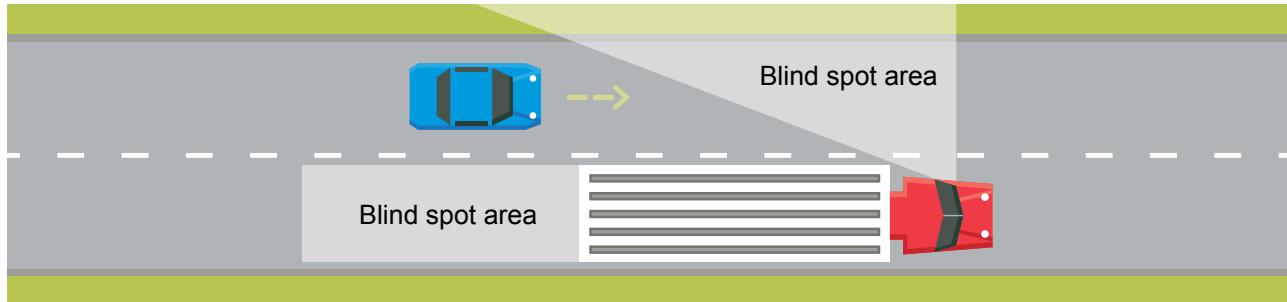
### Allow more room for heavy vehicles to stop

Heavy vehicles need a long distance to stop. If you are approaching an intersection or other hazard where you could be required to stop, and a truck or bus is approaching, do not pull into their lane because it might not have enough room to stop safely.

Turning trucks and buses sometimes take up more than one lane at corners or on roundabouts. Make sure you give them enough room to turn; do not assume they can stay completely in their lane.

### Safety tips:

- do not pull in front of trucks when coming up to traffic lights
- do not overtake them when they are turning
- do not drive in the blind spot of heavy vehicles (refer image below).
- allow more room for trucks and buses to turn.



Crashes involving buses and trucks are more likely to cause serious injury or death, so take particular care around these vehicles.

## Sharing the road with cyclists

Bicycles are classed as vehicles and, therefore, cyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as all other road users. They deserve the same respect and courtesy.

Importantly, cyclists are vulnerable road users, so when driving, always keep a look out for them.

When getting out of your vehicle, always check your rear view and side mirrors to avoid opening your door into a cyclist. It is an offence to cause a hazard to other road users by carelessly opening a car door or leaving it open, and you could be responsible for any injury or damage caused.

Cyclists are allowed to ride side by side (up to two abreast) on the road, so please be patient and overtake only when safe to do so.

Cyclists cannot stop as fast as other vehicles, so never cut in front of a bicycle or turn in front of a cyclist travelling on the road shoulder.

It is an offence to cut in front of cyclists at intersections. Do not overtake a cyclist if you are planning to turn left at an intersection close by. Be patient and wait until the cyclist is safely out of the intersection.

When overtaking a cyclist, keep a safe distance between your vehicle and the cyclist. A safe distance when overtaking a cyclist is considered to be at least one metre and two metres if you are travelling faster than 70 km/h. If two cyclists are riding side by side, overtake the cyclists as you would a car. Remember that the faster you are travelling, the more your tail wind will affect the cyclist

when you pass them.

Where the road or lane is damaged or narrow, cyclists may need to come into the road lane to ride safely. Be prepared to slow down and allow the cyclist to travel away from the kerb. Only overtake the cyclist when safe to do so.

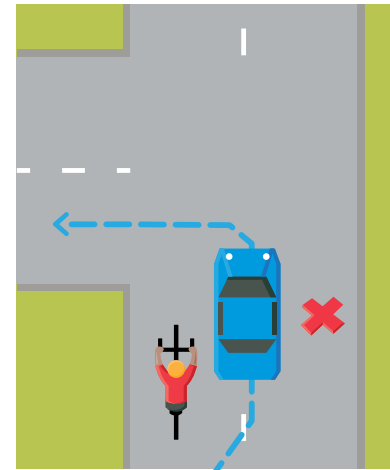
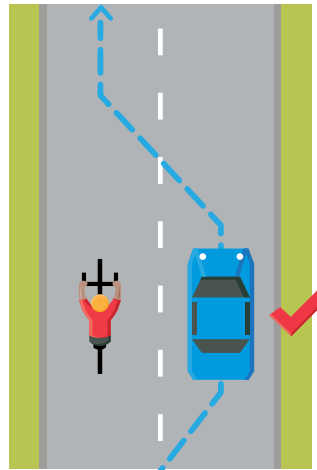
Cyclists are permitted to use the right lane to turn right or perform a U-turn at a roundabout.

### Safety tips:

- Leave at least 1 metre when passing a cyclist and 2 metres if you are travelling faster than 70 km/h.
- Never assume a cyclist is travelling slowly.
- Do not cut in front of cyclists.
- Do not turn in front of a cyclist travelling on the road shoulder.
- Check for cyclists in blind spots, at corners, driveways and intersections.
- When exiting your vehicle, use your left hand to open the door; this will force you to scan for cyclists.
- Always allow cyclists room to move and only overtake them when safe to do so.
- Dip your lights when approaching or overtaking a cyclist at night.
- Be aware of young cyclists, who can be unpredictable and lack road sense. Be especially careful around schools in the early mornings and afternoons.
- Be patient; consider the cyclists safety and your duty of care to avoid crashing.



**Be patient; consider the cyclists' safety and your duty of care to avoid crashing.**



### Additional road rules for cyclists

Just like drivers of a motor vehicle, cyclists need a sound understanding of the road rules and must ride in a manner that other road users will be expecting.

When riding a bicycle, you are required to abide by all the rules and regulations that govern the drivers of other vehicles.

**Cyclists under the age of 17 must wear a helmet at all times.**

The helmet must meet Australian Standard AS/NZS 2063. The helmet must be properly fitted and fastened. This rule does not apply if the cyclist is aged 17 or over and riding on a public place or path that is separated from the road. However, it is always recommended that cyclists wear a helmet when riding in the Territory.

**Cyclists must ensure they have:**

- a correctly fitted, fastened and approved helmet on their head, including passengers, at all times when riding on the road (in the Northern Territory, this rule does not apply if the cyclist is aged 17 or over and is riding on a public place or path that is **separated from the road**. However, it is always recommended that cyclists wear a helmet when riding in the Territory)
- at least one effective brake on their bicycle
- a working bell or horn on their bicycle
- a red reflector on the rear of their bicycle
- a white reflector visible for at least 50 metres from the front of their bicycle.

**At night or in hazardous weather conditions, cyclists must ride with:**

- a white light that can be seen from at least 200 metres from the front of the bicycle
- a red light visible for at least 200 metres from the rear of the bicycle
- a red reflector that is visible for at least 50 metres from the rear of the bicycle.

**Cyclists must:**

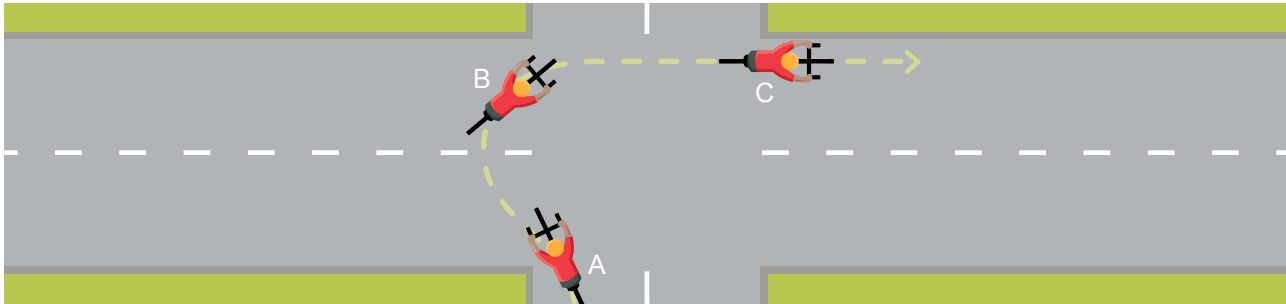
- maintain control of the bicycle at all times
- ride on the left side of the road
- ride in a predictable and considerate manner

- ride with at least one hand on the handlebars
- ride the bicycle the way it has been designed to be ridden
- ensure all passengers sit on a seat designed for them
- not carry more people than the bicycle is designed to carry
- signal when turning right or merging into the right lane
- give way to pedestrians and other vehicles when entering a road
- stop and give way to any vehicle exiting a roundabout
- always use the on-road bike lane when riding on the road and there is one available
- not ride alongside more than one other cyclist on a road, except to overtake other cyclists when safe to do so
- keep to the left when using a footpath or shared pedestrian / bicycle path and give way to pedestrians
- not ride a bicycle across a pedestrian crossing, children's crossing or marked foot crossing
- only ride on a crossing where there are bicycle crossing lights
- not be towed by another vehicle
- not ride within two metres of the rear of a moving motor vehicle continuously for more than 200 metres
- not lead an animal on a bicycle from a leash or any other kind of leading device.

It is an offence to ride with both hands off the handlebars or feet off the pedals, or to carry any load that prevents you from having control.

You must ride as near as possible to the far left side of the road. It is illegal and dangerous to ride on the right-hand side of the road into oncoming traffic.

Cyclists can turn right at an intersection by making a hook turn unless there is a sign to say that it is prohibited.



You are vulnerable when riding a bicycle on the road-take care and watch out for vehicles.

When riding a recumbent bicycle it is recommended that you use a high-visibility flag on a pole to improve your visibility to other road users, cyclists and pedestrians.

### Shared Paths, Bicycle Paths and Bicycle Lanes

All paths in the Northern Territory are shared between pedestrians and bicycles unless a sign indicates otherwise.

When riding on a shared path you must keep to the left, unless it is not possible to do so, and give way to any pedestrian.

When on a shared path and approaching someone from behind, slow down and sound your bell or horn to let them know you are passing.



Shared path sign



Bicycle only sign

You must not ride on a road or path if a 'no bicycles' sign or road marking applies.



No bicycles sign

When cycling on the road, you must use the bicycle lane when there is one available.



Bicycle lane sign

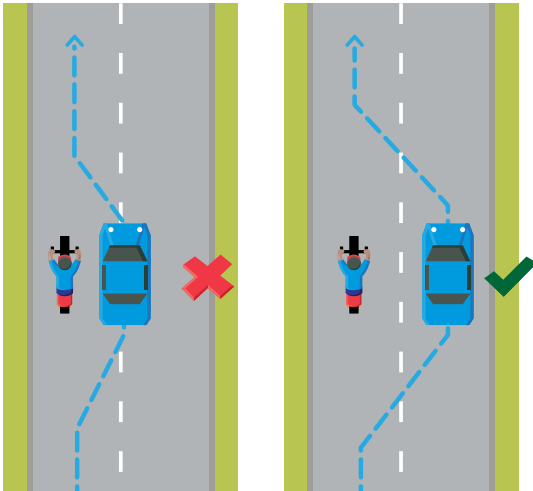
## Sharing the road with motorcycle riders

Like cyclists, motorcycle riders do not have a car around them to protect them from the impact of a crash, and they are also less stable than a car because they only have two wheels.

Motorcycle riders are more likely to be killed in a road crash than people in a car, so drive carefully around them.

### Motorcyclists are most at risk:

- on busy city roads – at intersections and when changing lanes
- on rural and outback roads and highways – when riding through bends.



### Safety tips for sharing the road with motorcyclists:

- Never drive in the same lane as a rider.
- When overtaking a rider, allow the same amount of space as you would when overtaking a car.
- Do not cut in front of a rider (they cannot stop as fast as a car).
- Allow extra space while driving near motorcycles because riders may need to slow down to avoid hazards such as flying debris, oil slicks or pot holes that a car could drive through.
- Look for motorcycle riders before you turn onto a road because they won't be as clearly visible as a car.
- Motorcycles can be easily hidden behind a truck or car, so check your side and rear view mirrors and the blind spot by looking over your shoulder before merging or changing lanes.
- Dip your lights when approaching or overtaking a rider at night.

Always be on the lookout for motorcycle riders; they are smaller than cars and harder to see.

## Animals as vehicles – sharing the road safely

An animal-drawn vehicle or an animal that is being ridden is considered to be a vehicle under the road rules. A person riding an animal is considered a rider and, for most road rules, the term driver includes riders.

When animals are ridden or animal-drawn vehicles are driven on the road or a road-related area, they must obey the same road rules as drivers of vehicles.

### Watch out for ridden, driven or led horses.

#### When you come across horse traffic, remember:

- Horses can be unpredictable, so slow down and give them plenty of room.
- Never sound your horn, rev your engine or pass a horse at high speed.
- Slow down or stop if a rider looks to be having difficulty with a horse.

#### There are some specific road rules in relation to animals:

- You must not lead an animal while driving a motor vehicle or riding a bicycle.

At multi-lane roundabouts, riders of animals can turn right or do a U-turn from the left lane, but they must give way to any vehicle leaving the roundabout.

- Riders of animals must give way to pedestrians on a footpath or nature strip.
- Riders must not ride alongside more than one other rider, unless they are overtaking other riders or droving stock.
- You must not ride an animal or drive an animal-drawn vehicle on a clearway in the hours when stopping is prohibited.