



Lesson 8: Meeting Traffic

Meeting Approaching Traffic

Priority

As a general rule if the obstruction is on your side of the road oncoming vehicles have priority. As well as parked cars you may have road works, traffic calming measures the list is endless. Any time that you continue and overtake obstructions on your side you must not cause oncoming vehicles to change speed or direction.

Be prepared to sacrifice priority when you are not sure if oncoming drivers are going to let you through (where the obstruction is on their side). Try not to leave it too late when deciding on your course of action so that you do not find yourself coming to a sudden stop or proceeding too fast.

Clearance



Try to give clearance of the width of a car door (1 metre) when passing parked cars - you should be able to do this when there are no oncoming vehicles or if the road is wide enough. If travelling on a narrow road slow your speed and proceed with caution.

Give cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders plenty of room when passing. Give cyclists enough room where possible so that if they fell off you would still avoid them - in particular when:

- It's a windy day
- The cyclist is a young child
- The cyclist is travelling up a hill

Where you have obstructions on a narrow road

Be prepared to use the hold back position

If you need to stop, aim to keep at a distance of 2 car lengths from the obstruction and near the centre to help maintain a good view of the road ahead, this is referred to as a hold back position.

On approach follow the M-S-M routine**Mirrors**

Check your mirrors well before changing speed or direction. Here you will be doing both - you will need to move over to the right to pass the red car which is parked up and as the obstruction is your side of the road you may need to stop.

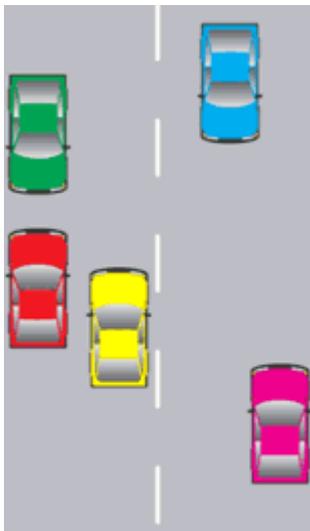
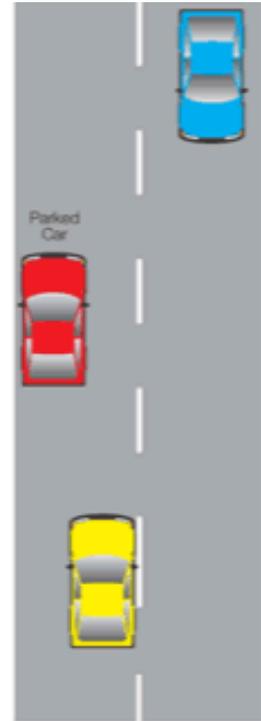
Signal

There should be no need to signal as you are following the flow of the traffic and other drivers would expect you to do so. If you find yourself close to the left a signal may be necessary so drivers are aware that you are not parking.

Manoeuvre

Position - move over to the centre of the road where possible to approach.

Speed - approach slowly enough to allow you to come to a smooth stop if necessary.

**Where you have obstructions on a wider road**

There is a fine balance between making progress and being too hasty. On more main routes in particular you won't want to be stopping unnecessarily. Approach slowly enough to enable you to stop smoothly if necessary and be aware of not only car doors opening but pedestrians walking out from behind parked cars or vehicles emerging from side roads.

Equal Priority

Slow down and assess the oncoming vehicle's speed and position to help judge their intentions, be more willing to hold back for oncoming traffic as you will be able to control the situation and not rely on other people. Be

more willing to give way to traffic travelling up a hill, especially larger vehicles.

Flashing Lights

Some people may flash their headlights as a sign they are willing for you to proceed. Judge their speed and position to confirm their intentions to let you through. The true meaning of flashing lights is as "a warning of presence". So be sure of the other driver's intentions. The lights may not have been flashed for you or may have



been flashed accidentally. To avoid any misunderstanding, and possible accident, do not use flashing lights to beckon people on.

Overtaking

Considerations for overtaking (single track roads)

Overtaking can put you on collision course with an oncoming vehicle so as a result is one of the major causes of accidents, therefore it makes sense to be very careful when deciding to overtake.

Before overtaking you need to consider:

Why is the vehicle going so slow in the first place?

Are you going to gain much?

Is it legal?

Is it safe?

Be aware of road signs and markings to indicate a hazard ahead, there may be a hidden dip, a junction or a bend.

Steps to overtaking

There will be times when it is necessary to overtake slow moving vehicles as following traffic will want to make progress. If you are too cautious you will make the situation more hazardous as vehicles behind will then need to overtake both you and the vehicle ahead.

M-S-M Routine - preparing to overtake

Mirrors- always assess the speed and position of traffic behind (someone could easily be about to overtake you). You will need to check the interior mirror and right hand door mirror.

Signal- at this stage because you are only preparing to overtake do not apply signal until ready.

Position- be close enough to the vehicle you wish to overtake whilst allowing enough room to get a good view of the road ahead.

Speed- keep to the same speed as the vehicle ahead and consider changing down a gear for extra power to help pass quickly when you get a chance. (Be mindful not to exceed the speed limit!)

Look- assess the whole situation.

- the road conditions
- the intentions of the driver ahead
- any hazards (look out for signs and road markings)
- speed of oncoming traffic



- assess the speed difference between yourself and oncoming traffic

As the situation can change you may need to keep following the above routine until you are 100% happy it is safe to overtake. If you are overtaking a cyclist give them plenty of room and where you are approaching horse riders slow down well in advance passing by without frightening the horses.

Recap Quiz (Highway Code Rules 162-169, 126, 151-153, 204-215 and pages 166-183)

1. What distance should you give the following if possible?

A pedestrian: _____metre(s)

A horse: _____metre(s)

A cyclist: _____metre(s)

2. How can you measure a safe separation distance?

3. What should you be aware of when you see this sign?



4. What does it mean when someone flashes their lights?
