

SMART MOTORWAYS UK

A smart motorway is a section of a motorway that uses traffic management methods to increase capacity and reduce congestion in particularly busy areas.

These methods include using the hard shoulder as a running lane and using **variable speed limits** to control the flow of traffic.

Highways England (previously the Highways Agency) developed smart motorways to manage traffic in a way that minimises environmental impact, cost and time to construct by avoiding the need to build additional lanes.

There are three types of scheme which are classed as smart motorways.

- **controlled**, which have a permanent hard shoulder, but use technology such as variable speed limits to adjust traffic flows
- **dynamic**, where the hard shoulder can be opened up at peak times and used as an extra lane; when this happens, the speed limit is reduced to 60mph
- **all-lane running**, where the hard shoulder has been permanently removed to provide an extra lane; emergency refuge areas are provided at regular intervals for cars that get into trouble

