

Road rules refresher

Top 10 misunderstood road rules clarified...

**Be
street
smart**

Simple misunderstandings of road rules can cause a lot of grief – from near misses and minor bingles to serious injury.

This guide clarifies the 10 most commonly misunderstood road rules.

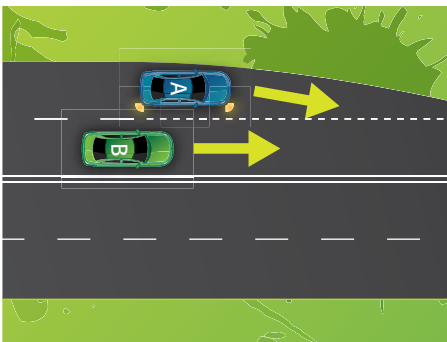
If you'd like to test your knowledge after reading this guide, or encourage friends and family to test their street smarts, try the road rules quiz at www.tmr.qld.gov.au/roadrules.

You can also view online videos which demonstrate most of these rules in action.

1 Merging

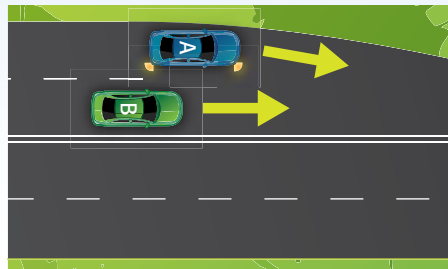
There are two different give way rules for merging.

1. On roads where there are lanes marked on the road, if your lane comes to an end, you must give way to traffic already in the lane you are moving into.



Vehicle A gives way to vehicle B.

2. On roads where there are no lanes marked on the road, when lines of traffic merge, you must give way to any vehicle that is ahead of you.



Vehicle B gives way to vehicle A.

2 Keeping left

When the speed limit is 90 km/h or more on multi-lane roads you must not drive in the right hand lane unless you are:

- overtaking
- turning right or making a U-turn
- avoiding an obstacle
- driving in congested traffic
- driving in a special purpose lane.

This same rule applies to a road with a speed limit of 80 km/h or less if there is a KEEP LEFT UNLESS OVERTAKING sign.

3 Roundabouts

It is important to be in the correct lane at multi-lane roundabouts. Signs, lane markings and arrows help you position your vehicle correctly and guide you in the direction you want to go.

Unless arrows on the road indicate otherwise, remember these rules:

- To turn left, use the left lane.
- To turn right, use the right lane.
- To go straight ahead, use either lane.

Left turn

1. Position your vehicle in the left lane well in advance, unless arrows on the road or signs indicate otherwise.
2. Signal using your left indicator.
3. Give way to all vehicles already on the roundabout.
4. Remain in the left lane as you complete your turn.

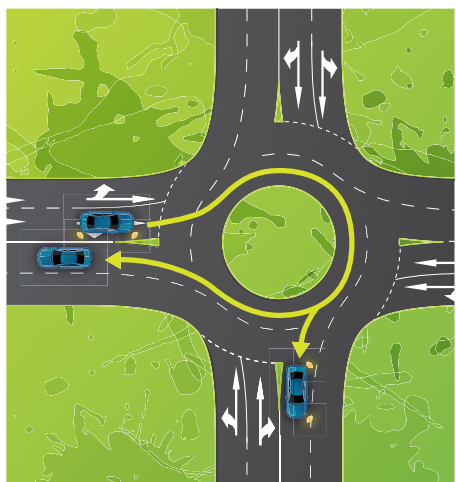
Roundabouts continued

- Continue to use your left indicator as you exit the roundabout. Stop indicating once you have exited the roundabout.



Right turn or U-turns

- Position your vehicle in the right lane well in advance unless arrows on the road or signs indicate otherwise.
- Signal using your right indicator.
- Give way to all vehicles already on the roundabout.
- Before exiting you should use your left indicator (if practical). Stop indicating as soon as you have exited the roundabout.



Note: Do not turn right from the left lane unless arrows on the road indicate that you can.

Straight ahead

- Position your vehicle in either lane well in advance unless arrows on the road or signs indicate otherwise.
- Do not use your indicator until you are ready to exit.
- Give way to all vehicles already on the roundabout.
- Before exiting you should use your left indicator (if practical). Stop indicating as soon as you have exited the roundabout.



4 Changing lanes

When you change lanes you must give way to any vehicle in the lane you are moving into. This is the case even if your lane is ending and you have to cross a lane line.

When driving, before you change direction you must indicate for long enough to give sufficient warning to other drivers and pedestrians.

Choose safe gaps before you move – don't take risks. Leave enough space for the vehicles behind you as well as in front of you.

If possible, plan ahead so you know when left and right turns are coming up that will require you to be in a certain lane, and change lanes early.

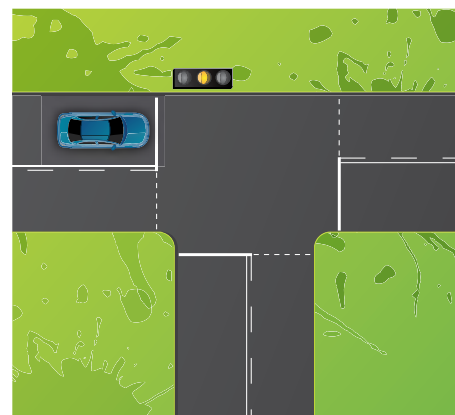
5 Yellow traffic lights

You must stop at a yellow light unless it is unsafe to do so.

A yellow light is not an extension of the green light. It is the beginning of the red light.

When approaching traffic lights showing a green light you should be ready to stop if the lights change to yellow, and if you can do so safely before reaching the stop line.

As you approach the lights you should also check your mirror to see if there is a vehicle close behind so that you know if it will be safe to stop suddenly.



6 Safe following distances

You must drive a sufficient distance behind a vehicle travelling in front of you so you can stop safely to avoid a collision.

Safe following distances vary depending on what speed you are travelling, what conditions you are driving in and what type of vehicle you are driving. In most cases, a safe following distance is much greater than a car length.

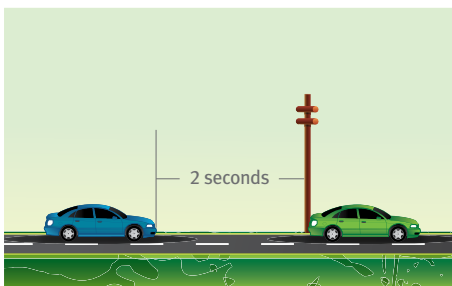
Use the time-lapse method below to keep a safe distance behind the vehicle in front:

Safe following distances continued

- A driver in a car should drive at least two seconds behind the vehicle in front in ideal conditions.
- A vehicle towing a trailer or caravan should allow two seconds, plus one second for each three metres of trailer.
- Double your following distance if you are driving a heavy vehicle or driving in poor conditions.

Time-lapse method

1. Pick a mark on the road or an object close to the left-hand side of the road, such as a power or light pole.
2. When the rear of the vehicle ahead passes the object, count 'one thousand one, one thousand two' (this takes about two seconds).
3. If the front of your vehicle passes the object before you finish counting, you are too close, so drop back.



7

Crossing continuous centre lines and islands

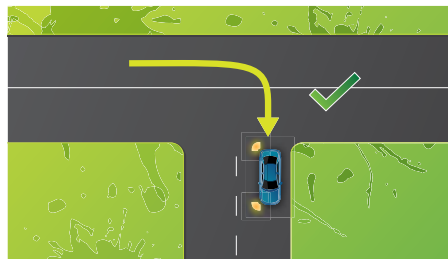
There are different rules for crossing continuous centre lines depending on what type of centre line it is, and what manoeuvre you are performing.

You can't cross a single continuous centre line to:

- overtake, or
- do a U-turn.

Crossing continuous centre lines and islands continued

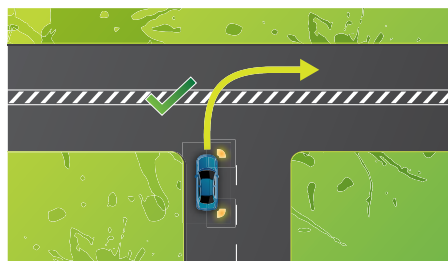
But you can cross a single continuous centre line (even if there's a broken line on the other side) to enter or leave a private property or another road.



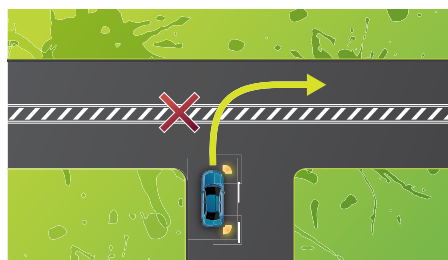
But remember if there's a double continuous centre line, you are not permitted to cross it at all.

Similar rules apply to painted traffic islands. If the island is surrounded by one continuous line, you can drive on or over it for up to 50 metres in order to:

- enter or leave the road, or
- enter a turning lane that begins immediately after the island.



But if the island is surrounded by double continuous lines, or if it separates traffic flowing in the same direction – such as where an onramp merges on to a motorway – you must stay off it.



8

Giving way

There are many situations other than at GIVE WAY signs where you have to give way. These include:

- at STOP signs
- turning across the path of an oncoming vehicle at an intersection
- turning from a terminating road onto the ongoing road at a T-intersection.

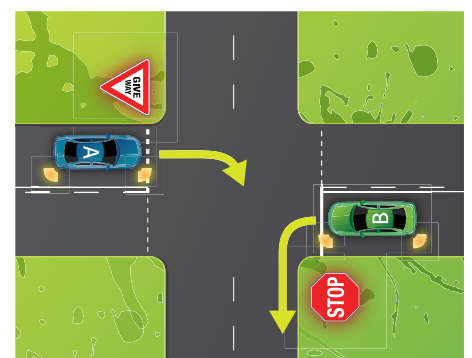
STOP lines and GIVE WAY lines on the road have the same meaning as STOP signs and GIVE WAY signs, in case a sign is missing, for example, stolen or knocked down.

Remember, if you turn at an intersection, you must also give way to pedestrians crossing the road you are entering.

Giving way at intersections with two STOP or GIVE WAY signs

A STOP sign is not 'more powerful' than a GIVE WAY sign.

Once the vehicles below have given way to all other vehicles, they must then apply the give way rules to each other. Vehicle A must give way to vehicle B because it is turning right across the path of vehicle B.

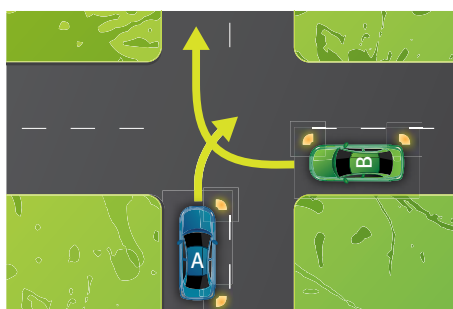
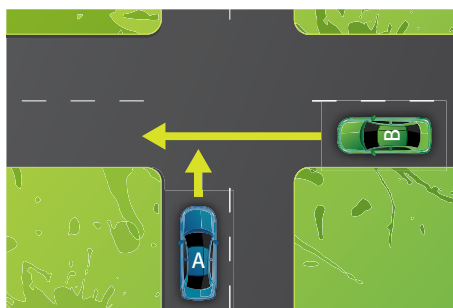
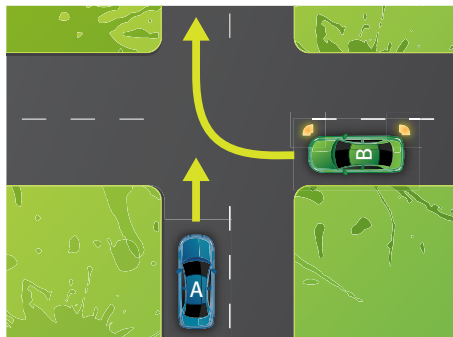


Giving way at uncontrolled crossroads

An uncontrolled crossroad is an intersection which has no traffic lights, STOP or GIVE WAY signs or lines. At an uncontrolled crossroad you must give way to the right.

Giving way continued

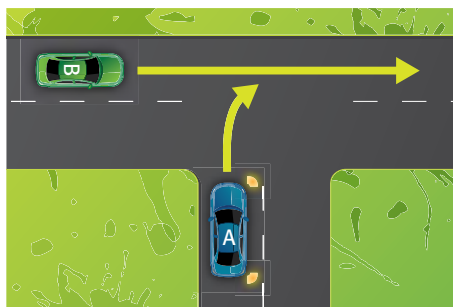
In all these situations, vehicle A must give way to vehicle B.



Giving way at a T-intersection

If you are driving on a road that ends at a T-intersection, you must give way to all vehicles travelling on the road continuing through the intersection.

In the below situation, vehicle A must give way to vehicle B.



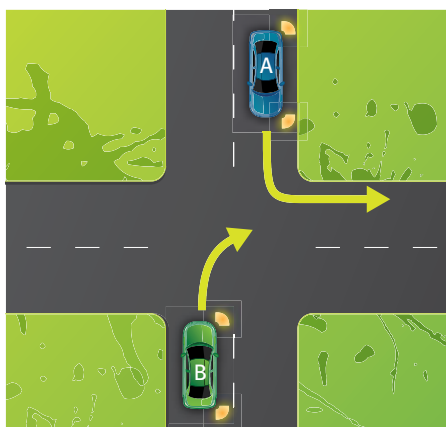
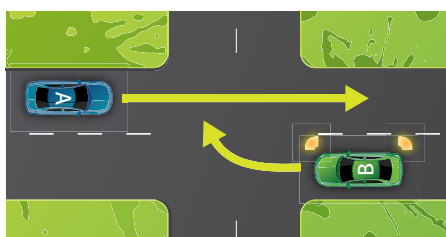
Giving way continued

Giving way when turning right

If you are turning right at an intersection, you must give way to vehicles coming from the opposite direction that are:

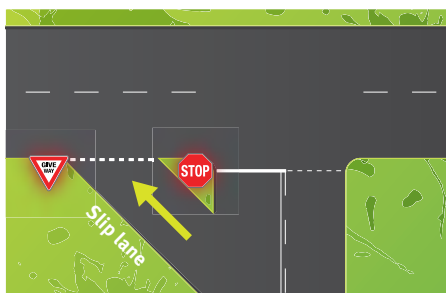
- driving straight ahead through the intersection
- turning left at the intersection.

In both cases, vehicle B must give way to vehicle A.



However, you don't have to give way to a vehicle if it is driving on to the road from a slip lane.

A slip lane is an area of road for vehicles turning left that is separated from other parts of the road by a painted island or traffic island.



9 U-turns

The signage indicating whether or not U-turns are allowed changes depending on if you are at traffic lights, unsignalised intersections or breaks in the centre island of the road.

At traffic lights

You are not allowed to make a U-turn at traffic lights unless there is a sign stating U-TURN PERMITTED.

Not at traffic lights

(for example, at a break in the centre island or at an intersection with no lights)

You must not do a U-turn:

- if there is a sign stating NO U-TURN
- across a single or double continuous centre line or a continuous centre line to the left of a broken line.

When you are doing a U-turn, you must give way to all other vehicles and pedestrians even if other vehicles are facing a GIVE WAY or STOP sign.

10 Overtaking

There are three situations where a driver may overtake to the left of another driver:

1. on a multi-lane road
2. if the vehicle in front signals to make a right turn or a U-turn
3. if the traffic on your right is stationary.

Overtaking on the left is not allowed in any other situation apart from the three listed above.

Remember, whether you're overtaking on the right or left, it's never legal to exceed the speed limit.

More information

Department of Transport and Main Roads
www.tmr.qld.gov.au/roadrules
 (road rules quiz and online videos)

13 23 80*

* A local call charge if calling within Australia. Higher rates apply from mobile phones and payphones. For international callers, please phone +61 7 3834 2011.