



# Highway Code Update

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The Highway Code was updated on 29 January 2022 to improve road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Here is a summary of some of the key changes to be aware of.

## Road hierarchy

The government have implemented a new hierarchy of road users. Those most at risk in the event of a collision – pedestrians and cyclists – will be prioritised over motorists.

## Junctions

At junctions, motorists and cyclists must give way for pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross at a junction. Motorists should also give way to pedestrians at crossings or zebra crossings, and pedestrians and cyclists at parallel crossings.

Cyclists going straight at junctions have priority over traffic waiting to turn in or out of side roads unless road signs indicate otherwise.

## Shared spaces

Cyclists should not pass pedestrians or horse riders closely or at high speed, especially from behind. They must slow down and alert those around them to their presence, remembering that some people walking may be deaf, blind or partially sighted.

## Cyclist positioning

The new guidance for cyclists is to position themselves in the centre of their lane on quieter roads, in slower-moving traffic and at the approach to junctions or road narrowings. This is to make them as visible as possible and to avoid them being overtaken where it would be dangerous.

They should also keep at least 0.5 metres away from the kerb edge when riding on busy roads with vehicles moving faster than them.

## Cycling in groups

The updated code notes that cyclists can ride 2 abreast and that it can be safer to do in larger groups or with children and less experienced riders. Cyclists should be considerate of other road users, particularly when riding in groups.

## Cyclists around parked cars

Cyclists should exercise caution when passing parked vehicles, leaving at least a door width of 1 metre to avoid being hit if the car door is opened.

## Overtaking

Those driving or riding motorcycles should leave:

- at least 1.5 metres when overtaking cyclists at speeds up to 30mph
- at least 2 metres when passing horse riders at speeds under 10mph
- at least 2 metres when passing people walking in the road when there is no pavement

Drivers and motorcyclists should wait behind and not overtake if they cannot meet these clearances.

Cyclists may pass slower-moving or stationary traffic but must proceed with caution on approach to junctions and when passing lorries or other large vehicles, as people driving may not be able to see them.

## Cyclists turning right

The new guidance advises to turn right in two stages:

- Stage 1 – when the traffic lights turn green, proceed to the turn arrow on the road, stop and wait
- Stage 2 – when the traffic lights on the far side of the junction turn green, complete manoeuvre

## Roundabouts

Cyclists and horse riders have priority over motorists on roundabouts.

Drivers and motorcyclists should not attempt to overtake cyclists in their lane and must allow cyclists to move across their path as they travel around the roundabout.

## Parking, charging and leaving vehicles

The code recommends a new technique when leaving vehicles known as the 'Dutch Reach'. It recommends that drivers and passengers should open the door using the hand on the opposite side to the door they are opening. E.g. opening the door on the right-hand side using the left hand. This is to encourage them to turn as they open the door, looking over their shoulder. This makes them less likely to open the door onto people cycling or walking past.

When using charging points, people should:

- Park close to charging point and avoid creating a trip hazard of cables
- Display a warning sign if possible
- Return charging cables neatly to avoid creating a hazard or obstacle for other road users

## Conclusion

The updated Highway Code highlights the importance for all road users to be aware of the Highway Code, be considerate to other road users and understand their responsibility for the safety of others.

You can read the [updated Highway Code here](#).

For further information about the Highway Code updates or any other injury-related matters, please contact our [Personal Injury](#) team. We have a number of the team who have years of experience in dealing with road traffic accidents. [David Healy](#) is a triathlon coach and GB age group competitor who lectures on the law surrounding road traffic accidents.