



Informing Progress - Shaping the Future

FOIL UPDATE 31st January 2022



The revised Highway Code

On 26th January, the Department of Transport confirmed the changes to the Highway Code that will take effect on **Saturday, 29th January**. The code applies to England, Wales and Scotland.

There are eight categories of change.

1. **A hierarchy of road users**, ranging from those most at risk (pedestrians and then cyclists) to those most likely to cause harm (lorries) but all road users are expected to behave responsibly.
2. **People crossing the road at junctions**.

The updated code clarifies that:

- when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, other traffic should give way
- if people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing have priority and the traffic should give way
- people driving, riding a motorcycle or cycling must give way to people on a zebra crossing and people walking and cycling on a parallel crossing.

A parallel crossing is similar to a zebra crossing but includes a cycle route alongside the black and white stripes.

IN BRIEF

From Saturday 29th January, the Highway Code is updated to introduce a hierarchy of road users and seven other categories of changes.

These changes focus primarily on the more vulnerable road users: pedestrians and cyclists but stress that everyone is expected to behave responsibly.

3. New guidance about routes and spaces which are shared by people walking, cycling and riding horses.

People cycling, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle should respect the safety of people walking in these spaces, but people walking should also take care not to obstruct or endanger them.

People cycling are asked:

- not to pass people walking, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle closely or at high speed, particularly from behind.
- to slow down when necessary and let people walking know they are there (for example, by ringing their bell).
- to remember that people walking may be deaf, blind or partially sighted.
- not to pass a horse on the horse's left.

4. Positioning in the road when cycling.

The changes include:

- cyclists riding in the centre of their lane on quiet roads, in slower-moving traffic and at the approach to junctions or road narrowings.
- keeping at least 0.5 metres (just over 1.5 feet) away from the kerb edge (and further where it is safer) when riding on busy roads with vehicles moving faster than them.

The updated code explains that people cycling in groups:

- should be considerate of the needs of other road users when riding in groups.
- can ride 2 abreast - and it can be safer to do so, particularly in larger groups or when accompanying children or less experienced riders.

People cycling are asked to be aware of people driving behind them and allow them to overtake (for example, by moving into single file or stopping) when it's safe to do so.

The updated code also explains that people cycling should:

- take care when passing parked vehicles, leaving enough room (a door's width or 1 metre) to avoid being hit if a car door is opened.
- watch out for people walking into their path.

5. Overtaking when driving or cycling.

These changes clarify that a road user may cross a double-white line if necessary (provided the road is clear), to overtake someone cycling or riding a horse if they are travelling at 10 mph or less.

There is updated guidance on safe passing distances and speeds for people driving or riding a motorcycle when overtaking vulnerable road users, including:

- leaving at least 1.5 metres (5 feet) when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and giving them more space when overtaking at higher speeds.
- passing people riding horses or driving horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space.
- allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space and keeping to a low speed when passing people walking in the road (for example, where there's no pavement).

Wait behind them and do not overtake if it's unsafe or not possible to meet these clearances.

The updated code confirms that people cycling may pass slower-moving or stationary traffic on their right or left. They should proceed with caution as people driving may not be able to see them. This is particularly important:

- on the approach to junctions.
- when deciding whether it is safe to pass lorries or other large vehicles.

6. People cycling at junctions.

The code is updated to clarify that when turning into or out of a side road, people cycling should give way to people walking who are crossing or waiting to cross.

Some junctions now include small cycle traffic lights at eye-level height, which may allow cyclists to move separately from or before other traffic. People cycling are encouraged to use these facilities where they make their journey safer and easier.

There is new guidance for people cycling at junctions with no separate facilities.

The code recommends that people cycling should proceed as if they were driving a vehicle where there are no separate cyclist facilities. This includes positioning themselves in the centre of their chosen lane, where they feel able to do this safely. This is to:

- make them as visible as possible
- avoid being overtaken where this would be dangerous.

The code includes advice for people cycling using junctions where signs and markings tell them to turn right in two stages. These are:

- stage 1 - when the traffic lights turn green, go straight ahead to the location marked by a cycle symbol and turn arrow on the road, and then stop and wait.
- stage 2 - when the traffic lights on the far side of the junction (now facing the people cycling) turn green, complete the manoeuvre.

The code clarifies that when people cycling are going straight ahead at a junction, they have priority over traffic waiting to turn into or out of a side road, unless road signs or markings indicate otherwise.

People cycling are asked to watch out for people driving intending to turn across their path, as people driving ahead may not be able to see them.

7. People cycling, riding a horse and driving horse-drawn vehicles on roundabouts.

The code is updated to clarify that people driving or riding a motorcycle should give priority to people cycling on roundabouts. The new guidance is that people driving and or riding a motorcycle should:

- not attempt to overtake people cycling within that person's lane
- allow people cycling to move across their path as they travel around the roundabout

The code already explains that people cycling, riding a horse and driving a horse-drawn vehicle may stay in the left-hand lane of a roundabout when they intend to continue across or around the roundabout.

Guidance is added to explain that people driving should take extra care when entering a roundabout to make sure they do not cut across people cycling, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle who are continuing around the roundabout in the left-hand lane.

8. Parking, charging and leaving vehicles.

The code recommends a new technique when leaving vehicles. It's sometimes called the 'Dutch Reach'.

Where people driving or passengers in a vehicle are able to do so, they should open the door using their hand on the opposite side to the door they are opening. For example, using their left hand to open a door on their right-hand side.

This will make them turn their head to look over their shoulder behind them. They're then less likely to cause injury to:

- people cycling or riding a motorcycle passing on the road.
- people on the pavement

For the first time, the code includes guidance about using electric vehicle charging points.

When using one, people should:

- park close to the charge point and avoid creating a trip hazard for people walking from trailing cables.
- display a warning sign if you can.
- return charging cables and connectors neatly to minimise the danger to other people and avoid creating an obstacle for other road users.

The full version of [The Highway Code](#) is available, free of charge, on GOV.UK.

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