
Changes to The Highway Code: hierarchy of road users

From 29 January rules for all types of road users will be updated in The Highway Code to improve the safety of people walking, cycling and riding horses.

As a professional driver or operator, it is vital that you stay up to date with The Highway Code, checking it regularly to understand how changes affect you and your business.

New hierarchy of road users

The changes being made by the Government on 29 January introduce a new 'hierarchy of road users'. The new hierarchy explains that those in charge of vehicles that can cause the greatest harm in the event of a collision bear the greatest responsibility to take care and reduce the danger they pose to others.

This principle applies most strongly to drivers of large goods and passenger vehicles, cars and motorcycles.

Other more vulnerable road users have a responsibility to reduce danger to people walking. None of this detracts from the responsibility of ALL road users, including people walking, cycling or riding a horse, to have regard for their own and other road users' safety.

You can read more about these changes on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Changes at a glance

The latest changes to The Highway Code include:

- Giving people walking across and people cycling going straight ahead priority when turning in and out of junctions
- Leaving at least 1.5 metres when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and give them more space when overtaking at higher speeds.
- Passing people riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle at speeds under 10 mph and allow at least 2 metres of space
- Allowing at least 2 metres of space and keep to a low speed when passing a person who is walking in the road
- Encouraging people driving vehicles to open their doors with the hand furthest from the door, to help them look over their shoulder behind them to see people cycling or walking nearby
- People cycling may ride in the centre of the road or two abreast for their own safety, whilst allowing others to overtake when it is safe for them to do so

Why staying up to date is important

It's important that everyone understands their responsibility for the safety of other road users.

Many of the rules in the code are legal requirements, and if you disobey these rules you're committing a criminal offence.

If you do not follow the other rules in the code, it can be used in evidence in court proceedings to establish liability.

How to stay updated

It's easy to keep up to date with The Highway Code, and any other future changes, online.

GOV.UK includes a list of the latest updates that have been made, so it's quick and easy to see what has changed. You can also sign up for email alerts whenever The Highway Code is updated.

The Highway Code on GOV.UK allows you to:

- search for key words and phrases within The Highway Code
- quickly move between related rules
- follow links to the original laws that the rules are based on
- print sections more easily

There's also an official Highway Code app.

Help spread the word

Now's a great time to remind your colleagues about the importance of staying up to date with The Highway Code throughout their lifetime of driving.

We'll post on social media about the most recent changes to the code. Follow The Official Highway Code on Facebook to see our latest posts and share them with your colleagues.

Future changes and print editions

Over the coming months we anticipate some further changes to The Highway Code; we will keep you informed of these by email, on GOV.UK and on social media.

New printed edition of The Official Highway Code later in 2022.