



FAHRLEHRER24

CAR THEORY SWITZERLAND

All 20 topics of the Swiss car theory test

All exam topics compactly summarised for learning



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Appropriate Speed

Adjust Your Speed to the Situation

Under the Swiss Road Traffic Act (Art. 32 RTA), drivers must always adapt their speed to the circumstances, especially to the condition of the vehicle, road and load, as well as traffic and visibility.

Driving at the posted maximum speed is not always allowed – it is the upper limit, not the recommended speed.

Factors That Reduce the Appropriate Speed

- Poor visibility – fog, rain, snow, darkness, sun glare
- Slippery roads – ice, snow, wet leaves, loose gravel
- Built-up areas – children, pedestrians, cyclists
- Narrow or winding roads, blind crests, obstructions

Speed and Stopping Distance

Speed must always allow you to stop within the distance you can see to be clear. On unfamiliar or winding roads, this often means driving well below the posted limit.

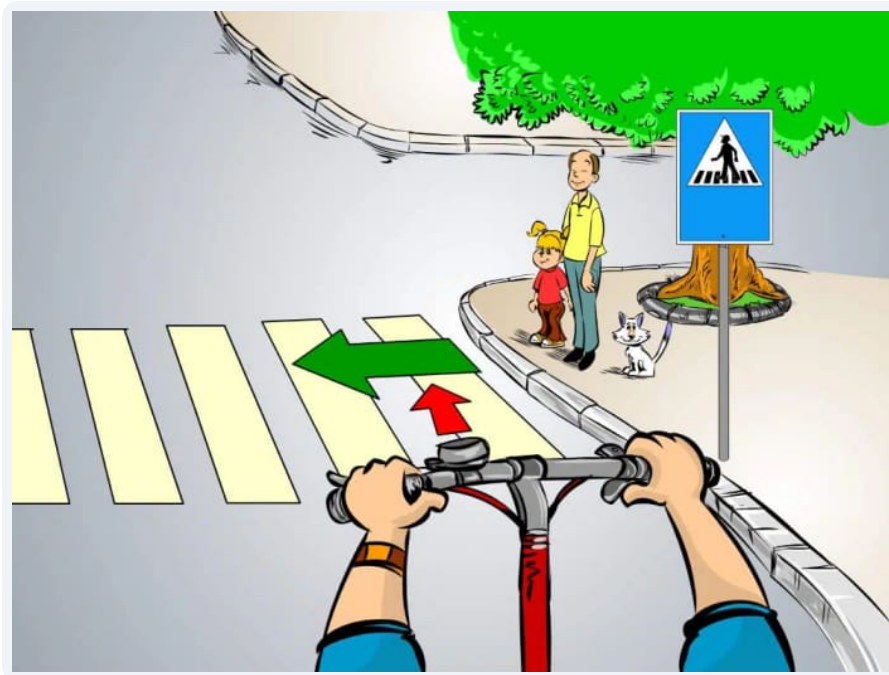
Driving too fast for conditions is one of the most common causes of accidents in Switzerland – even when the speed is technically legal.

Behaviour Towards Pedestrians

Pedestrian Crossings (Zebra Crossings)

At zebra crossings without traffic lights, drivers must give priority to pedestrians who are already on or clearly about to step onto the crossing.

Approach every zebra crossing at a speed that lets you stop safely. Never overtake another vehicle just before or on a pedestrian crossing.



Behaviour at pedestrian crossings

Pedestrians on the crossing always have priority – the vehicle must stop if necessary.

Children, Elderly and Disabled Persons

- Children may act unpredictably – reduce speed near schools, playgrounds and residential areas
- Elderly may move slowly – wait patiently, never honk to hurry them
- Blind or disabled pedestrians (white cane, yellow armband) always have absolute priority
- A school patrol signal must be obeyed like a traffic sign

Pedestrians on the Road (No Crossing)

Pedestrians may cross outside of zebra crossings, but they do not have priority. Still, you must avoid endangering them and reduce speed if needed.

In residential zones (max. 20 km/h), pedestrians have priority everywhere – cars are guests.

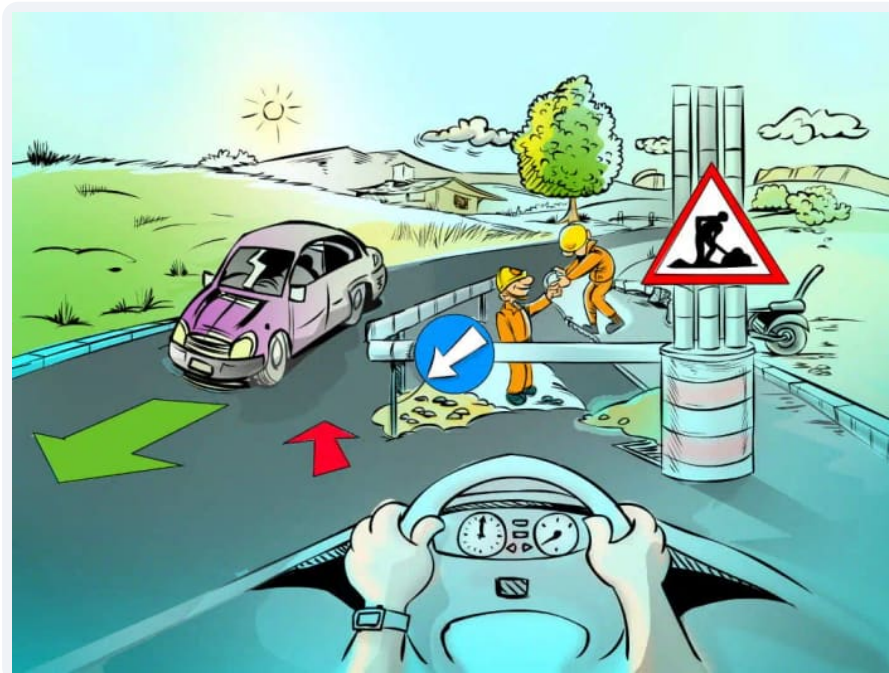
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Crossing

Crossing Oncoming Vehicles

When crossing oncoming traffic on a normal road, keep as far right as possible and slow down if needed.

Crossing is forbidden on narrow bridges, tunnels and blind crests unless visibility and width allow it safely.



Crossing on a narrow road – keep to your half of the lane

Cross on the right – keep a sufficient distance from oncoming traffic

Narrow Roads – Who Yields?

- The vehicle on the side with the passing bay (turnout) gives way and uses it
- On a slope, the downhill driver generally yields to the uphill driver – reversing downhill is easier and safer
- Heavy vehicles have priority over cars and motorcycles; postal buses on signed mountain roads have absolute priority

Crossing on Mountain Roads

On signed mountain postal roads, the driver going uphill has priority. Follow signs from postal bus drivers – their instructions take precedence.

Never reverse blindly – use passing bays and stop in time if you see oncoming traffic.



Driver Condition

Alcohol Limits in Switzerland

- General limit: 0.5‰ blood alcohol (BAC)
- Zero tolerance (0.1‰) for: new drivers (3 years), learners, driving instructors, professional drivers (taxi, bus, lorry)
- 0.8‰ and above = serious offence – licence withdrawal, fine, possible imprisonment

Drugs and Medication

Zero tolerance for illegal drugs (cannabis, cocaine, heroin, amphetamines, etc.). Even trace amounts in saliva or blood lead to licence withdrawal.

Check the package insert of any prescription medication – some sleeping pills, sedatives and antihistamines impair driving fitness even days later.

Fatigue and Concentration

- Driving when tired is comparable to driving with alcohol – reaction time drops sharply
- Take a break every 2 hours on long trips
- Coffee, music or open windows are no substitute for sleep
- Strong emotion, stress and illness also impair the ability to drive safely

Lane Selection & Turning

Choosing the Correct Lane

Select your lane in good time based on where you want to go next – ideally about 100 m before an intersection in town, 200 m outside town.

Indicate clearly before changing lanes, and check your mirrors and blind spot every time.

Turning Right and Left

- Turning right: keep to the right edge of your lane, watch for cyclists in your blind spot
- Turning left: move to the centre of the road, give priority to oncoming traffic
- On a one-way street, you may turn left from the left edge
- Always indicate in good time and switch the indicator off after the manoeuvre



U-Turns and Reversing

U-turns (turning around) are forbidden where they would endanger others, on motorways, semi-motorways, in tunnels, on level crossings and where signs prohibit them.

Reversing is allowed only over short distances and never on motorways. Always look back – mirrors alone are not enough.

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Level Crossings & Barriers

Approaching a Level Crossing

Approach every level crossing at a moderate speed, prepared to stop. Trains have absolute priority – they cannot brake quickly.

It is forbidden to enter a level crossing if the road on the other side is blocked or if you cannot pass through without stopping.

Closed or Closing Barriers

- Barriers down or red light on – stop immediately before the crossing
- Flashing red light without barrier = train is approaching, never cross
- A bell with closed barriers may indicate that a second train is coming after the first – wait for the all-clear
 - If your car stalls on the tracks: get everyone out, push the car off, alert by phone (railway emergency)

Unguarded Crossings (St. Andrew's Cross)

At unguarded crossings (St. Andrew's cross sign), look and listen carefully in both directions. Stop if a train is approaching.

Always cross in one continuous movement – never linger on the tracks.



Maximum Speed

General Speed Limits in Switzerland

- 50 km/h – in built-up areas (town and village signs)
- 80 km/h – outside built-up areas (country roads)
- 100 km/h – on semi-motorways (autostrasse)
- 120 km/h – on motorways (autobahn)
- Lower limits in special zones: 30-zone, 20-zone (residential), 40 km/h for towing

Lower Limits for Specific Vehicles

- Cars with trailer: max. 80 km/h on motorway / semi-motorway, 60 km/h elsewhere outside town
- Towing a broken-down vehicle: max. 40 km/h, motorway prohibited
- Heavy lorries: 80 km/h on motorway, 80 km/h semi-motorway, 80 km/h country roads

Speed Limit ≠ Appropriate Speed

The posted maximum is the absolute upper limit. The appropriate speed is often lower – in fog, snow, heavy traffic or near schools.

Exceeding the limit by 25 km/h (in town) or 30 km/h (outside) leads to licence withdrawal. Excessive speeding (50/60/80 km/h over) counts as a crime under the Via Sicura law.

Motorways & Semi-Motorways

Joining and Leaving the Motorway

On the acceleration lane, match your speed to traffic on the main carriageway. Use the indicator and merge smoothly – the cars on the motorway have priority.

Use the deceleration lane to brake – never slow down on the main carriageway. Indicate before leaving.

Lane Discipline and Overtaking

- Drive in the right-hand lane when free
- Use the middle / left lane only for overtaking
- Overtaking on the right is forbidden – exception: orderly columns of traffic moving at different speeds (Rechtsvorbeifahren)



- Stopping or reversing on the motorway is strictly forbidden

Speed Limits and Vignette

120 km/h on motorways (autobahn) and 100 km/h on semi-motorways (autostrasse). Trailer combinations max. 80 km/h.

A valid motorway vignette (sticker or e-vignette) is required for every car. Penalty for missing vignette: CHF 200.

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Operating the Vehicle

Before You Drive Off

- Adjust seat, head restraint and mirrors – head restraint at eye/head height to prevent whiplash
- Fasten the seat belt (driver and all passengers – mandatory, also rear)
- Check that lights, brakes and indicators work
- Children under 12 and shorter than 150 cm: child seat required

Lights

- Day/night running lights mandatory at all times (since 2014)
- Low beam in tunnels, twilight, fog, rain, snow
- High beam when no oncoming traffic and no vehicle ahead – dip in good time
- Fog lights only in fog or heavy snow; rear fog light only when visibility — 50 m

Horn and Hazard Lights

Use the horn only to warn – short signal in town, light signals at night and on country roads.

Hazard warning lights: when stopped at the roadside, approaching a tail-back, or being towed.



Overtaking

When Overtaking is Allowed

Overtaking is allowed only when you have sufficient visibility, enough space to return, and no oncoming traffic.

Indicate left in good time, accelerate decisively, and return to your lane only after clearly seeing the overtaken vehicle in your rear-view mirror.

Where Overtaking is Forbidden

- Before and on pedestrian crossings
- On blind crests, in tunnels, before bends with restricted view
- Where a solid yellow or white line separates the lanes
- Where –No overtaking– sign is posted
- At level crossings without barriers

Overtaking on the Right

Overtaking on the right is forbidden. Exception: in orderly columns of traffic where lanes move at different speeds, you may pass on the right (Rechtsvorbeifahren) – but without changing lanes for this purpose.

Cyclists may be passed on the left, with at least 1 m lateral distance in town and 1.5 m outside.

Parking

Where You May Park

Park parallel to the edge of the road, as far right as possible, and not more than 40 cm from the kerb.

Blue zone: with parking disc, max. 1 h (Mon-Sat 08:00-19:00 typical). White zone: usually free / time-limited. Yellow zone: private (reserved for residents or company).

Where Parking is Forbidden

- On / within 5 m of a pedestrian crossing or intersection
- On motorways and semi-motorways
- Within 10 m of an unguarded level crossing

- On bus / tram stops, where signs or yellow markings forbid it
- In front of driveways, on cycle paths, on the pavement (unless permitted)

Stopping vs Parking

Stopping = up to 3 minutes for loading/unloading or boarding. Parking = anything longer.

Stopping is allowed in many places where parking is forbidden, but never on a zebra crossing, in front of an emergency exit or on a tram lane.

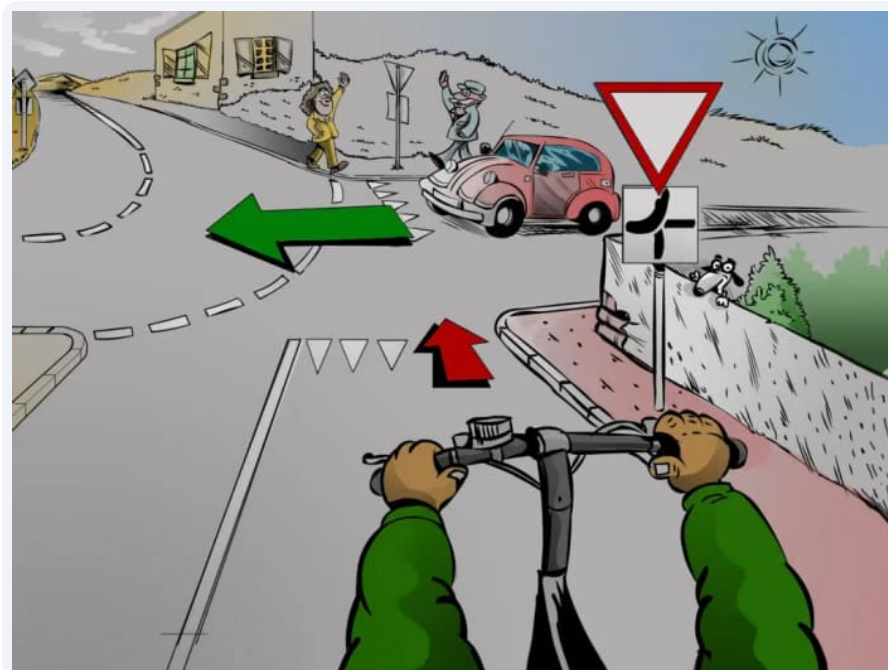
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Priority from the Right

The Basic Rule

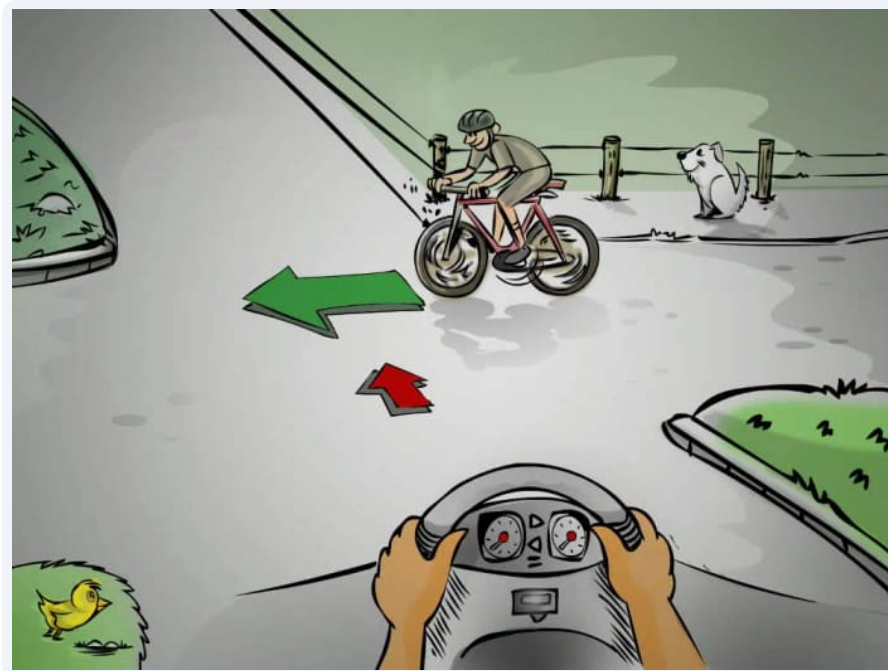
At intersections without priority signs or markings, the vehicle coming from the right has priority – this is the most fundamental Swiss traffic rule (Art. 36 RTA).

Even when you cannot see clearly to your right, you must approach an unmarked intersection at a speed that lets you stop in time.



Priority from the right at junctions – vehicle from the right has priority

Priority from the right: the vehicle coming from the right has the right of way



Priority from the right Switzerland – junction example

On minor roads without signs, priority from the right applies

When Priority from the Right Does NOT Apply

- On main roads (signed 3.03 / 3.04) – vehicles on the main road have priority
- At Stop or Give Way signs – you must yield even if a car comes from the left
- In roundabouts – vehicles inside the roundabout have priority
- When leaving a property, parking lot or field path – you yield to road traffic

Trams Always Have Priority

Trams have priority over all other vehicles – from the right and from the left – unless a sign or signal says otherwise.

Emergency vehicles with blue light and siren also have absolute priority – make way immediately.

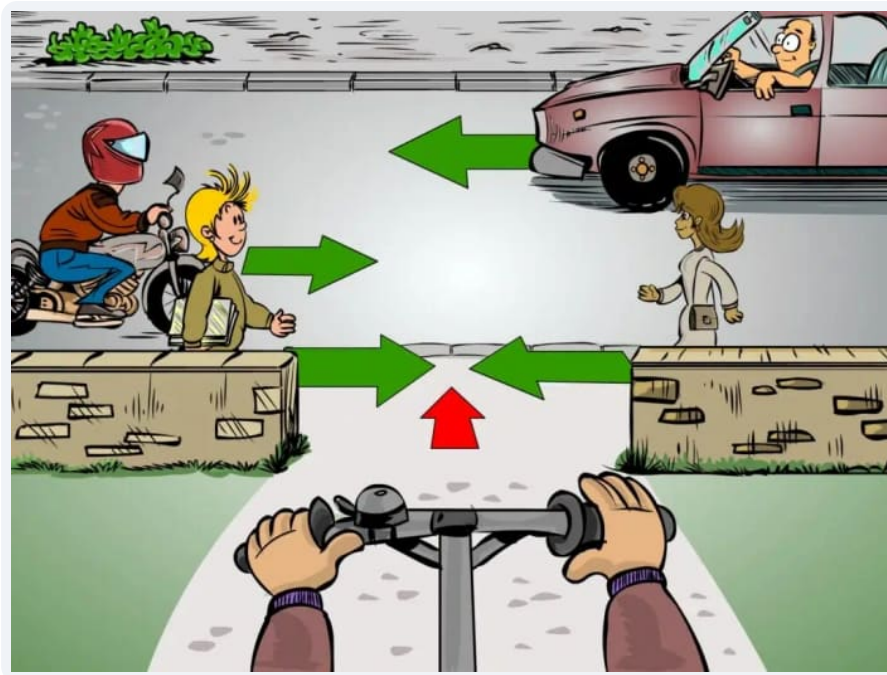
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Right of Way

How Right of Way is Established

Right of way is determined by signs and markings, by traffic lights, by the basic priority-from-right rule, and by signals from the police.

A driver entitled to right of way must not be forced to brake, swerve or stop by the obligated driver.



Right of way at driveways

Anyone emerging from a driveway must yield to all road users on the road.

Who Yields When?

- When turning left, give priority to oncoming traffic
- When turning, give priority to pedestrians on the road you turn into
- When leaving a property, cycle path, field path or parking lot – you yield to all road traffic
- When changing lanes, you yield to traffic in the lane you want to enter

Special Vehicles

Emergency vehicles (police, fire, ambulance) with blue light and siren: pull aside, brake if necessary, never block their path.

Public buses leaving a marked stop in built-up areas (signed) have priority – slow down and let them pull out.

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Roadworthiness

Driver Responsibility

The driver is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is in a roadworthy condition – brakes, tyres, lights, steering, windscreen wipers, mirrors.



If the vehicle becomes unroadworthy during the trip (e.g. light fails, tyre damaged), driving must be stopped or limited to reaching the next garage safely.

Tyres and Brakes

- Tyres: minimum tread depth 1.6 mm (legal); recommended 4 mm summer / 4 mm winter for grip
- Winter tyres recommended from October to Easter – with summer tyres on snow/ice you may be liable in case of accident (Art. 29 RTA)
- Check tyre pressure regularly, including the spare
- Brakes: spongy pedal, pulling to one side or unusual noise – garage immediately

Load and Occupants

Load must be secured against shifting or falling off. It must not obstruct the view or be longer than allowed.

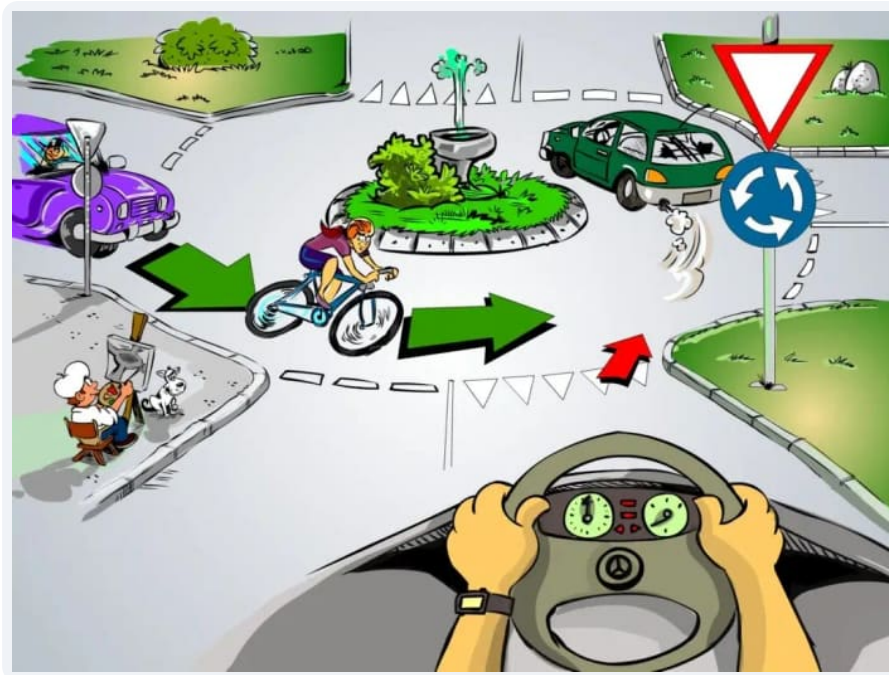
The maximum number of occupants is set in the vehicle registration document. Every passenger needs a seat belt and a proper seat.

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Roundabouts

Right of Way in the Roundabout

Vehicles already inside the roundabout always have priority over vehicles entering from the right. Before entering, the driver must slow down and make sure no priority vehicle is approaching.



Right of way in the roundabout – vehicles in the circle have priority

Vehicles in the roundabout always have priority over those entering

Indicating in the Roundabout

When entering: The indicator does not need to be used (provided no lane change takes place).

When leaving the roundabout: The right indicator must be activated, but not too early – so that drivers waiting to enter are not misled.

Cyclists and Pedestrians

On roundabouts without lane markings, cyclists may deviate from the rule of keeping right. Pay extra attention to two-wheelers in the roundabout and avoid overtaking them where possible.

When entering and especially when exiting, watch out for pedestrians and give them priority at pedestrian crossings.

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Steep Roads & Mountain Roads

Uphill vs Downhill Priority

On narrow mountain roads, the uphill driver generally has priority – reversing uphill is harder and more dangerous than reversing downhill.

If a heavier vehicle (truck, bus) is descending, the lighter vehicle going uphill yields. On signed postal-bus roads, the postal bus has absolute priority.



Yielding on a mountain road

Crossing on narrow mountain roads: whoever is closer to the next passing place reverses.

Using Engine Braking

- Long downhill: shift to a low gear and let the engine brake
- Avoid continuous use of the foot brake – brake discs overheat (fade) and effectiveness drops
- Brake pedal feels spongy / smells of burning = stop, let brakes cool
- Manual / automatic both have a low gear or hill-descent mode

Curves, Snow Chains and Visibility

In curves, keep strictly to your side. Many mountain accidents happen because drivers cut the curve.

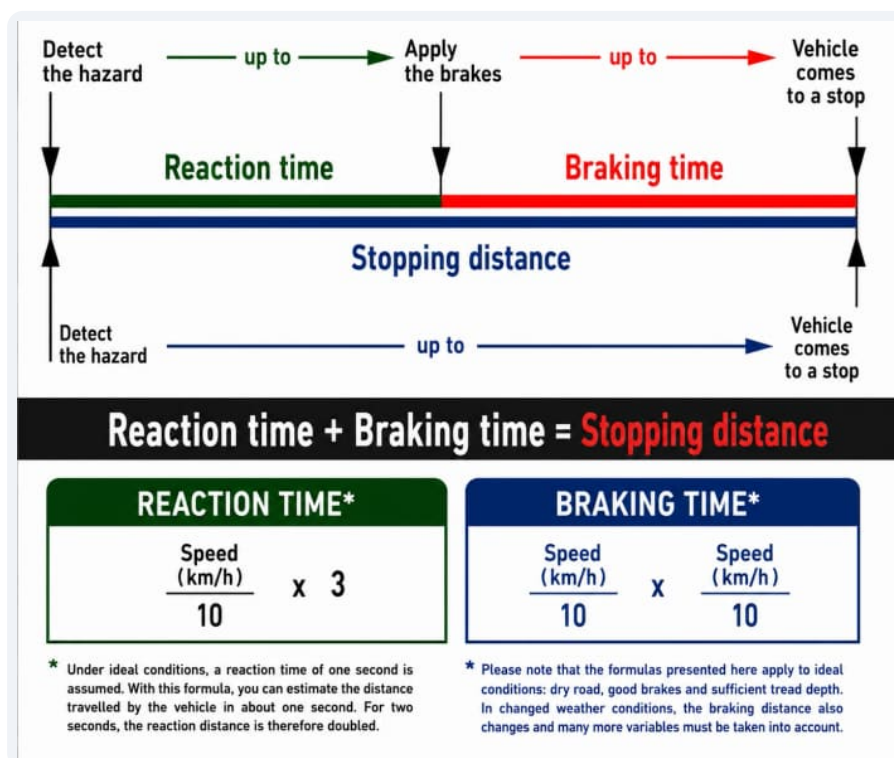
In snow or ice, use winter tyres and carry snow chains. Where signed, snow chains are mandatory on the drive wheels.

Stopping Distance & Braking

Three Distances Together = Stopping Distance

Stopping distance = reaction distance + braking distance.

- Reaction distance = the metres covered between seeing a hazard and pressing the brake (avg. 1 s reaction time)
- Braking distance = the metres needed to come to a stop once the brake is fully applied
- Stopping distance = both added together – the real distance you need to avoid a collision



Reaction distance + braking distance = stopping distance

Stopping distance = reaction distance + braking distance

Rule-of-Thumb Formulas (Dry Road)

- Reaction distance "H speed / 10 x 3 – example: 50 km/h !' 15 m
- Braking distance "H (speed / 10)² – example: 50 km/h !' 25 m
- Stopping distance at 50 km/h on dry road "H 40 m
- On wet road: double the braking distance. On snow / ice: triple or more.

What Increases Your Stopping Distance

Reaction time grows with fatigue, alcohol, distraction (phone), age and bad visibility. A reaction of 2 s instead of 1 s doubles the reaction distance.



Braking distance grows with speed (squared!), worn tyres, wet or icy roads, heavy load and downhill gradient. Always keep enough following distance (rule: 2 seconds, in poor conditions more).

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Towing

When You May Tow a Broken-Down Vehicle

Towing is allowed only to bring a broken-down vehicle to the nearest garage or safe parking spot – not for general transport.

Motorways and semi-motorways are off-limits for towing. Leave them at the next exit.

Speed, Cable and Lights

- Maximum speed when towing: 40 km/h
- Tow cable / rod: maximum 5 m long, clearly visible (red flag on a rope)
- Hazard lights on in both vehicles, day and night
- The towed driver must have a valid licence and steer / brake actively

Difference: Towing vs Trailer

Towing = pulling a broken-down vehicle (emergency, max. 40 km/h). Trailer = a vehicle built to be pulled (different rules, higher speeds).

Brakes-failed vehicle: never tow with a rope – use a rigid tow bar.

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Trailer

Categories and Licence

- Cat. B (car) allows trailers up to 750 kg total weight, or heavier if total combination "d 3500 kg
- Cat. BE required for heavier trailers (up to 3500 kg trailer)
- Trailer must not exceed the towing car's permitted trailer weight (registration document)

Speed Limits with Trailer

- In town: 50 km/h (general limit applies)

- Country roads: 80 km/h
- Motorway / semi-motorway: max. 80 km/h
- For heavier (BE) trailers, special lower limits may apply – check signs and trailer plate

Driving with a Trailer

Loading: heavy load over the axle, lighter load above. Secure against shifting. Heavy front load increases drawbar load – check max. drawbar load on registration.

Driving: longer braking distance, wider turns, careful in side wind. Trailer with brakes is much safer than unbraked.

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Trams

Trams Always Have Priority

Trams have priority over all other vehicles – from the right and from the left – unless a sign or signal says otherwise (Art. 38 RTA).

Reason: a tram cannot swerve and its braking distance is much longer than a car's.



Tram stop – alighting passengers have priority

At stops without a safety island, vehicles must wait until passengers have cleared the road



Passing a Tram

- Overtake only on the right – never on the left (the tram tracks are usually in the middle)
- If a tram is at a stop without a refuge island, you must stop until passengers have boarded / alighted
- Tram tracks must be free – do not stop on or beside the tracks where you would obstruct the tram

Tracks, Curves and Signals

When crossing tram tracks, do so at a flat angle to avoid the wheels slipping – especially on wet rails.

A tram in a curve overhangs the rails by up to 1 m on each side – keep a clear safety distance.

Tram drivers use a three-light signal (yellow arrows): straight, left or right – do not confuse it with car traffic lights.