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# GUIDE TO THE ON-ROAD SAFETY TEST

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Under the driver licensing system, drivers must obtain a *Medical certificate for driver licence* from their doctor in order to renew their licence at age 75, 80 and two-yearly thereafter.

If your doctor thinks you are medically fit to drive but is unsure about your ability to drive safely, they may issue you with a *Medical certificate for driver licence*, enabling you to renew your driver licence provided you pass an on-road safety test with a testing officer.

This guide is only for older drivers who have been referred for an on-road safety test by their doctor. It explains the process for booking, preparing for and taking the on-road safety test. It also explains what the test covers and what happens afterwards.



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If you have further queries, call our contact centre on 0800 822 422 or write to us:

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Private Bag 6995  
Wellington 6141.

This publication is also available on NZ Transport Agency's website at [www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/on-road-safety-test/guide-on-road-safety-test.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/on-road-safety-test/guide-on-road-safety-test.html)



**The NZ Transport Agency is part of, and contributes to, the Safer Journeys programme.**

Safer Journeys is the government's strategy to guide improvements in road safety over the period 2010-2020. The strategy's vision is a safe road system increasingly free of death and serious injury. It is a coordinated effort across partner agencies to improve each aspect of road safety - better behaviours, a safer road environment, safer speeds and higher vehicle standards.

For more information visit [www.transport.govt.nz/saferjourneys](http://www.transport.govt.nz/saferjourneys)

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## BOOKING THE ON-ROAD SAFETY TEST

To book an on-road safety test, you will need to visit a NZ Transport Agency driver licensing agent or book over the phone. Driver licensing agents are participating offices of:

- New Zealand Automobile Association (AA)
- Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ)
- Vehicle Inspection New Zealand (VINZ).

When booking your test, you will need to bring:

- your completed *Application for renewal of driver licence* form
- your current driver licence or other acceptable evidence of your identity (refer to page 3 of the *Application for renewal of driver licence* form for a full list)
- confirmation of your address, such as a recent bank statement
- the *Medical certificate for driver licence* signed by your doctor
- \$21.50 driver licence renewal fee (the on-road safety test is included in this fee).

Please be aware that driver licensing agents do not accept credit cards. However, if you book a test over the phone by calling 0800 822 422, you can pay by credit card.

If you book your test over the phone, you will need to arrive 30 minutes before your test appointment to allow all the pre-test requirements to be completed, such as confirming your identity and address, and checking the details recorded on your medical certificate. Remember to bring

everything listed above (apart from the fee payments) along to your test appointment.

At age 75, 86 and every 10 years after that, your photograph and signature on your driver licence will need to be updated.

If you can't get an appointment to take the test before your licence expires, you will be given a temporary driver licence when you book your test.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, or do not understand English, special arrangements can be made for you to complete the on-road safety test. You (or someone acting on your behalf) will need to advise the driver licensing agent when booking your test appointment.

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## WHAT THE TEST INVOLVES

The on-road safety test is designed to check that you still have a good knowledge of the road rules and continue to practise safe driving skills. It takes about 30 minutes to complete and is done in your own vehicle (or one supplied by you).

The vehicle in which you take the test can have an automatic or manual transmission. If you pass the test in a car with automatic transmission, you can still drive a car with manual transmission (unless your doctor has recommended a condition be placed on your licence for medical reasons, requiring that you only drive an automatic car).

The testing officer will give you instructions directing you when to turn, stop and carry out other driving manoeuvres. There are no fixed routes – you must be capable of driving on all types of road and in all traffic situations. You must drive safely and legally throughout the assessment.

The testing officer uses a simple 'yes' and 'no' scoring method, and you need to get a total score of 80% or more to pass the safety test.

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## PREPARING FOR THE TEST

- Ensure that your vehicle's warrant of fitness and registration (and if you have a diesel vehicle, your road user charges label) will be current for the test. You should also check that lights and indicators are working, the tyres have sufficient tread depth, etc. The testing officer will check your vehicle to ensure it is roadworthy before the test proceeds.
- Refresh your knowledge to ensure you're up to date with any new road rules, signs and markings. Copies of the road code are available from most bookstores or your local library. You can also view the road rules section online at [www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/roadcode/index.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/roadcode/index.html). See also the 'Road rules refresher' section on page 8.

- Consider attending Staying Safe – a refresher workshop for senior road users. These community-based courses are a great way to refresh your skills and knowledge. See page 7 for how to find out if workshops are being run in your area.
- Also check out our website for more information: [www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/senior-road-users/index.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/traffic/senior-road-users/index.html). You can watch videos on safe driving and complete a self-assessment.
- It may be helpful to have a practice session with a qualified instructor (look in the Yellow Pages®) or someone else you consider to be a good driver.

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## ON THE DAY OF THE TEST

- Make sure you take your current driver licence with you (you are legally required to carry it with you while driving).
- Remember to take your glasses or a hearing aid if you need them for driving. When you arrive, remember to tell the testing officer if you have hearing difficulties.
- Arrive at the test venue in plenty of time – if you are more than five minutes late, your test will be cancelled and you will need to re-book the test. It's free to re-book the test.



## BEFORE THE TEST BEGINS

The testing officer will carry out a pre-test vehicle check with you before the on-road safety test begins. If your vehicle is not roadworthy, the safety test will not continue and you will have to book another appointment. It's free to re-book the test.

The testing officer will check that:

- the vehicle is sitting square to the road, indicating all tyres have equal or close-to-equal pressure
- there is no obvious damage to the vehicle that could be considered dangerous
- the tyres have a legal tread depth and have no uneven wear, the wheel nuts are intact where visible and the wheels appear undamaged
- the indicators, tail lights and brake lights operate correctly and all lenses are intact
- the high and low beams operate and lenses are intact (if the test is taking place in poor lighting conditions)
- the windscreen washers and wipers operate satisfactorily (if the test is taking place in rain or fog)
- the horn operates satisfactorily
- the vehicle registration and warrant of fitness are current (as well as the road user charges label if you have a diesel vehicle)
- the safety belts are in good condition.

## PART 1 OF THE TEST: BASIC DRIVING SKILLS

Before setting off, make sure you have fastened your safety belt.

The basic skills assessment takes about five minutes and includes:

- leaving the kerb
- driving in a straight line
- turning left at an intersection
- returning to the kerb.

During this section, the testing officer will check that you:

- look in the appropriate mirror(s) before and after moving (includes setting off, turning, when changing lanes and about every 10-15 seconds when driving in a straight line)
- search forward and to both sides to identify potential hazards
- signal in the appropriate direction for at least three seconds before moving (this includes setting off, turning, changing lanes and merging)
- turn your head to look for vehicles in your blind spots (the areas not covered by your mirrors) before leaving the kerb, turning or changing lanes and merging
- choose appropriate gaps when you merge into a traffic flow, such as when leaving the kerb or moving through an intersection
- drive at a safe and legal speed throughout the assessment
- position the vehicle in a safe and legal position before, during and after all manoeuvres
- brake smoothly and effectively.

These tasks must be successfully completed for you to move on to the next stage of the safety test. If you're not sure of any instructions, ask the testing officer for clarification.

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## **PART 2 OF THE TEST: BASIC DRIVING SKILLS AND HAZARD DETECTION**

This part of the on-road safety test takes about eight to 10 minutes. You will be asked to:

- turn left or right at T-intersections
- negotiate a crossroad
- negotiate a roundabout
- stop or give way at stop or give way signs
- negotiate an uncontrolled intersection (turning right across a road without a stop or give way sign).

During this and the following stage, your ability to detect traffic hazards around the vehicle will also be assessed. A traffic hazard is an object or activity that requires you to change your position, adjust your speed or stop (such as other vehicles, pedestrians or animals).

Having successfully completed this stage, you'll move on to part 3.

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## **PART 3 OF THE TEST: MORE COMPLEX DRIVING SITUATIONS AND HAZARD DETECTION**

This takes about five minutes. It combines more complex driving situations and hazard detection in medium to heavy traffic conditions in 50–80km/h speed zones.

You will be asked to:

- travel through a local shopping area or commercial/industrial area in a 50km/h zone
- turn right at a crossroad in medium to heavy traffic in a 50km/h zone
- travel straight in a 60–80km/h zone
- turn right off a road in a 60–80km/h zone.

When you've finished this final stage, the testing officer will calculate your result (score) and provide you with feedback on your performance in the safety test.

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## DURING THE TEST

If you think you've made a small mistake, try not to dwell on it – it may cause you to lose your concentration.

Ask the testing officer to clarify any instructions you are not sure about.

You must be able to demonstrate safe driving practices and a current knowledge of road law throughout the test. You will not pass the test if your driving is unsafe, if you do something illegal or if your score is less than 80%.

Remember the importance of:

- using mirrors properly
- looking for potential hazards
- signalling
- checking over your shoulder for traffic
- obeying all signs and signals
- braking smoothly and effectively
- driving at a safe and legal speed
- positioning the vehicle safely and legally
- choosing appropriate gaps in the traffic.

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## AFTER THE TEST

The testing officer will discuss the results of the test with you and will give you a form highlighting any areas of concern. If you pass the on-road safety test, the testing officer will also give you a temporary driver licence – your new photo driver licence will be posted to your mailing address.

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## COMMON ERRORS

The following traffic offences will affect your on-road safety test result:

- exceeding the speed limit
- failing to stop when required (for example, stop signs, traffic lights, pedestrian crossings)
- failing to give way when required
- inconveniencing other road users by failing to signal or driving unnecessarily slowly
- failing to stay within a lane or using an incorrect lane.

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## IF YOU FAIL THE TEST

A driver may fail the on-road safety test because of a few simple mistakes or small lapses of concentration.

If your licence is still current, you can continue driving until it expires.

If you wish to re-sit the test, you can book another appointment. It's free to re-book the test.

If you wish to book another test and your driver licence will expire before the new test date, you will be given a temporary driver licence to cover you. The temporary driver licence will have a condition requiring you to be accompanied by a licensed driver at all times while driving.

If your practical test is terminated because of unsafe or illegal driving, the testing officer may inform the Transport Agency's Chief Medical Adviser who will assess your situation.

If you decide to give up your driver licence, you will need to follow the process explained in the 'Life after driving' section.



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## LIFE AFTER DRIVING

Most drivers are aware of the signs of ageing and know when their ability to drive safely is compromised. Some choose to give up their driver licence for their own and other road users' safety.

Talk it over with family and friends who know you best. Find out about the transport options in your area. The Transport Agency's booklet *The road ahead* has more advice about life after driving – see the 'Further information and resources' section below for information on how to get a copy.

If you wish to surrender your driver licence, you should write to Driver Licensing Administration, NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442. Please make sure you clearly outline your intention to surrender your licence, and sign the letter. Put your driver licence in the envelope with your letter. If you later wish to re-obtain your driver licence, you'll need to re-apply. If more than five years has elapsed since you surrendered your licence, then you will also need to sit and pass the applicable theory and practical tests.

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## FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

*The official New Zealand road code* has up-to-date information on all aspects of driving. You can obtain a copy at your local library, bookshop or driver licensing agent, or go to [www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/roadcode/index.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/roadcode/index.html) to view the road rules section of the road code online.

*The road ahead* covers topics such as adjusting your driving as you age and life after driving.

The Transport Agency also produces factsheets containing useful tips and information on a range of road safety topics.

Transport Agency publications can be viewed online at [www.nzta.govt.nz/resources](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources) or obtained through Transport Agency offices or driver licensing agents or by calling the contact centre on 0800 822 422.

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## STAYING SAFE - A REFRESHER WORKSHOP FOR SENIOR ROAD USERS

Designed for senior road users aged 70 and over, Staying Safe is a classroom-based programme that aims to maintain and improve safe driving practices.

During the course, you'll re-familiarise yourself with traffic rules as well as increase knowledge about other transport options available.

To see if workshops are available in your area check:

- [www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/driving-safely/senior-drivers](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/safety/driving-safely/senior-drivers) or call 0800 822 422.

Any questions about driver licensing issues?

Call the driver licensing contact centre on 0800 822 422.

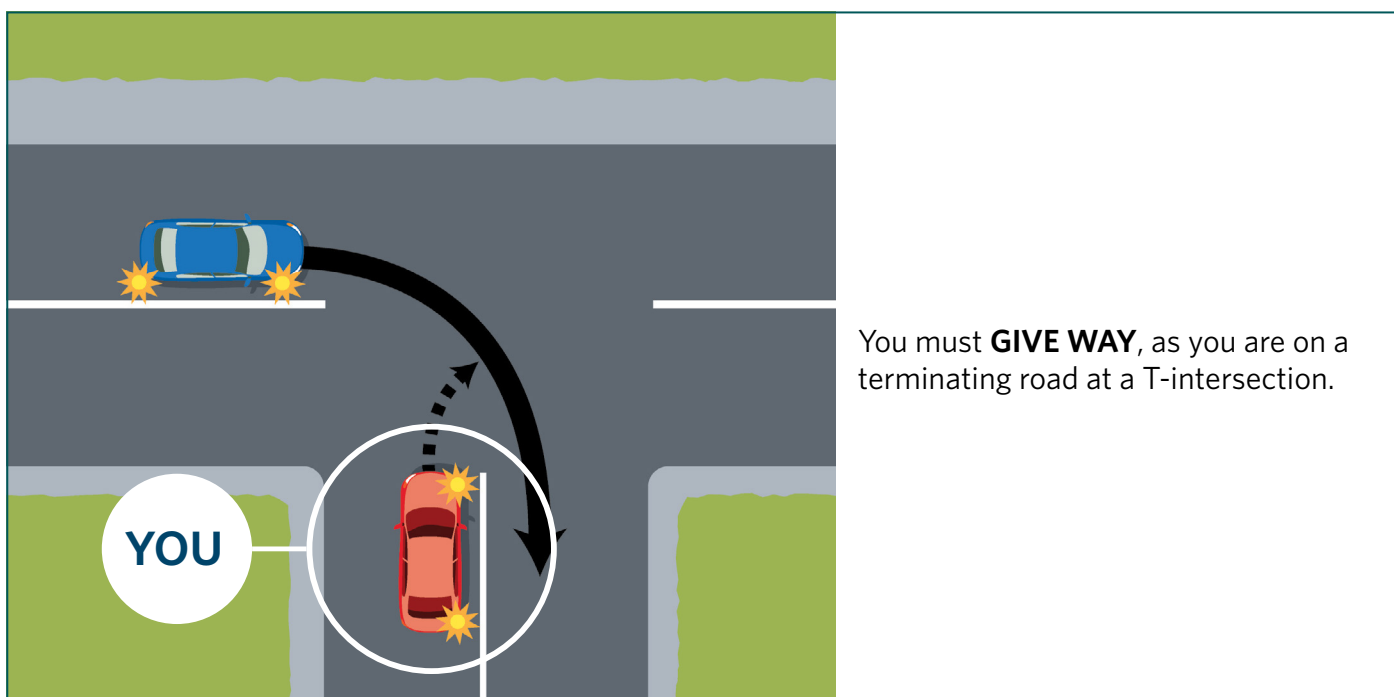
## ROAD RULES REFRESHER

### GIVING WAY - INTERSECTIONS

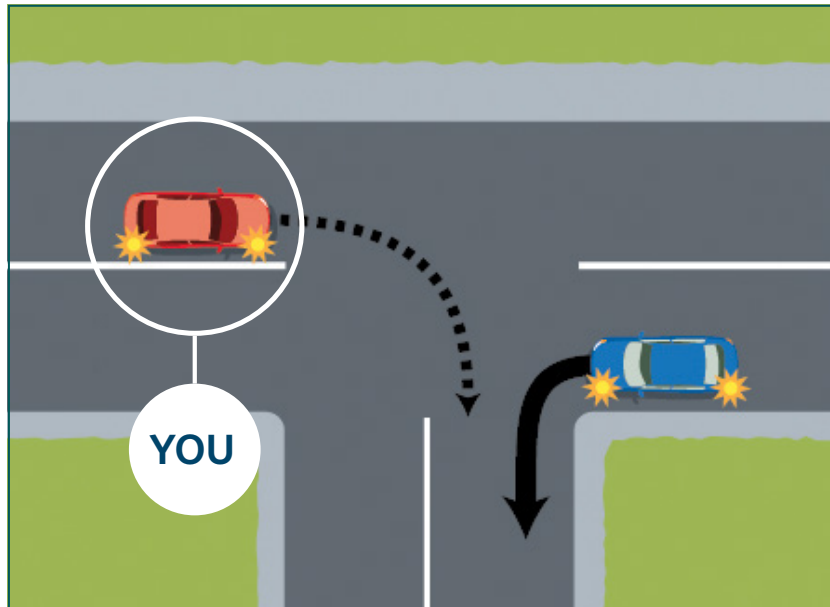
Two of the give way rules changed on 25 March 2012. Here's an explanation of the two new rules and a refresher of the other give way rules that didn't change.

#### The two new give way rules

**Uncontrolled T-intersection rule** - all traffic from a terminating road (bottom of the T shape) should give way to all traffic on a continuing road (top of the T shape). Note: 'Uncontrolled' means there are no signs or signals telling you what to do.

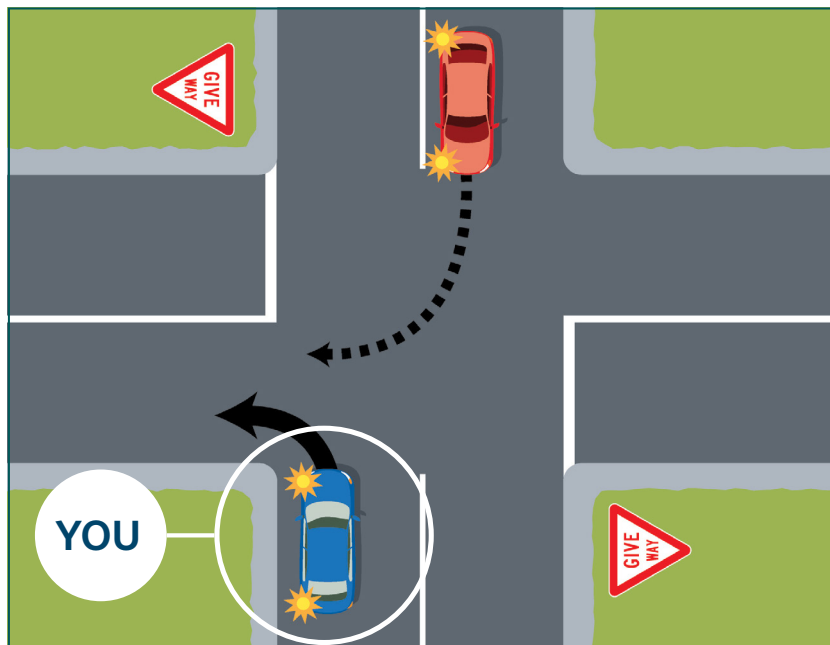


**Left turn versus right turn rule** – all traffic turning right should give way to a vehicle coming from the opposite direction and turning left. This applies at crossroads, T-intersections and driveways where both vehicles are facing



**Example 1**

You must **GIVE WAY**, as you are turning right and the other vehicle is turning left.



**Example 2**

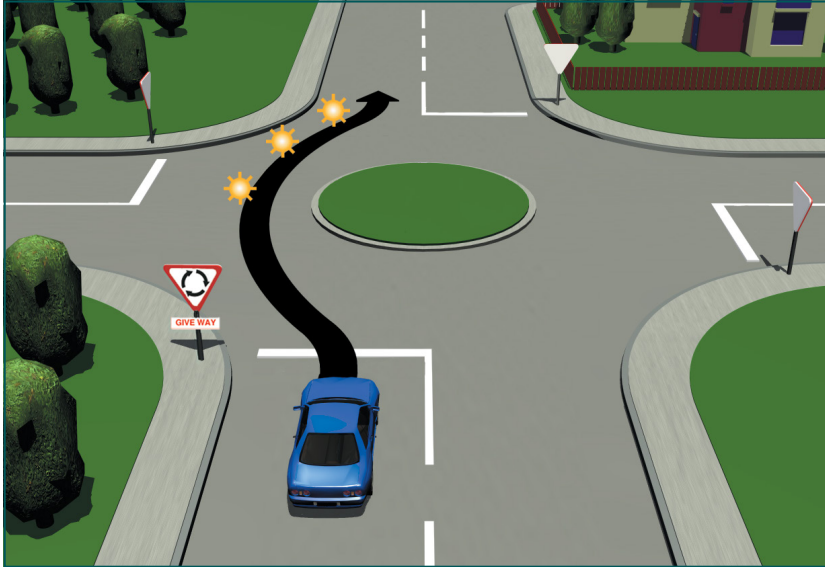
You may proceed, as you are turning left and the other vehicle is turning right.

**The rules that have stayed the same**

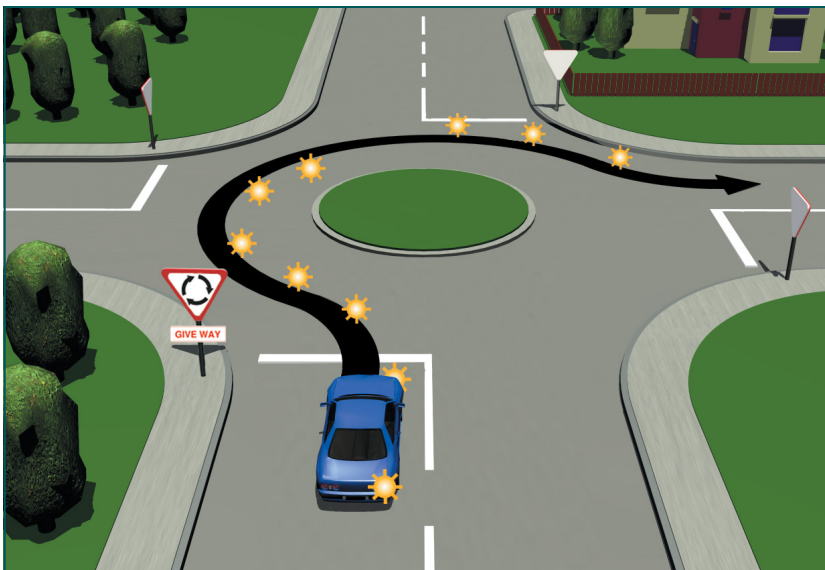
- Road users should continue to obey all road signs and signals.
- If you are turning, give way to all vehicles not turning.
- If all other give way rules (or signs and signals) do not determine who gives way, give way to vehicles coming from your right, eg at crossroads controlled by traffic signals, when the signals have failed and all approaches have a flashing yellow light.

# SIGNALLING - ROUNDABOUTS

## Single-lane roundabout



**Driving straight :**  
indicate left when exiting.



**Turning right :**  
first indicate right, then left to exit.



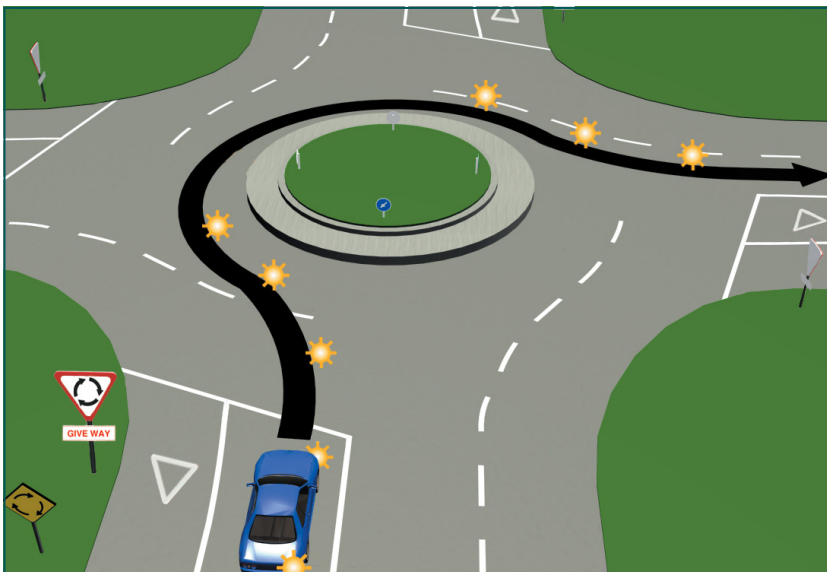
**Turning left :**  
indicate left before turning.

## Multi-lane roundabout



**Driving straight :**

indicate left when exiting.  
Stay in the same lane throughout.



**Turning right :**

first indicate right, then left to exit.  
Stay in the same lane throughout.

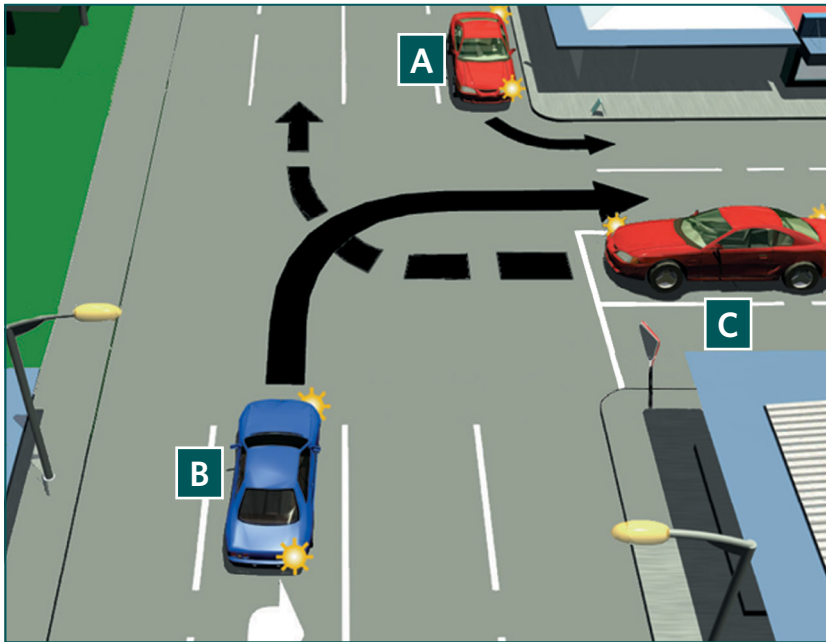


**Turning left :**

indicate left before turning.  
Stay in the same lane throughout.

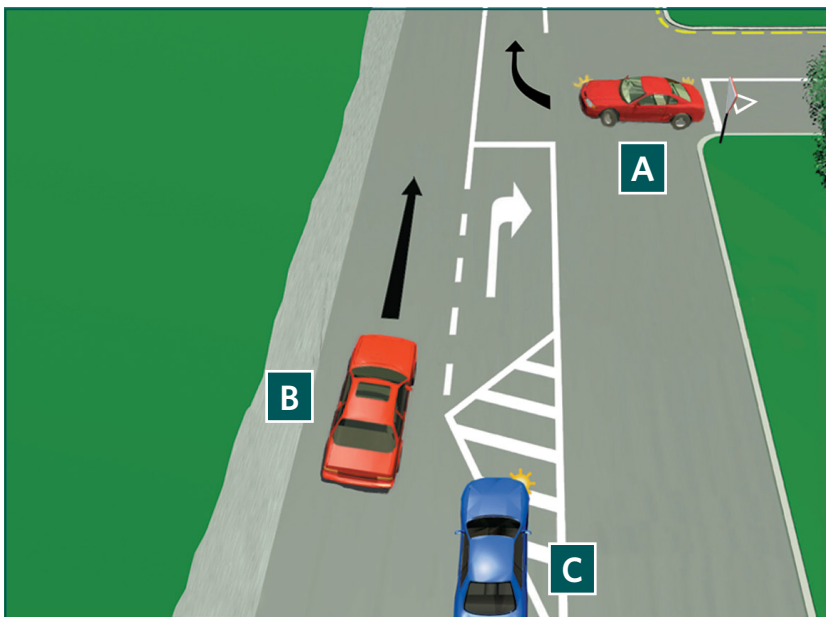


## CORRECT USE OF LANES, BAYS AND FLUSH MEDIANS



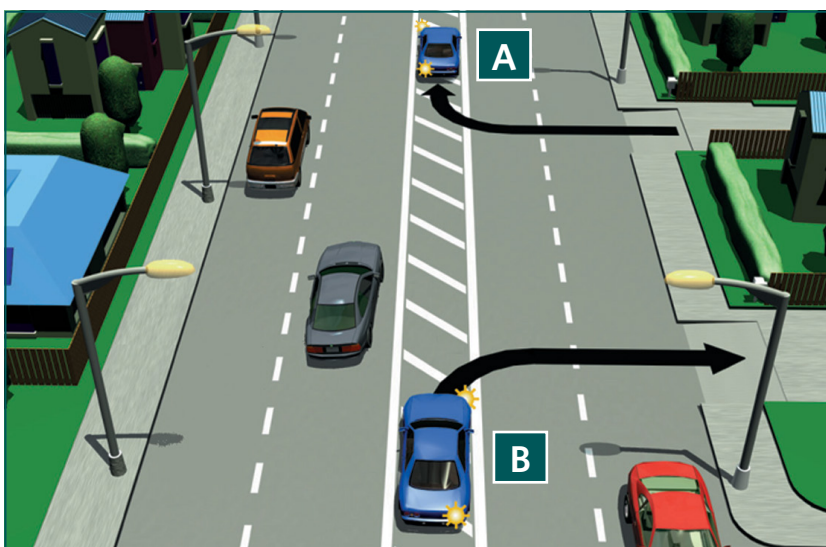
### Correct use of lanes when turning

- A When turning left into a multi-laned road from a lane adjacent to the kerb, you must turn into the left-hand lane of the new road.
- B When turning right into a multi-laned road from a lane adjacent to the centre line, you must turn into the right-hand lane of the new road.
- C Turn from a right-hand lane to a right-hand lane. Check behind and to the left before merging.



### Correct use of right-turn bays

- A You may enter the merging lane nearest the centre of the road, then indicate your intention to merge left.
- B Proceed straight ahead, and watch to your right for merging traffic.
- C Indicate a right turn before you drive across the white diagonal lines into the right-turn bay.

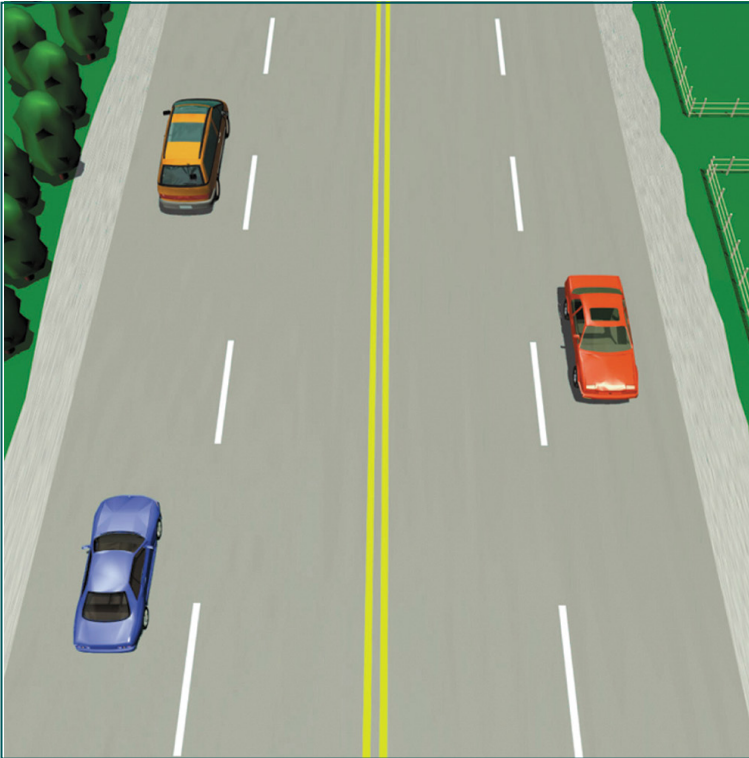


### Correct use of flush median when turning

- A Turn right into a flush median to wait for a safe gap, before merging with traffic.
- B Use the median to wait to turn right. Keep the front wheels pointing straight ahead while you wait to turn.



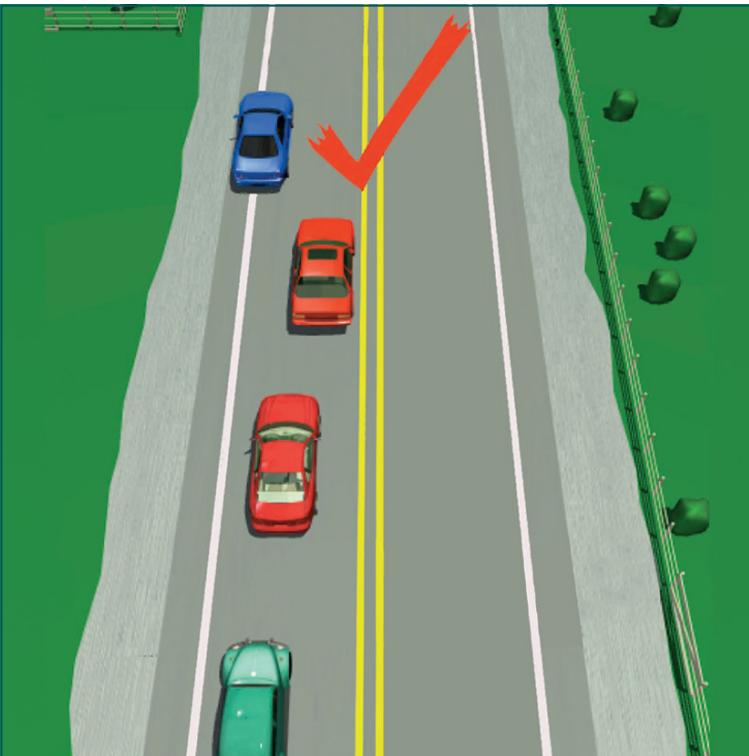
# HIGHWAY DRIVING



## Two-lane roads

### Keep to the left lane.

Don't use the right-hand lane unless you are about to turn right or pass a vehicle in the left lane.

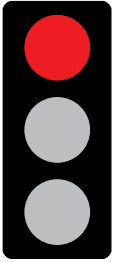


## Single-lane roads

You may drive across the left-hand white lane marking if it is safe to do so and you are holding up following traffic.

You may pass a slower vehicle at 'no passing' lines if you stay to the left of the yellow lines and you have 100 metres of clear visibility throughout the whole manoeuvre.

# TRAFFIC LIGHTS



**MUST STOP**



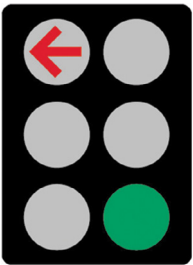
**STOP**  
(UNLESS TOO CLOSE)



**FAULTY LIGHTS!**  
APPLY THE  
**GIVE WAY RULES**



**GO**  
(IF SAFE)



**Left turning**

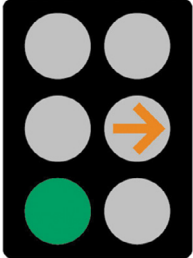
Must STOP

**Straight ahead**

GO (if safe)

**Right turning**

GO but must give way to oncoming traffic, including left-turning traffic and pedestrians



**Left turning**

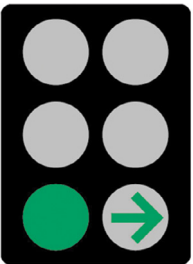
GO, but must give way to pedestrians crossing the road

**Straight ahead**

GO (if safe)

**Right turning**

Must STOP (if safe)



**Left turning**

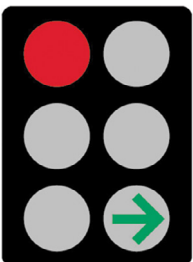
GO, but must give way to pedestrians crossing the road

**Straight ahead**

GO (if safe)

**Right turning**

GO - oncoming traffic should stop



**Left turning**

Must STOP

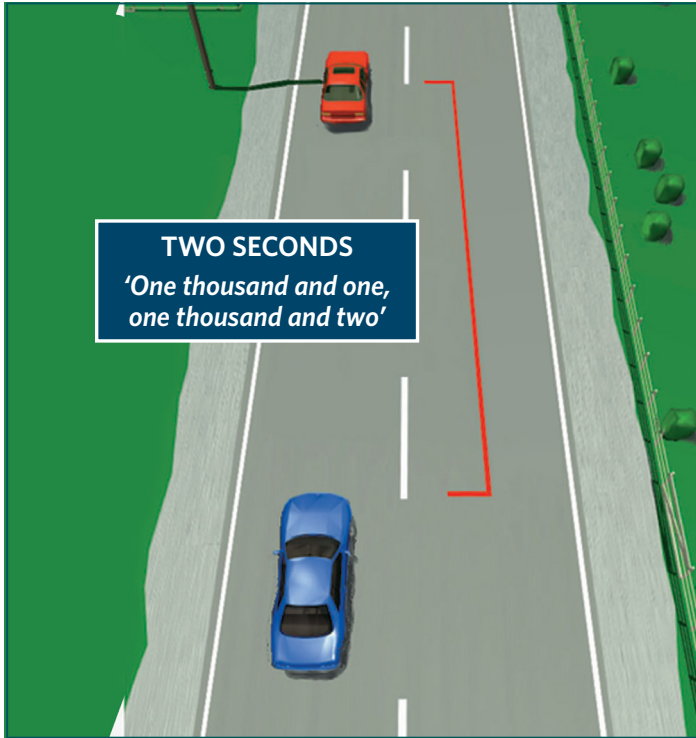
**Straight ahead**

Must STOP

**Right turning**

GO - oncoming traffic should stop

# FOLLOWING DISTANCE AND SAFETY ON THE HIGHWAY



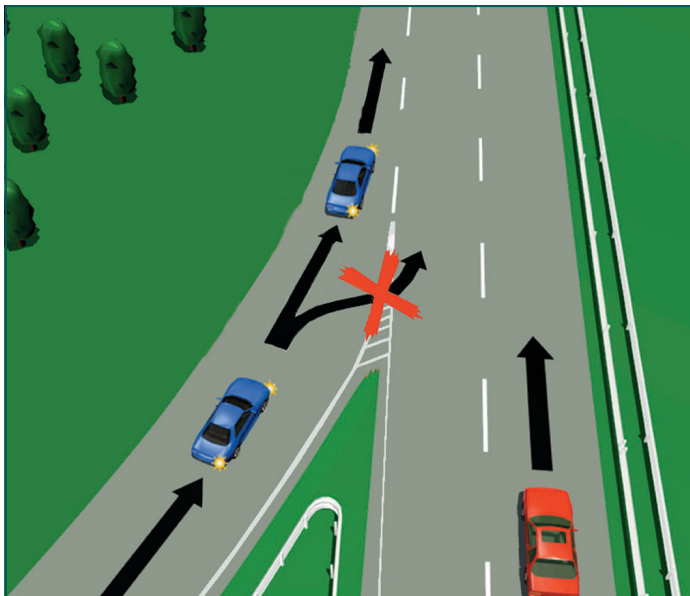
## Safe following distance

When following another vehicle travelling at the same speed, watch as that vehicle passes a fixed object (for example, a lamppost). Start counting **'one thousand and one, one thousand and two'**.

If you pass the object before you finish saying **'two'**, you are following too close.

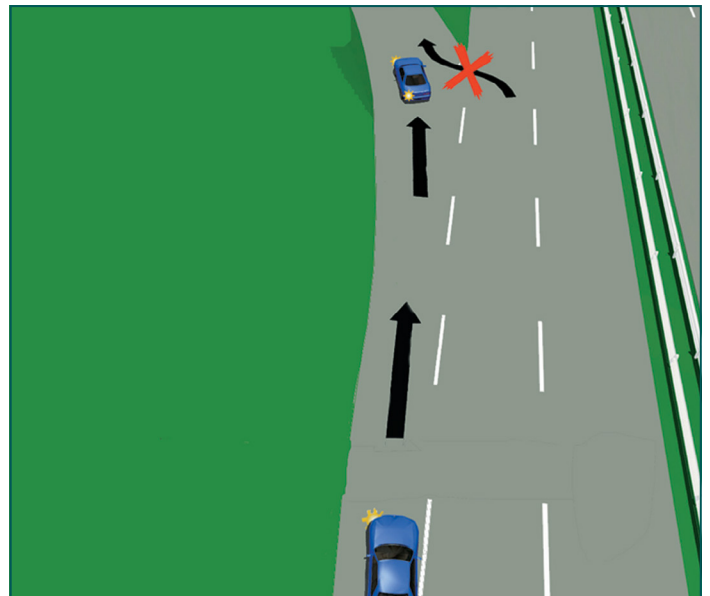
This **two-second rule** works equally well at any speed.

In bad weather, increase the distance to **four** seconds.



## Merging with highway traffic

- Use the whole of the on-ramp to adjust your speed to match the traffic on the highway.
- Indicate your intention to merge.
- Check your blind spot by turning your head.



## Exiting from the highway

- Maintain your speed while indicating your intention to enter the off-ramp.
- Use the off-ramp or exit lane to slow down.



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If you have further queries, call our contact centre on 0800 822 422 or write to us:

NZ Transport Agency  
Private Bag 6995  
Wellington 6141

This publication is also available on the NZ Transport Agency's website at [www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/on-road-safety-test/docs/guide-on-road-safety-test.pdf](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/assets/resources/on-road-safety-test/docs/guide-on-road-safety-test.pdf)



New Zealand Government

## OUR CONTACT DETAILS

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### FREEPHONE NUMBERS

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Driver licensing: 0800 822 422

[www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz)