

Heavier traffic and higher speeds on the motorway mean you need to be more alert and in control of your vehicle. You can help avoid motorway accidents by following some simple rules.

Plan your journey

Check that your vehicle is roadworthy before you start out, and if you are driving long distances, take plenty of breaks.

Overtaking

If you are overtaking a number of slower vehicles, it may be safer to stay in the middle or outer lane rather continually switching lanes.

Keeping your distance

Watch when the vehicle in front passes an object beside the road, and then slowly count "one second, two seconds". If you pass the same object before you've finished counting, you're too close.

Watch your speed

The speed limit for cars, motorcycles, light goods vehicles, and buses and coaches less than 12m long, is 70 mph.

The speed limit for vehicles towing a caravan or trailer, HGVs, articulated lorries and buses or coaches over 12m long, is 60 mph.

Signs with yellow flashing lights are used to show lower speed limits when you need to slow down in poor weather conditions, when traffic is heavy or if there has been an accident.

Only use the hard shoulder in an emergency

If you break down, pull onto the hard shoulder as close to the verge as possible and turn on your hazard warning lights.

There are emergency phones every 1,500m (about a mile).

Wait for help as far away from traffic as you can. If you need to stop for any other reason - to read a map or use your mobile phone, for instance - pull into a service area.

