**The Highway Code has changed – what you need to know.**

Changes came into force from Saturday 29th January 2022.

This overview does not take away your responsibility for ensuring that you are familiar with the requirements of the highway code.

**Hierarchy of road users**

The introduction of The Highway Code will be updated to include three new rules about the new ‘hierarchy of road users’. The hierarchy places the road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy, it does not remove the need for everyone to behave responsibly.

**All road users should:**

* Be aware of the Highway Code
* Be considerate of other road users
* Understand their responsibility for the safety of others

The 3 new rules are numbered H1, H2 and H3.

**Rule H1**

It is important that ALL road users are aware of The Highway Code, are considerate to other road users and understand their responsibility for the safety of others.

Everyone suffers when road collisions occur, whether they are physically injured or not. But 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 post to others. This principle applies most strongly to drivers of large goods and passenger vehicles, vans/minibuses, cars/taxis and motorcycles.

Cyclists, horse riders and drivers of horse drawn vehicles likewise have a responsibility to reduce danger to pedestrians.

None of this distracts from the responsibility of ALL road users, including pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, to have regard for their own and other road users’ safety.

Always remember that the people you encounter may have impaired sight, hearing or mobility and that this may not be obvious.

**Rule H2 – Rule for drivers, motorcyclists, horse drawn vehicles, horse riders and cyclists**

At a junction you should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross a road into which or from which you are turning.

You MUST give way to pedestrians on a zebra crossing, and to pedestrians and cyclists on a parallel crossing.

Pedestrians have priority when on a zebra crossing, on a parallel crossing or at light-controlled crossings when they have a green signal.

Cyclists should give way to pedestrians on shared use cycle tracks and to horse riders on bridleways.

Only pedestrians may use the pavement. Pedestrians include wheelchair and mobility scooter users. Pedestrians may use any part of the road and use cycle tracks as well as the pavement, unless there are signs prohibiting pedestrians.

**Rule H3 – Rule for drivers and motorcyclists**

You should not cut across cyclists, horse riders or horse drawn vehicles going ahead when you are turning into or out of a junction or changing direction or lane, just as you would not turn across the path of another motor vehicle. This applies whether they are using a cycle lane, a cycle track, or riding ahead on the road and you should give way to them.

Do not turn at a junction if to do so would cause the cyclist, horse rider or horse drawn vehicle going straight ahead to stop or swerve.

You should stop and wait for a safe gap in the flow of cyclists if necessary. This includes when cyclists are:

* Approaching, passing or moving off from a junction
* Moving past or waiting alongside stationary or slow-moving traffic
* Travelling around a roundabout

**People crossing the road at junctions**

* When people are crossing or waiting at a junction, other traffic should give way
* If people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing the road have priority and the traffic should give way
* People driving, riding and 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.*

**Walking, cycling or riding in shared spaces**

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 should:**

* Not pass people, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle closely or at high speed, particularly from behind
* Slow down when necessary to let people walking know they are there (e.g. by ringing the bell)
* Remember that people walking may be deaf, blind or partially sighted
* Not pass a horse on the horse’s left

**Positioning in the road when cycling**

* Ride in the centre of the lane on quiet roads, in slower-moving traffic and at the approach to junctions or road narrowings
* Keep at least 0.5 metres away from the kerb edge (and further where it is safer) when riding on busy roads with vehicles moving faster than them

**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.

Cyclists are asked to be aware of people driving behind them and allow them to overtake when it’s safe to do so.

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

**Overtaking when driving or cycling**

You 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 10mph 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 when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and giving more space when overtaking at higher speeds
* Passing people riding horses or driving horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10mph and allowing at least 2 metres of space
* Allowing at least 2 metres of space and keeping to a low speed when passing people walking in the road

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

**People cycling past slower-moving or stationary traffic**

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 and when deciding whether it is safe to pass lorries or other large vehicles.

There is more information for cyclists which is summarised at [www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022)

 **Motorcycles**

People driving 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 a roundabout
* Give priority to people cycling on roundabouts

**Parking, charging and leaving vehicles**

The Highway Code recommends a new technique when leaving a vehicle. 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. This will make them turn their head to look over their shoulder behind them, meaning they are less likely to cause and incident. This technique is called the ‘Dutch reach’, named after a method that has been standard practice by the Dutch for many years.

**Using electric vehicle charging points**

When using one, people should:

* Park close to the charge point and avoid creating a trip hazard to pedestrians
* Display a warning sign if possible
* Return charging cables and connectors neatly to minimise the danger to other people