



Newsletter ~ February 2016

St Helens Group of Advanced Motorists
Working to make our roads safer every day...



Chair's Remarks

Hello everybody and welcome to the February edition of the Newsletter.

I'd like to give a particularly warm welcome to Anita Clift, Stephen Copple, Thomas Cunliffe, Jonathon Dobson, Brian Funston, Daniel Heslop, Lesley Marriott, Jack Trainer, Stephen Molyneux and Arnie Nielsen who have joined the Group's Winter Skill for Life Course.

This is a fantastic start to the year and I think it's the largest intake of Associates for many a year. A few of the new intake have come to the Group via 'word of mouth' through being friends of existing members or family members of those who have passed the Advanced Test through the Group. For me, this is a testimony to both the professionalism of the members who run the Group and the way we run our driving courses. We are trusted to deliver what is required to improve peoples driving.

The Group is gearing (pardon the pun) itself up for another busy year. An exciting development is the rolling out across the country of a new As-

sociate Training Programme. This will ensure that any new Associate signing up for the Skill for Life package anywhere in the country will get the same training. This is a very ambitious aim and to bring this about all new Associates will need the same training material and all Observers will need a clear understanding of the required driving standards across the full range of driving situations. We are now very much at the beginning of the process and by the next Newsletter I should have more information to share with you.

To all who read this Newsletter, please have a think about whether you or a family member or friend would like to do one of our courses. It is never too late or too early to improve driving skills.

To those who have driven for many years, you know only too well to arrange for your car to have an MOT when needed. But, how about an 'MOT' for you as the driver? Situations happen on the road. Your overall confidence may have taken a knock or you may have become less confident on some types

of road due to lack of use e.g. motorways.

You could do so much driving that complacency has set in and you find yourself having more near misses and scrapes.

As a young driver, with a fast mind and fast reactions, you may become anxious at times and find yourself driving on your instincts and using your reactions to stay out of trouble.

No matter what your age, driving experience or circumstance, you may feel that you could benefit from a Free Driving Assessment. If this is the case then we are here to help.

I think a lot still needs to be done about raising public awareness of the IAM. Every member of our Group could help with this. Please continue to speak to family, friends and even work colleagues about the advantages of doing a Skill for Life course.

Well, that's it from me. Safe driving and good observing.

Mark Farnworth,
Group Chairman



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Associate Coordinator's Corner

Welcome to Anita Clift, Stephen Cople, Thomas Cunliffe, Jonathon Dobson, Brian Funston, Daniel Heslop, Lesley Marriott, Jack Trainer, Stephen Molyneux and Arnie Nielsen who have recently joined the Group.

By now you should have settled into the Course and I would like to wish you every success. To pass the IAM Test your Test Drive needs to be safe, systematic, smooth and progressive.

While being **safe** speaks for itself, it also includes legality. The law must be obeyed throughout the Test. The biggest single cause of Test Failure is breaking the speed limit. This is usually down to poor observation which results in missing the speed limit sign. Places where speed limit signs can be missed include just before or after busy roundabouts, when your attention is on the traffic situation; or when the sign is right on the junction that you are turning into and you are so focused on what else is

happening. By the end of the Course, you should be used to these situations but you must get it right on the day.

Systematic means driving to the System. By now, you should be familiar with I.P.S.G.A. Problems that the Associates have had in the past include completing all the breaking before the gear change. If, for example, you are turning left from a major road to a minor, then aim to complete your braking one and a half to two car lengths from the corner. Then you will find the features of the System slot into place. Some Associates might find it difficult to time the gear change on approach to roundabouts. The advice I was given was 'when it's clear, select the gear.' It does seem to work.

Smooth also speaks for itself but do avoid the potholes and remember the Examiner wants to feel comfortable throughout the Test.

Progressive includes driving up to

the speed limit when safe to do so, selecting the best lane for progress and always being in the correct position.

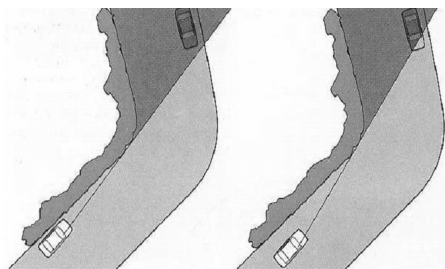
All of the above and more will be shown to you on the Demonstration Drive.

I must also stress the importance of attending the Classroom Sessions. A lot of work goes into these presentations and you will learn a great deal. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions. However, questions on the IAM Test itself are best left until the 'Meet The Examiner Evening'. At that meeting you will learn exactly what the Examiner is looking for and how the Test is marked.

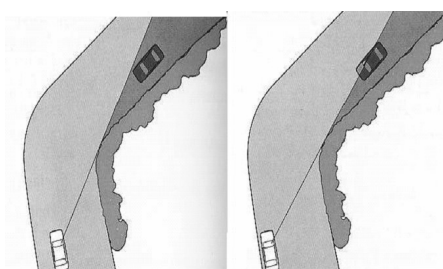
I trust that you will enjoy the Course and achieve a Test Pass. If you do have any problems, then please let me know.

Alan Prescott
Associate Coordinator

Positioning



Position yourself for left hand bends towards the right hand side of your lane on the approach - but don't drive on or over the white centre line. Positioning in this way will give you an early view of any danger at or beyond the bend. However, don't position in this way if there is on-coming traffic (move back to the centre of your lane for safety) or if you might wrongly give the driver behind the impression that you intend to turn right at or beyond the



bend. For right hand bends position towards the left of your lane for improved observation but only if there are no nearside hazards such as cyclists or pools of water. Never position yourself so far to the left that you drive over debris in the gutter along the roadside. Don't hit the kerb!



(graphic downloaded from twitter, originates from Peter Rodger, IAM Chief Examiner)



Winter 2016 Course Programme

Course Programme – Starting January 2016

The Introduction and System Evenings will be held at 8pm at the IBIS hotel, Haydock and the Meet an Examiner Evening at the Millennium Centre, St. Helens Town Centre. For all Observed Runs, meet at the IBIS hotel for 10.00am.

Introduction Evening

- Run 1 (Assessment drive)
- Run 2 (Observation, planning)
- Run 3 (Urban)

The System of Car Control

- Run 4 (Rural 1)
- Demonstration drive
- Run 5 (Major roads)
- Run 6 (Rural 2)

Meet an Examiner / Revision Night Q&A

- Run 7 (Mixed)
- Run 8 (Final polish)
- Consolidation run if waiting for test
- Consolidation run if waiting for test

Thursday 7th Jan

- Sunday 10th Jan
- Sunday 17th Jan
- Sunday 24th Jan

Thursday 28th Jan

- Sunday 31st Jan
- Sunday 7th Feb
- Sunday 14th Feb
- Sunday 21st Feb

Monday 22nd Feb

- Sunday 28th Feb
- Sunday 6th Mar
- Sunday 13th Mar
- Sunday 20th Mar

Welcome to:

- Anita Clift
- Stephen Copple
- Thomas Cunliffe
- Jonathon Dobson
- Brian Funston
- Daniel Heslop
- Lesley Marriott
- Jack Trainer
- Stephen Molyneux
- Arnie Nielsen

who have joined the Winter Skill for Life Course

Notice Board

Congratulations



Elizabeth Howlett receives her IAM Advanced Test Pass Certificate from Group Chairman, Mark Farnworth

10 Pin Bowling

7.30pm Friday 12th February
AMF Bowling
Wallgate, Wigan, WN3 4AG

The cost is £10.55 for two games .
e-mail Kay Heppenstall
(events@shgam.org.uk) or call her
on 07843 051468 if you plan to
attend

Paper Newsletter?

Over the last few years an increasing number of members have been receiving a bi-monthly e-mail from me with a link to a newly posted Newsletter on the Group's web site. Now only a dozen or so members receive a paper copy of the Newsletter. To these members I'd like to ask if you now have an e-mail address and if you have would you consider receiving the Newsletter by e-mail? It is a way that the Group can save a bit of money.

Mark Farnworth
Newsletter Editor

What is Gift Aid?

Gift Aid gives you an extra 25p for every £1 you donate. Gift Aid is an income tax relief designed to benefit charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC). If you're a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid increases the value of your charity donations by 25% because the charity can reclaim the basic rate of tax on your gift at no extra cost to you.



If an Associate or an existing Member in a voluntary retest achieves a "1" rating in all of the Examiners assessment boxes then they will qualify for IAM FIRST. So whether you've recently taken your Test or have been an IAM Member for a number of years, why not go for the ultimate IAM challenge?

Meet an Examiner

Mon 22nd Feb, 8pm
Millennium Centre, St. Helens.

IAM Examiner Paul Griffiths will be attending.

Associates - bring some questions!



IAM News Release

IAM's calls for increased investment in roads finally answered, as councils spend more on road projects

14th January 2016

Many county councils across England appear to have responded to criticisms about failing to make pothole repair and road maintenance a top priority, the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) has found, with increased spending across the country.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request by the IAM has found councils are following government-stated best practice and increasingly investing more money into capital projects (i.e. road rebuilding) rather than spending funds on short-term temporary repairs.

In early 2015 the Asphalt Industry Alliance (AIA) confirmed a backlog of repairs topped £12 billion, while an IAM survey found that 64 per cent of participants cited general road maintenance as one of their biggest concerns (reference 1).

The FOI request asked county councils how much they spent on fixing road surface defects such as potholes and how much they spent on capital projects to resurface roads between 2013 and 2015.

While the IAM's findings reveal many councils are spending less on filling potholes, 17 out of 23 of them are in fact spending more overall on resurfacing worn-out roads.

The top five county councils to invest the most money into road repairs and resurfacing between 2014/15 include:

1. Surrey – £44 million
2. North Yorkshire – £43.9 million
3. Cumbria – £33.5 million
4. Devon – £32 million
5. Lincolnshire – £30.2 million

In percentage terms, the following councils have increased their capital spending on resurfacing roads the most:

1. Oxfordshire – 139 per cent (from £4.6 million to £11 million)
2. Cambridgeshire – 85 per cent (from £10.5 million to £19.4 million)
3. Norfolk – 45 per cent (from £19 million to £27.6 million)
4. Leicestershire – 43 per cent (from £7.5 million to £10.7 million)
5. West Sussex – 38 per cent (from £19.5 million to £27 million).

Four of the five worst driving licence penalty point holders not banned, IAM discovers

7th January 2016

Three drivers with more than 40 points on their driving licences are still allowed on the road, according to a Freedom of Information request to the DVLA by the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM). The enquiry also found that 13 people in Britain currently have 28 or more points on their driving licence, the worst of those amassing 51 points. In addition, the numbers of drivers with 12 or more points has gone up by 9% in just seven months between March and October 2015 – from 6,884 to 7,517 (reference 1). While the DVLA does not hold details as to whether all of those individuals were still on the road, it did state that individual courts have the powers to choose not to disqualify a driver.

In its reply to the IAM's request, the DVLA said: "In a small percentage of cases where the driver has accumulated 12 or more penalty points, the agency understands that a court can exercise its discretion and not

disqualify the driver. "In the majority of these cases, magistrates may have decided to allow drivers to retain their entitlement to drive where it is considered that disqualification would cause exceptional hardship," it added. The location of drivers with 28 points or more across Britain by postcode district is as follows:

Points	Location
51	Oxford
42	Liverpool
42	Basildon
39	Wigan
38	Burnley
33	Northampton
33	SW London
30	Sheffield
30	Southend-on-Sea
30	Slough
30	Cambridge
29	Peterborough
28	Stevenage

Separately the IAM has looked into the 'top five' and has discovered the following: 42 points holder (Basildon): seven offences, all of which were for failing to report driver details. Previously held points for speeding including one at 109mph. Not disqualified from driving as magistrates accepted mitigating circumstances including 'extreme hardship' through loss of income. Not disqualified

DVLA data shows that of the 45 million driving licence holders in Britain, three million have points on their licence.

Sarah Sillars, IAM chief executive officer, said: "The IAM has been highlighting this issue for several years now and we appreciate that the flow of information between the DVLA and the courts is slowly improving, which will allow the courts to make better decisions while armed with the full facts. However these improvements cannot come quickly enough to deliver a truly joined-up approach".



Extract from IAM INSIGHT January 2016 Edition



A Modern IAM—as told by a teenage driver

This month IAM chief executive officer Sarah Sillars has given up her usual spot in Insight. Instead we have 17-year-old advanced driver Eloise Peabody-Rolf talking about driving from a teenage perspective.

I am not an average young driver or an average IAM member, to be honest I don't really fit in either group. I'm 17 and seven weeks after passing my DVSA driving test, I became an IAM member. I'm really proud of this achievement - how did I manage it?

I have been a member of the Under 17 Car Club (U17CC) for the past six years and therefore gained a huge amount of pre-licence experience in a safe environment. The club's instruction methodology had prepared me well as I ventured out onto public roads. What did I find most challenging? The sheer volume of traffic, impatient and distracted drivers, how narrow some country roads were and multi-lane roundabouts!

I was disappointed to find the general attitude towards a driver with L plates was often so inconsiderate.

There seems to be a universal view that younger drivers equal danger and with the stats on young driver accident rates, that's not surprising. I was lucky enough to be part of the U17CC team invited to run the young driver's workshop at the 2015 IAM Annual Conference, where it was a pleasure to meet many of you. Although many members were very accepting, there seemed considerable surprise that 17-year-olds can be and are advanced drivers.

U17CC members progress through its structured grading system, so when the opportunity to take the advanced test was offered, I jumped at the chance. It was daunting as it was rather short notice, however I managed to squeeze in some observed drives with Terry Simpkin one of the U17CC instructors who's also a national observer, and was delighted to pass.

It was sad to find when I told my (non U17CC) friends of my achievement, very few had heard of the IAM, and thought that the test was perhaps like Pass Plus. When I explained what the test involved, most couldn't understand why I bothered as I was already 'on the road'. To many of

them driving is seen as a convenience, simply to get from A to B, rather than a skill to be mastered and enjoyed. I've since given the matter a lot of thought - I wish there was an easy answer to what needs to be done to encourage young drivers to want to improve their driving skills.

I appreciate the number of young people who are lucky enough to get the opportunities I've had are small, however I would love to see (noncommercial) schemes such as U17CC and the 'Pathfinder' programme the Charitable Trust runs with their proven benefits, far more widely available. I believe road safety should be taught from an early age, included in the national curriculum. Also learning to drive should be not simply learning what's required to pass the test, as this doesn't prepare newly qualified drivers adequately - no wonder they have accidents.

Coming into the IAM, I believe the organisation has so much to offer young drivers and riders. However young people need to be made aware of the IAM and it be made more accessible to them. Ways need to be found to bridge the 'generation gap', to encourage existing members to engage with young people, and vice versa. It needs to offer young people a chance to take advantage of the experience and passion for driving IAM members clearly have, and to develop, enjoy and be proud of their driving skills without being too daunting.

As for me; I am very proud to be a member of the IAM and look forward to continuing my development as a driver. I also want to encourage my friends to share my passion for driving and road safety. With every good wish to you all for 2016!

Eloise

Special offer for young drivers -see page 7.



Commercially available DVD Resources

Ultimate Driving Craft (DVD 100 minutes): Chris Gilbert has a relaxed teaching style which is very suitable for a DVD audience. The DVD covers many advanced driving techniques throughout the range of driving environments (urban, rural, motorways, bad weather, progressive etc) with an initial emphasis on the benefit and development of commentary as a method of driving "self development". The DVD instruction is given in the form of an Instructor's style of commentary which Chris delivers in a very listenable manner.

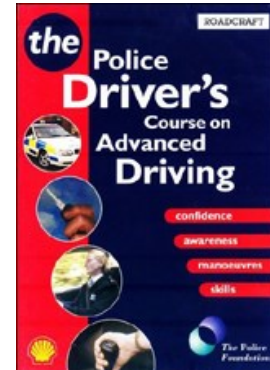
Advanced Roadcraft (DVD – 68 minutes): This DVD features general skills and techniques for driving safely and progressively in the range of road environment and includes tips for driving at night. The techniques and skills presented cover much of the syllabus of the

Police Roadcraft Manual including a section including demonstration of safe overtaking, a twenty minute demonstration of advanced driving through busy city traffic and a section on motorway driving.

Commentary Driving (DVD- 75 Minutes): This programme presents the development and expert examples of driving commentary. The programme features 3 commentary sections.

Roadcraft - The PoliceDriver's Course on Advanced Driving
Rather than being purely instructional this DVD follows police candidates on an advanced driving course run at the Metropolitan Police Motor Driving School, Hendon. The DVD complements "Roadcraft: The Police Drivers Handbook" by showing the instructors coaching the candidates

through advanced driving techniques and particularly the System of Car control. The course includes the range of driving situations covered by the Group and additionally includes sections on night driving and skid pan training.



Contact Phil Sharples on
01744 29886 or
philetsan187@gmail.com

Courses and Discounts

Young Driver Group discount

Due to a generous donation to the Group, we are able, **subject to funding availability**, to offer the following discounts to younger drivers who fall into the following age ranges at the start of the course.

Age 26 to 35

Skill for Life Course is initially reduced to only £124 (£25 discount). After completing the Course and taking the Test a generous £35 refund is paid (irrespective of outcome) making the course only £89

Age up to 25

Skill for Life Course is initially reduced to only £109 (£40 discount). After completing the Course and taking the Test a generous £50 refund is paid (irrespective of outcome). Phone Julie Brown on 07814 415559 (after 6pm).

IAM Young Drivers Assessment

Momentum is designed for 17-25 year olds who have passed their driving test, and incorporates two modules: an interactive online assessment, followed by an on-road session with an IAM examiner. *Momentum* does not involve an exam and there is no risk of failure; it offers a quick, low-cost option for improving the confidence, awareness and safety of younger drivers.

Momentum costs £45, a sum that will be taken off the full Skill for Life programme if purchased within 12 months of the *Momentum* assessment. *Skill for Life* will develop on feedback from the *Momentum* assessment and will help drivers to safely predict hazards, anticipate other drivers' behaviour and more accurately assess road and traffic conditions.

Employer sponsorship

If you drive, even very occasionally, for an employer they may be a source of sponsorship for the SfL. This is particularly relevant for small to medium organisations without a vehicle fleet that rely on employees to use their own or company vehicle on company business. Health and safety legislation places a responsibility on employers to assess risk and provide suitable measures such as training to minimise such risks. So if you are considering further driver training and your employer requires you to make occasional deliveries, go for the post, pick up visitors or visit customers then you could ask your employer for help to cover all or part of the cost. The sponsorship you gain, however, is a matter between you and your employer.



Winter driving tips from the IAM

Have you mist any of our winter hints? What a mist-ake

Given the onset of cold weather more and more of us are experiencing misty car windows. The IAM's chief examiner, Peter Rodger recommends drivers better prepare their cars before they travel. Your windows will steam up when the air inside your car is warmer and is carrying more humidity. This air inside is cooled near the glass allowing the humidity to condense and form mist. Here are Peter's top tips for coping better with misty windows:

1. Mist will often form quicker on dirty windows so it's important you keep your windows clean throughout the winter. Both the outside and inside of your windows should be kept equally clean – free from dust, tar, tree sap and grime.
2. Newspaper can be used to polish glass once you've cleaned it. Wash the windows with some washing up liquid and water, then dry with a cloth ensuring you lift the windscreen wipers and clean the section of your windscreen beneath them. If you prefer the traditional method of using crumpled up newspaper, this works well too.
3. Don't leave any damp clothing in your car overnight as this can also cause the windows to steam up.

4. Use the air conditioner to help lift any condensation from the inside of your car windows. You can adjust it accordingly to lower the setting once the moisture clears. And if your car has a button that sets the demister at the optimum for clearing the screen then use that.

Rodger said: "Your windows are your eyes when you get behind the wheel. It is foolhardy and downright dangerous to drive one inch if you can't see clearly from your windows. Be five minutes late rather than venture down the road in this way".

You're as cold as ice!



1. Make sure you have cleared your windows and side mirrors before starting your journey and use the heater settings to remove mist and condensation. Avoid using hot water to pour over your windscreen as it's more than likely that it will freeze up again. Never apply heat to a door lock as most modern locks now have plastic components.

2. Keep an eye on your tyres. The legal minimum tread depth should be at 1.6mm – but for safe travel you should not let the depth go be-

low 3mm. Whatever you do, avoid travelling with worn tyres at all costs as this will increase the likelihood of your car skidding. If you can afford them, winter tyres do offer a real grip advantage.

3. If you're driving a manual vehicle, avoid using high revs and set off gently in second gear. This will improve control and reduce the risk of wheel spin. If you're driving an automatic vehicle, select the 'winter' mode, (if there is one), which will automatically lock out first gear and reduce the risk of wheel spin – if unsure, refer to your handbook for more advice.

4. If your car loses grip you should take your foot off the accelerator and point the front wheels in the direction you want them to go. All steering and braking inputs must be as gentle as possible in icy conditions. Front-wheel-drive vehicles are generally better in icy conditions, but if your car is a rear-wheel-drive always take it extra slow and steady when changing direction.

5. Increase the distance between you and the vehicle in front, especially in slippery conditions. The same applies for when you're approaching a junction or a sharp bend – drive at a steady speed that allows you to stop well within the available distance.

SPECIAL OFFER DEAL FOR YOUNG DRIVERS



If you have children or grandchildren who are under 17 you might be interested to know there are places available on driving tuition courses offered by the Under 17 Car Club (U17CC) coming up this Easter.

U17CC's Pathfinder project is open to 'rising 17s,' and over five days aims to deliver them the key attitudes and skills for advanced driving. Actively supported by Gloucestershire Advanced Motorists and the police, Pathfinder has space during Easter break (4-8 April) exclusively for the children and grandchildren of IAM members. Each place costs £170. To find out more visit this website: www.under17driver.co.uk



For your information



The IAM F1RST Register recognises excellence during the IAM advanced driving or riding test.

Members will receive a special certificate and membership card complete with the F1RST logo. Their names are also entered into the F1RST register.



F1RST membership is attained by taking the advanced test for car, motorcycle or commercial vehicle and achieving a score of 1 in every* category.

Existing IAM members can take a Member's Assessment in order to try and achieve the all 1s score*. Existing members who previously passed the test with the qualifying score within the last two years can be added to the Register retrospectively.

The F1RST Register provides a means for IAM members to improve their road skills by retaking an assessment and working on the areas where a score of less than 1 was achieved.

* Our Examiners have the discretion to recommend a candidate even if they score a '2' in no more than three categories (Note: Legality and Slow Manoeuvring must score a '1')

F1RST with commentary clarification The rule for a commentary drive to achieve a F1RST

There has been some inconsistency with regard to the scoring or inclusion of a commentary drive in an advanced test of F1RST standard. Here is our official clarification.

To achieve a F1RST in the advanced test the drive MUST include a commentary drive that scores 1 or 2 (and meets the overall scoring rules for a F1RST)

A commentary drive although not mandatory in an advanced test must be included in the test to achieve a F1RST. We know some of our groups do not prepare associates to deliver a commentary.

If a commentary is NOT given during a test or if the commentary scores a 3,4 or 5 then a F1RST cannot be achieved.

Driving licence fines threaten two million drivers

Driving licence fines threaten two million drivers

Many drivers face a fine of £1,000 if they fail to update their photo-card driving licences, according to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

It started issuing photo-card licences 15 years ago and more than 30 million drivers now have one.

These are usually valid for 10 years and there is a legal requirement for drivers to renew the photograph at the same time as they renew their licence.

However, two million drivers have failed to do this and this means they could be fined up to £1,000 should they be pulled over by the police, who then discover that the photo and licence is out of date.

Even failing to notify the DVLA that you have changed address could be

costly.

Checking your licence:

Photo-card driving licences are set to become mandatory in 2015, when new paper licences are officially phased out.

Victoria Ford from the DVLA believes the reasons for updating the photograph on your licence are clear.

"Appearances can change and it is important that photo-card licences are updated every 10 years to ensure the police and other enforcement agencies have the best possible photograph to help them correctly identify whether a driving licence is being used fraudulently," she says.

"This helps prevent driving licence impersonation - stopping disqualified and perhaps dangerous drivers taking to our roads."

If you change your address or name, you have to tell the DVLA, so that your driving licence and car registration details can be updated. Towards the bottom of the card, you will find the address the authorities have for you.

Normally the cost of renewing a licence is £20 but if you are merely updating your address, your new licence will be free.

Article taken from the BBC News web site



Driving Tips

Overtaking

Overtaking is probably the most dangerous manoeuvre that we do as drivers. Three conditions need to be met before overtaking: the driver must be concentrating, the vehicle must be capable of quickly responding to the use of the accelerator pedal and the safety of the full overtaking manoeuvre must be predicted by the driver BEFORE starting the overtake.

The decision to overtake is NOT made at the moment of arrival behind a slower moving vehicle in front. Rather, the decision is made much earlier when the driver sees the vehicle ahead for the first time and realises that he is travelling faster. The decision is then made to overtake the vehicle when it is safe to do so. An overtaking opportunity may soon occur, may not occur for several miles or may not occur at all. As long as there is no opportunity, the vehicle ahead is followed at a safe distance (2 second rule). This is called the Following Position. The driver behind scans the road ahead, looking for an overtaking opportunity. Oncoming vehicles, other road users, junctions and weather conditions are some of the factors considered.

Let us assume that the driver realises that an opportunity may develop in the next ten seconds. The driver draws his vehicle slightly nearer to the vehicle in front. This is called the Overtaking Position. If it is the lack of view of the road ahead that is preventing the overtake, the driver could move slightly to the left or right of the vehicle ahead to improve the view. This could entail crossing the white centre line. Moving slightly to improve view prior to an overtake would only be acceptable if no one is endangered or confused i.e. particular consideration should be given to oncoming vehicles and vehicles behind. If, against expectations, an overtaking opportunity does not develop the driver should re-adopt the 'following

position'. Before overtaking, a gear needs to be engaged which will be used throughout the entire manoeuvre and which will enable the manoeuvre to be carried out quickly i.e. a responsive gear for the planned overtaking speed. The gear must also provide, if needed, more acceleration than that originally anticipated for the manoeuvre. The point at which the gear is engaged will depend upon the circumstances at the time. If, after checking the mirrors, a decision is made to start the overtake, the manoeuvre should be carried out speedily but without undue haste or aggressive acceleration.

During the overtake, continue to scan all around for danger as well as monitoring the speed and position of the vehicle being overtaken. You must not force the overtaken vehicle to change speed or position. The entire overtaking manoeuvre must be carried out in a decisive, calculating manner with a high level of concentration. If something goes horribly wrong, and you survive, you should know what went wrong!

Indicating—just in case?

As Advanced Drivers we should only indicate when another road user can benefit from our signal or in anticipation of such a signal being required. This apparently straight-forward piece of advice can actually cause no end of confusion when its applied on our roads. Many Associates like to indicate 'just in case' they have not seen some road user or for a road user they can't actually see but guess may be ahead. I'd like to share my thoughts with you on this potentially thorny issue.

Whether to indicate or not is like all other aspects of Advanced Driving - there has to be a well thought out reason for doing so. Indicating 'just in case' ALL THE TIME, removes the 'thinking' and could cause us to drive on 'autopilot'. Anticipation is good but let it be based upon experience and evidence rather than guesswork. Consider the following situation. You

are in a rural area and are approaching a T-junction 100m ahead. You can see vehicles moving left to right and right to left on the main road ahead. You also note that there are bushes and trees down either side of your road all the way up to the junction. There is no traffic or other road users on your road ahead and you also note that there is no traffic or other road users behind. You intend to turn left at the junction. Do you indicate 'just in case'? Let's say that you would. Okay, let's put that to one side for the moment.

Consider the following situation. You are on a main road and intend to turn right into a side road. As you approach the junction you see a vehicle waiting at the end of the side road with its left indicator flashing. Do you believe this signal? I hear you say, "Not entirely, since he may have left the indicator on from a previous manoeuvre". This is a very good point that you make. The driver was actually giving an ambiguous signal even though from his point of view he was indicating 'just in case'. I hope you can see the point that I'm making.

Finally, imagine you are on a main road and intend to turn right into a side road. As you approach you see a vehicle waiting at the end of the side road with no indicators flashing. However, as soon as you realise there's no indication, you see the left indicator of this vehicle come on. Do you believe this? - - the signal is probably more believable than if it was already on. As advanced drivers we use speed and position of other vehicles, in addition to what their indicators are suggesting, to form a view of what the other vehicles are going to do. Indicating all the time is not dangerous but don't let this become an excuse for poor observations and lack of thinking. Examiners and Observers know the difference!

**Mark Farnworth,
National Observer**



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**Articles for the Newsletter should be submitted no later than the 15th of the month
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