

Awareness Road Users

Vulnerable user groups include motorcyclists, pedal cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians. These groups aren't protected by a vehicle body in the same way car users are for example, and as they are harder for other drivers to see on the road, they are particularly vulnerable to accidents and injuries.

Taking that extra second to double check and take another look can mean the difference between an accident happening, or not. It's all about awareness of what other road users around you are doing. What's also certain is that the vast majority of them know nothing about driving a commercial vehicle so you've got to make allowances for them. It's all stuff you do every day, but an occasional reminder never does any harm.

Motorcyclists

Motorcyclists account for just 1% of road traffic in the UK but account for one in five of all road user deaths. According to THINK! they are roughly 38 times more likely to be killed in a road traffic accident than car occupants, per mile ridden.

Think bike! Take longer to look for motorcyclists. In nearly half of accidents involving motorbikes, drivers of other vehicles had failed to look properly when pulling out of a junction.

- Check for bikes when changing lanes, turning and double-check that bikes aren't already passing you when you're planning to turn.
- Don't underestimate speed. The Transport Research Laboratory suggests that even when a driver has seen a motorcyclist approaching the junction, they underestimate the speed of travel.
- Keep your distance. Driving too close can intimidate less experienced motorcyclists.

Cyclists

Cycling has become an increasingly popular way to commute. Handy 'cycle lanes' enable riders to pass queuing traffic on the left at junctions. But this is one of the places where things can get nasty.

Staffing Match

Half of all fatal collisions involving bikes and trucks occur when trucks are turning left at junctions. Whilst cyclists can be to blame, truck drivers can do their bit to make life a little safer. So double check your blind side mirrors before you turn left.

- ✦ Don't overtake a cyclist before turning across their path – they may be going faster than you think.
- ✦ Turbulence caused by your vehicle can be dangerous. When overtaking a cyclist on the open road give them plenty of room – at least a metre.

Pedestrians

Pedestrians are amongst the most vulnerable road users. Always be aware of children, older and disabled people, particularly in crowded shopping streets and residential areas. According to RoSPA, 60 child pedestrians are killed or seriously injured every week and nearly half of all pedestrians killed are aged over 60.

Pedestrians can be easily distracted, especially children and may dash into the road without looking.

- ✦ Use caution when passing parked vehicles, especially ice cream vans where children may run into the road without looking.
- ✦ Older people may have difficulty seeing or hearing approaching traffic and have decreased mobility, and children often misjudge intentions of drivers and speed of the vehicle. Give them time and room to cross.
- ✦ Stop at crossing and never wave pedestrians as instruction to cross as there may be approaching vehicles on the opposite side of the road, as well as vehicles behind you who would unexpectedly overtake

Horse Riders

More than half of all road accidents involving horses occur on minor roads. Horses are powerful animals and can be frightened easily. Their riders can be adults or children, and sometimes ride in double file to protect novice riders or nervous horses.

- ✦ Drive slowly past horses, giving them plenty of room and be prepared to stop in case horses do panic.

Staffing Match

- ✦ Turn down your music and avoid revving the engine when passing
- ✦ Look out for any signals the horse rider may provide, they may indicate they are going to turn

Overtaking other vehicles

If you're pulling out into the middle lane on a motorway, use your wide angle mirrors to check there's nothing approaching from behind, especially when they are swapping from the fast lane to the middle lane. This is, apparently, when most motorway shunts occur.

Mirrors

- ✦ Before setting off, check your mirrors to ensure you've got good vision down both sides of the trailer when going forward and when turning
- ✦ Be aware of blind spots
- ✦ Use your mirrors frequently so you always know what's happening around you
- ✦ Above all, always remember 'mirror, signal and then maneuver'. Making that final observation can make the difference between having an accident or avoiding one.