



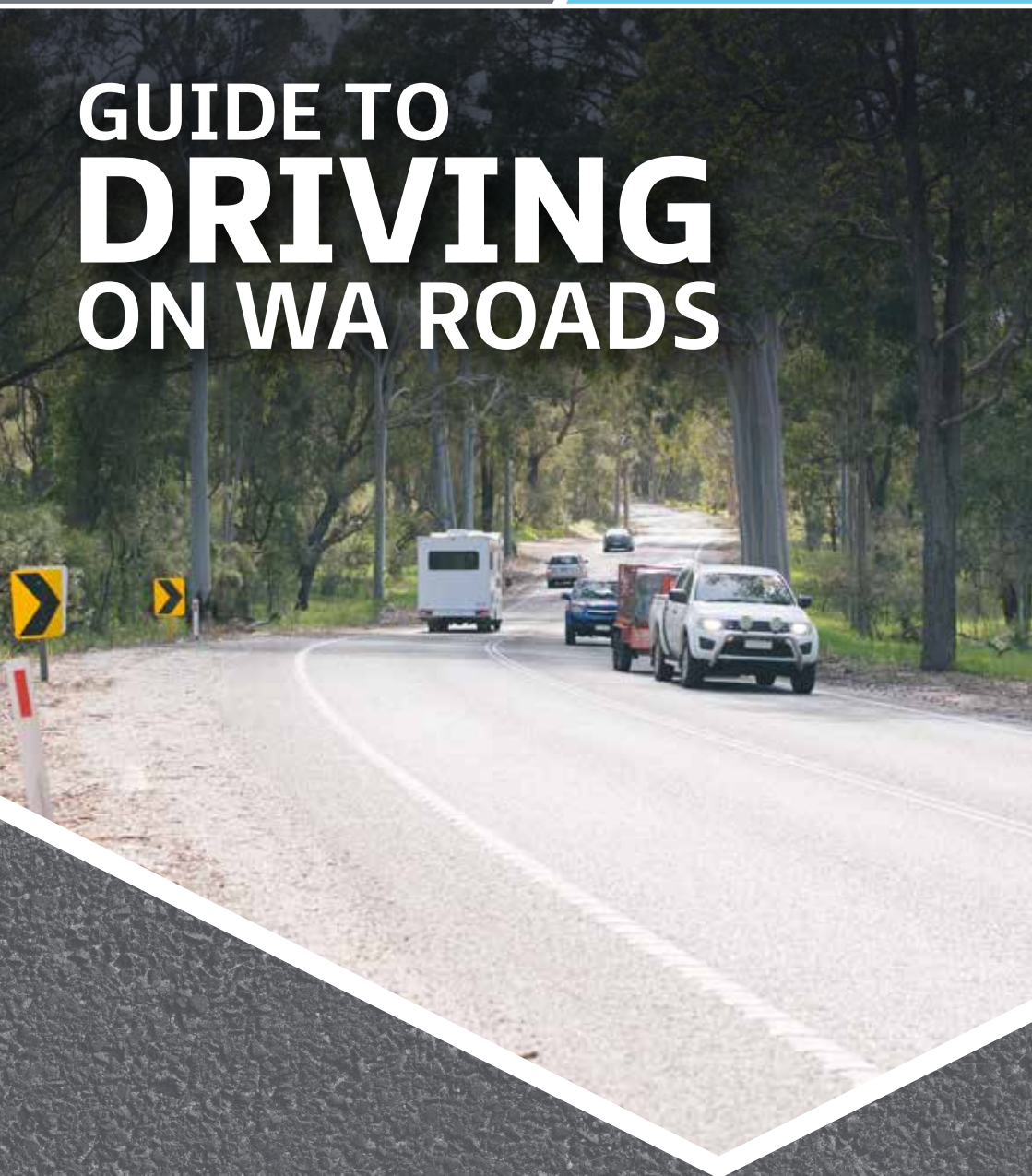
GOVERNMENT OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



ROAD
SAFETY
COMMISSION

ENGLISH

GUIDE TO DRIVING ON WA ROADS



Produced and published
by the Road Safety Commission.
December 2019

**If you would like this document in another
format please contact us.**

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Western Australia is larger than the whole of Western Europe.

The landscape, wildlife, flora, climate, weather and Aboriginal culture vary widely across the State. Regional and remote WA especially offer a wide range of unique and enjoyable experiences.

The distances between locations are often further than you would expect. This publication outlines the main road rules and serves as a guide to some of the conditions you may experience. We want you to enjoy exploring WA and to be safe. Please drive carefully. Enjoy your travels in WA!

The Road Safety Commission is dedicated to reducing road trauma – one of the biggest and most sustained causes of death and injury in the community. We encourage road users to drive safely and avoid crashes.

Specific information about the road rules and infringements is available at <https://www.rsc.wa.gov.au/Rules-Penalties>.



Scan to visit the Road Safety website to find out more about Rules and Penalties in Western Australia.



THINGS TO
KNOW

THINGS TO KNOW

- Always drive on the left.
- Plan your journey.
- Be mindful of the dangers of smoke caused by bushfires and dust caused by other vehicles and high winds. Avoid driving when there is smoke in the area.
- Avoid flooded roads. Do not drive through flood waters. These can be deeper and faster moving than they appear.

For alerts, check with:

Emergency WA

emergency.wa.gov.au



Main Roads 'Travel Map'

mainroads.wa.gov.au



- Be alert to cattle, kangaroos, emus and other wildlife and livestock on the roads, especially at sunset.
- Do not turn left on a red-light signal.
- Torrential rain reduces visibility and increases risk.
 - Drive to the conditions.
 - Switch on your headlights.
 - Use the windscreen wipers.
 - Never attempt to cross flooded roads.

Driver's licence rules

While driving, you must carry your current overseas driver's licence and translation if the original is not available in English, or an International Driver's Permit (IDP).

If you intend to drive or ride a motorbike in Australia and your overseas licence does not contain a photo ID, you should obtain an IDP before departure from your country of origin.



**SAFE
DRIVING**

KEEP TO THE LEFT

In Australia, all vehicles drive on the left side of the road.

If you are not used to driving on the left, tape a note to the dashboard as a reminder to stay left. Some hire car companies have placed keep left stickers inside their vehicles.

When coming to an intersection or making turns, take extra care.

On a multi-lane road, with a speed limit of 90km/h or more, you should stay in the left lane, unless:

- you are overtaking
- the left lane is a bus or cycle lane
- you're avoiding an obstruction.



CROSSING ROAD LINES

Road line markings are a guide on how to use the road, and include edge lines, lane lines and centre lines.

There are three types of single continuous, unbroken lines:

1. Edge lines mark the edge of the road

- You can only cross an edge line when entering or leaving the road, passing on the left of a vehicle that is turning right, or when you are making a U-turn.

2. Lane lines define multiple lanes travelling in the same direction

- If the lane line is continuous, don't cross the line to change lanes.

3. Centre/dividing lines separate lanes travelling in different directions

- If the centre/dividing lines are continuous, do not cross that line unless you are turning right to leave or enter the road or making a U-turn. The same applies if there is a continuous line on the left or right of a broken or dotted centre line.
- If there is a broken or dotted centre line on the left of a continuous line, you may cross to overtake, if it is safe to do so. Do not cross if the continuous line is on the left of the broken or dotted line.
- **Exception:** You may cross a continuous line when passing a bicycle rider – but only when it is safe. You must also ensure a safe distance between your vehicle and the bicycle rider. See also page 15 (Sharing the road with bicycle riders).



CONTINUOUS SINGLE LINE (never cross to overtake)



BROKEN LINE



DOUBLE CONTINUOUS LINE (never cross to overtake)



SINGLE WITH CONTINUOUS LINE (only overtake when the dotted line is on the left of the continuous line, and it is safe to do so)



VEHICLE CHECKS

If you borrow or hire a car, seek advice on the best model for your journey, taking the road conditions into account.

An off-road trail and some unsealed roads are not suitable for a conventional car.

Follow the advice of your hire car company about safety and the appropriate vehicle to use.

If you are borrowing a car from family or friend, ensure the owner's insurance includes other drivers and do a pre-trip safety check.



- Check headlights, brake lights, indicators, reversing lights work and carry spare bulbs.
-



- Check the condition of the tyres and the spare tyre.
 - Look for cracks, bulging or irregularity in the tyres.
 - Look for any objects stuck in the tyres and remove them.
 - The tyre tread should have a depth more than 3mm or the size of a match head. If not, replace the tyre.
 - Ensure the vehicles tyres and the spare are inflated to the correct pressure. The correct tyre pressure for your vehicle is on a placard inside the driver's door. Do not over inflate.
 - Some cars have space-saver spare wheels as the spare tyre. Only use the space-saver tyre to drive to have the punctured tyre repaired. Speeds are usually restricted to 80km/h.
-



- Check your windshield wiper blades are in good condition and the washer fluid is topped up. To maximise visibility, clean the windscreen inside and out.
-



- Check the oil and coolant level.
-



- Conduct a brake test away from other traffic. If the brakes squeal or grind, work may be required.
-

A four-wheel drive (4WD) track is not suitable for a conventional car.



PROTECT PEDESTRIANS

Pedestrians are vulnerable road users, so take extra care and share the roads courteously.

Drivers and riders

As a driver or rider, you should give way to pedestrians:

- when you are turning
- when you are making a U-turn
- at stop signs
- at a slip lane with a 'stop' sign or 'stop' line.

Pedestrians have the right of way on zebra crossings, which are marked by white lines on the road, and signalised crossings at traffic lights and intersections.

Pedestrians

When crossing at traffic control lights, only walk when the pedestrian signal is green. Do not cross if the light is a steady or flashing red pedestrian signal.

Penalties apply for breaches.



SHARING THE ROAD WITH BICYCLE RIDERS

In WA, a driver must pass a bicycle travelling in the same direction at a safe distance, being:

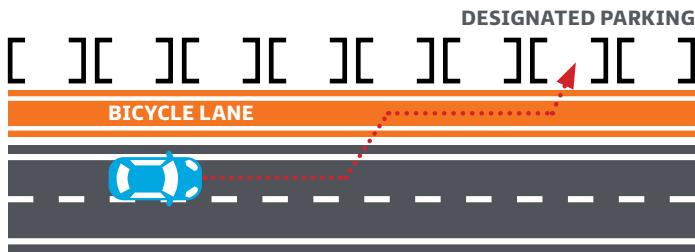
- 1 metre on roads where the posted speed limit is 60 km/h or less
- 1.5 metres on roads where the posted speed limit is more than 60km/h.

The safe passing distances laws allow drivers to cross centre/dividing lines, including continuous lines, but only when it is safe to do so, and when the driver has a clear view of oncoming traffic.

The minimum passing distances laws do not apply to cyclists passing vehicles.

You can drive in a marked bicycle lane for up to 50m to park in a designated parking area (see diagram below).

Penalties apply for breaches.



SHARING THE ROAD WITH HEAVY VEHICLES

Heavy vehicles, such as road trains (see page 32), trucks, buses and farm machinery weigh more than an average vehicle and require extra stopping distance.

Do not cut in front of a heavy vehicle at traffic lights, stop signs or in traffic congestion as the driver may not have enough room to stop.

Drivers of heavy vehicles and trucks use their mirrors to stay aware of what is around them. If you sit in a truck's blind spot you will be invisible to the driver.

If you cannot see the truck driver's side mirrors, the truck driver cannot see you.

Penalties apply for breaches.



RIDING A MOTORCYCLE

Motorcycles and scooters don't provide users with the physical protection of other vehicles.

It is compulsory for riders and passengers to wear motorcycle helmets that comply with Australian standards.

Children younger than eight years are not permitted to ride as passengers.

Consult the MotoCAP website for safety and comfort ratings for a range of protective riding pants, jackets and gloves. The CRASH website has a guide to buying a motorcycle helmet that meets Australian standards.

MotoCAP Website

motocap.com.au



CRASH Website

crash.org.au



Penalties apply for breaches.



HOW TO MERGE

There are two types of merging lanes in Western Australia.

1. Where two lanes merge and one lane ends, the vehicle in front has the right of way.
2. If there are two marked lanes and one ends, give way to the vehicles in the lane you are moving into.

Be courteous at merge points, use your indicator, keep a safe distance and match the speed limit of the road you are merging into where possible.

Penalties apply for breaches.



Where two lanes merge into one, the vehicle in front of you has the right of way.

ROUNDABOUTS

When entering a roundabout, you must give way to vehicles already in the roundabout.

On multi-lane roundabouts, obey the directional arrows on the road.

Turning left

- On approach, indicate left from the left lane.
- Stay in the left lane and exit the roundabout from this lane.

Driving straight ahead

- You don't need to indicate on approach.
- Enter in either the left or right lane, stay in and exit from the same lane.
- If possible, indicate left when you've passed the last exit before the one you intend to use.

Turning right or making a full turn

- On approach, indicate right from the right lane.
- Stay in the right lane and exit the roundabout from this lane.
- If possible, indicate left when you've passed the last exit before the one you intend to use.

Penalties apply for breaches.

MAKING A U-TURN

If you are performing a U-turn, you should always give way to all other road users and use your indicator.

You must not make a U-turn:

- at traffic lights, unless there is a sign that indicates that U-turns are permitted
- where there is a 'No U-turn' sign
- on freeways
- if there is no clear view of oncoming traffic.

Penalties apply for breaches.

SPEEDS

Monitor your speed. Always drive to the conditions.

- Never exceed the speed limit.
- 40km/h speed zones apply in some areas, such as school zones and areas shared by pedestrians and vehicles. These areas are sign-posted.
- If there is no sign, the default speed limit for:
 - all urban areas is 50km/h
 - freeways is 100km/h
 - open regional roads is 110km/h.
- Learner drivers and drivers towing a caravan, boat or trailer cannot travel at more than 100km/h, even if a higher speed limit applies to the road.
- On freeways, you must not travel less than the speed limit by 21km/h or more, unless you encounter emergency services or traffic congestion.



All school traffic zones have a speed limit of 40km/h during school student arrival and departure times.

EMERGENCY VEHICLES

You must allow an emergency vehicle, such as police, fire or ambulance, with its blue or red lights flashing and/or sounding a siren, to pass you easily.

When an emergency vehicle is approaching:

- Give way by moving as far to the left side of the road as you can.
- If you are unable to move left, slow down, indicate left and allow the emergency vehicle to drive around you.
- If you occupy the left lane, allow other vehicles from the lane to your right to move into your lane, if required.

Do not break the law

The SLOMO law (Slow Down, Move Over) requires that you must slow down to 40km/h when you approach stationary emergency or incident response vehicles that display flashing lights at an incident.

You must allow emergency vehicles with blue or red lights flashing, to pass you easily.



DRINK AND DRUG DRIVING

Drink driving

WA police randomly test drivers for their blood alcohol levels. The aim is to help ensure the safety of everyone on the road. It is illegal to refuse these tests.

Driving with a blood alcohol level equal to or higher than .05% is illegal. This can equate to a small amount of alcohol. A zero blood alcohol limit applies:

- to learner drivers and riders
- to P plate drivers and riders
- to holders of extraordinary licences
- if you have been recently disqualified
- if you're driving a vehicle that weighs more than 22.5 tonnes
- if you drive a bus, taxi or a small charter vehicle.

The legal limit also applies to a supervising driver.

Drug driving

Police can stop you if they suspect that your abilities may be impaired by any drug.

You may be given a saliva or blood test. It is illegal to refuse these tests.

Penalties apply for breaches.

**If you plan to drink,
plan not to drive!**



MOBILE PHONE DISTRACTION

Driver distraction is a major cause of road trauma. Laws around illegal mobile phone use are strictly enforced.

If you're driving, you can touch a mobile phone only to receive and terminate a phone call if the phone is secured in a mounting fixed to the vehicle. If your phone is not secured in a mounting, it can be used only to receive or terminate a phone call using:

- voice activation
- a Bluetooth hands-free car kit.

It is illegal to create, send or look at a text message, video message, email or similar communication while you are driving, even when the phone can be operated without touching it.

You may use a GPS in your phone while driving, if it can be operated without touching the keypad or screen. It must be set up before you start your journey.

Penalties apply for breaches.



SEATBELTS SAVE LIVES

Seatbelts are compulsory. Both you as a driver and your passengers can be fined for not wearing seatbelts.

As the driver, you are responsible for ensuring passengers are restrained with appropriate seatbelts. Take the height and weight of the children into account when choosing the appropriate restraint.

Child restraints and seating arrangements

The law requires that children aged:

- less than six months are restrained in a rear-facing child restraint (e.g. infant capsule)
- six months up to four years are restrained in either a rear or forward-facing child restraint with built-in harness
- from four to seven years are restrained in either a forward-facing child restraint or a booster seat restrained by a correctly adjusted and fastened seatbelt or child safety harness.

Children aged older than seven years

Children aged older than seven years may be restrained in a booster seat or an adult seatbelt if the child is big enough.

Where can my child sit?

If the vehicle has two rows of seats or more, children aged under seven years must not sit in the front row.

Children aged between four and seven years can travel in the front seat if all other rear seats are occupied by passengers aged under seven.

Children seven years and older can sit in any seating position, provided they are suitably restrained.

For more information contact the Child Restraint Information Line on 1300 780 713.

What about taxis and rideshare?

Even if a suitable child restraint is available, children younger than 7 years must not be seated in the front row of seats in a taxi.

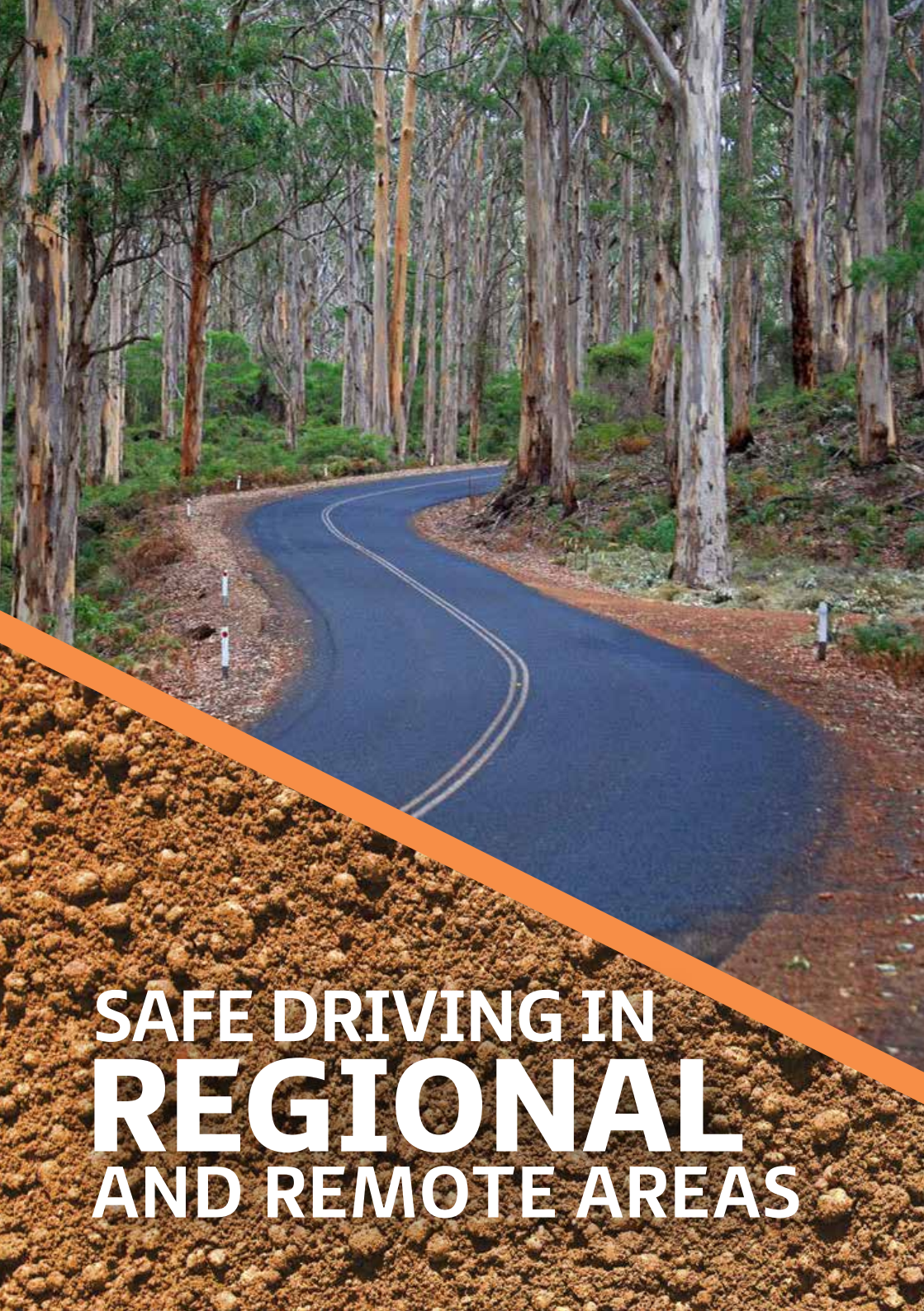
Rideshare

Drivers of rideshare services must ensure passengers are wearing seatbelts.

Although they are strongly recommended, there is no requirement for the driver to ensure the use of child car seats. If there is no child car seat, children aged between one and seven years must be restrained in an adult seatbelt.

Penalties apply for breaches.





SAFE DRIVING IN
REGIONAL
AND REMOTE AREAS

STOPPING FOR PHOTOS

Do not stop on the road to view or take photographs of the scenery.

To pull off the road to a safe area:

- indicate early to ensure that other vehicles have plenty of notice of your intentions
- drive carefully, particularly if the road shoulder is dirt or gravel, and park well away from the road.

When returning onto the road:

- be aware that cars may be travelling at high speeds
- wait for a sufficiently large gap in the traffic flow
- allow enough time to re-enter the road lane without disrupting the traffic flow and accelerate to the speed of the moving traffic.

Drive slowly and carefully
(particularly if the road shoulder is dirt or gravel).

FATIGUE OVER LONG DISTANCES

WA is 2.5 million square kilometres. The distances between towns may be a lot further than you think.

- Use a detailed, recent road map.
- Plan your journey based on distances you intend to travel, taking into account road conditions and the weather.
- Keep track of the distance you have travelled.
- Drink water to help to prevent fatigue.
- Carry at least four to five litres of water per person, per day.
- Carry spare fuel.
- Rest the night before a long trip.
- Do not drive if you feel tired.
- Take regular breaks. Stop regularly to relax – and to admire the sights.
- Refuel every time you see a fuel station.
- Share the driving with a relative or friend.
- Only resume driving when you feel refreshed.



Did you know?

It can be up to 200km between fuel stations. Refuel every time you see a fuel station. Carry spare fuel if you are planning to travel long distances.



DRIVING ON GRAVEL

Many regional roads in WA are made from small stones called gravel. Sometimes, gravel can also be found on roadsides and verges.

Gravel acts like ball-bearings under car tyres and can cause a vehicle to slide out of control.

- Slow down on bends.
- Do not brake suddenly to avoid skidding, sliding or losing control of the vehicle.
- Be aware that gravel and dirt roads also create big dust clouds. This impedes visibility. In these circumstances, keep a safe distance behind other vehicles.

You also need to be prepared for dust and stones being thrown up from cars travelling in the opposite direction. Drive on all dirt roads with the headlights turned on.

**Slow down on bends.
Do not brake suddenly.**



OVERTAKING ROAD TRAINS

Known as 'road trains', some of the largest trucks in the world can be found in Western Australia. Some are longer than 50m and require great care when overtaking.

- You need a long, straight stretch of road that is clear for as far as you can see.
- Be aware that it may take some time to overtake one of these long trucks.
- Be aware that when overtaking, air movement generated by trucks creates a draught that can cause your vehicle to be pulled towards the truck.
- Take your time. Stay back several car lengths. When it is safe to pass, indicate and overtake safely. Do not exceed the speed limit.
- If you are towing a caravan or trailer, do not try to overtake road trains. Wait for an overtaking lane, where it is safe to overtake.
- On busy regional roads, there are overtaking lanes about every 5 to 20km. Travelling 100km/h, this means they are about 3 to 12 minutes apart. Do not overtake if it is not safe.



Did you know?

Road trains can be up to 53.5m long (175.5 feet) with two, three or four trailers. Overtaking at 110km/h can take 2.5km or about 85 seconds.



WILDLIFE ON THE ROAD

Be aware that roaming animals such as kangaroos, cattle, camels and even large birds can settle or cross on the road in front of your vehicle.

Animals on the road can be unpredictable. Sometimes, they head towards your vehicle rather than away from it.

- Slow down. Allow time to brake.
- Sound your horn. If it is safe to do so, drive slowly around them.
- Do not try to swerve around an animal at speed. This can cause you to collide with other vehicles or lose control on the gravel verge.

More than 7,000 collisions with kangaroos occur in Australia every year. They can inflict significant damage when the vehicle is travelling at speed. About 15% of vehicles involved are written off. The risk is highest when they are most active at sunrise and sunset. Kangaroos are particularly active in winter.

While driving, look as far ahead as you can – and off to both sides of the road to detect animal movement.



What to do if you hit an animal?

If a native animal is injured:

- Ensure you move your vehicle safely off the road.
- Call the Wildcare Helpline on 9474 9055.
- Do not approach an injured kangaroo. Kangaroos have a very powerful kick and can cause considerable harm if you are struck.



LOW VISIBILITY

Plan your journey to avoid roads which have been affected by bushfire smoke or floods. For alerts, check with:

Emergency WA

emergency.wa.gov.au



Main Roads 'Travel Map'

mainroads.wa.gov.au

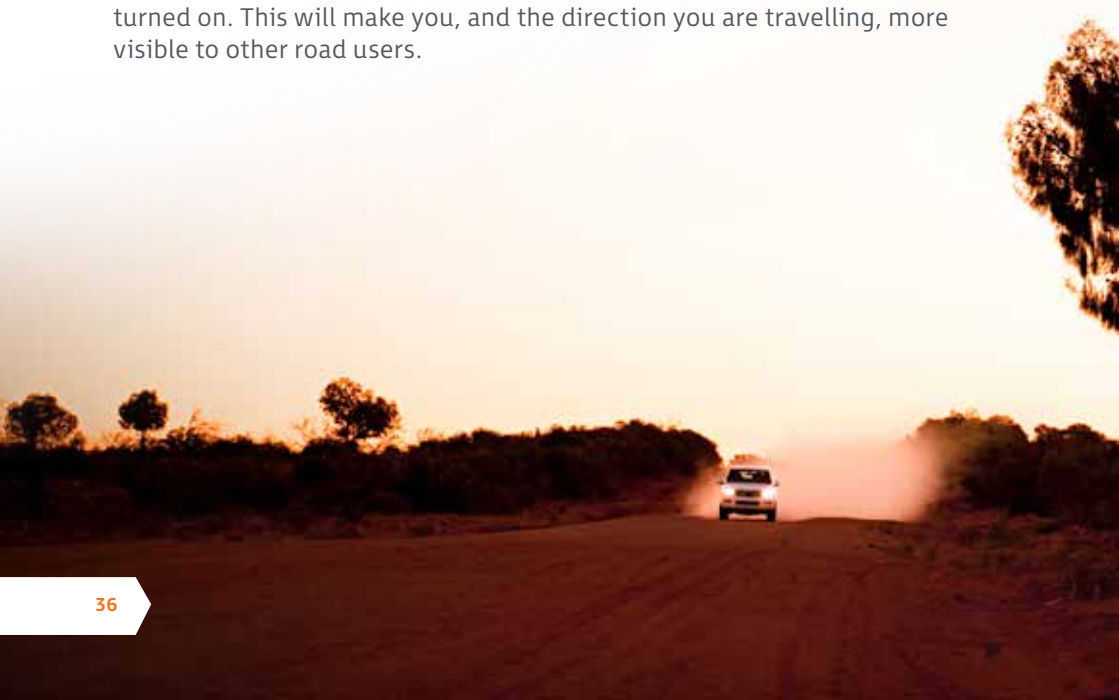


Avoid driving or riding when there is smoke on the road. If you can't, drive slowly and to the conditions.

Avoid driving and riding if the sun is going to be directly in your eyes. It is preferable to take a break until the sun rises higher in the sky. In the evening, wait until the sun sets. Then drive within the visibility of your headlights.

Be alert for wildlife on the road.

You are encouraged to drive or ride during the day with your headlights turned on. This will make you, and the direction you are travelling, more visible to other road users.



HIGH BEAM HEADLIGHTS

On most regional and remote roads there are very few or no streetlights. Accordingly, you are permitted to use high beam on your headlights so you can see where you are driving.

At a close range, the high beam can dazzle other drivers. This may cause crashes.

High beam is not permitted if:

- you are driving less than 200m behind a vehicle
- an oncoming vehicle is within 200m – or its headlights are ‘dipped’ (i.e. the high beam is not activated).

Fog lights can be used in foggy conditions, dust storms or heavy rain. Do not drive with headlights and fog lights on at the same time.

Penalties apply for breaches.





ROAD SIGNS



SOME ROAD SIGNS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA



WA railway crossings often intersect roads.

- Stop at warning signals.
- Wait for the train, or trains to pass.



Flashing speed signs will often be located near schools.

- Slow down to 40km/h.
- Watch out for children.



Roundabouts can be confusing.

- Always drive on the left in a clockwise direction. See page 19.



Some remote roads have derestricted speed signs.

- In these areas, the maximum speed limit is the State default speed (currently 110km/h).
- Always drive according to the conditions.

GUIDE TO PARKING SIGNS

It is suggested that a passenger use a smartphone app that can translate parking signs.



No Stopping

Vehicles are not permitted to stop unless traffic conditions require it. No Stopping zones can also be identified by a solid yellow line on the road surface next to, and parallel with, the kerb.



No Parking

The maximum permitted parking time is two minutes to set down or pick up passengers or goods. As the driver, you must remain within three metres of the vehicle.



Ticket Parking

A ticket must be purchased from the parking ticket machine and displayed on the dashboard. The ticket is valid only in the area for which it was purchased. Ensure that you comply with any instructions on the sign, ticket or ticket machine. (e.g. time limits 1P = 1 hour maximum).



Time Limited Parking

Multiple-time parking options may be shown on one sign. For example, it may display '2P from 8am-5.30pm.' Beyond those hours, the duration of parking is unlimited.

MULTI-USE ZONES

Multiple signs will identify restrictions that apply at different times of the day or night. Each section of the sign must be read in conjunction with the others. The applicable hours of operation for each purpose will be shown on the signs.

Bus Lane

You must not drive or park in bus lanes during the hours indicated on either the signage or the road markings.

Clearway

Clearway signs indicate the time period during peak traffic times that you cannot stop or park your vehicle in the clearway.

Towing

If you have parked illegally in an area signposted as a 'No Stopping Zone, Clearway or Bus Lane,' your car may be towed away. If this occurs, contact Main Roads WA on 138 138. You will be able to collect the vehicle only during specified opening hours. You will be required to pay a substantial fine to get the vehicle released.



USEFUL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Download the St John's Ambulance 'First Responder' app to your phone. If you need to call 000 for an ambulance, the app will automatically send your GPS coordinates to the operator. This accelerates the time it will take to confirm your location and dispatch an ambulance.

The app also contains other resources. They include first-aid instruction guides plus the locations of nearest medical centres and hospital emergency departments.

Download the St John's Ambulance 'First Responder' app here:



St John's Ambulance 'First Responder' App

www.stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/st-john-first-responder-app

It is also suggested that you take valuables with you when parking and leaving your vehicle at tourist hotspots (where thefts are targeted). Anything visible inside the car may increase the chances of a break-in.



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www.rsc.wa.gov.au