

# Emergency Stop

## Stopping in an emergency situation (including stopping distances)

Example:- if a child runs out in front of you! You will need quick reactions and good control of the car to stop promptly and safely. As this is an emergency then mirror checks will only delay your reactions therefore are not necessary - if you looked in your mirrors as often as you should then you would have an idea of following traffic anyway (i.e. mirrors checked for moving out when passing parked cars).

## Poor Weather / Road Surface / Road Conditions

On a wet road it may take up to twice the braking distance to stop and much more on snow and ice. A good driver should not need to carry out too many emergency stops! If you look out for warning signs where pedestrians / children are more likely to be around then you are less likely to get caught out. 30mph may be the maximum in many built up areas but judge every road accordingly.

### Are you driving at an appropriate speed?

If you hit a child at 40mph there is an 80% chance you will kill that child! **4 out of 5 will be killed!**  
If you hit a child at 30mph there is an 80% chance the child will live but may be left with serious injuries! **4 out of 5 will live!**  
If you hit a child at 20mph there is a likelihood of less serious injuries!  
**So watch your speed as even a few mph can make a difference!**

At 20mph your overall stopping distance would be around 40ft  
At 30mph your overall stopping distance is around 75ft (note: almost double that of 20mph!)  
At 40mph your overall stopping distance is around 120ft (note: three times greater than at 20mph)

## Carrying out an emergency stop exercise

It is recommended that you practise stopping your car promptly under control, so that you know how to react if you ever had to stop your vehicle in an emergency situation for real. You may be asked to carry out a simulated emergency stop (controlled stop) on your driving test. Approximately one in three tests will include this exercise. Your examiner will ask you to pull over somewhere convenient and then warn you in advance that you will be given a signal for when you are to stop the car as if in an emergency situation.

You will need quick reactions when you get the signal - take your right foot off the accelerator pedal (gas) and apply foot brake firmly and progressively, then after a slight pause apply the clutch pedal with your left foot. Don't slam on the brake as this may lock up your wheels which would then cause the car to skid. Also try not to put the clutch down too soon, in order to allow the engine (whilst in gear) to assist with the braking, so you can stop sooner and are less likely to skid. As the weight will be thrown forward when you brake keep both hands firmly on the steering wheel to maintain control - take a deep breath when you've stopped, apply the hand brake and select neutral.

If it is your very first attempt it is a good idea to practise whilst your car is still stationary (a dry run)...! This can help you get used to pivoting from the accelerator (gas) pedal to the brake pedal with your right foot and applying the clutch with your left foot before trying it on the move. A dry run will increase the likelihood of early success.

## Observations before moving off

When you have stopped the car in an emergency you may be positioned more to the centre of the road, possibly to pass parked cars, therefore to check all areas that it is safe to move off again you will need to check over your left shoulder (blind spot), check all mirrors and over your right shoulder before moving off. If you have traffic approaching then you should give them the opportunity to pass before moving off.

# Skidding

### Causes of skids

- Excessive acceleration especially on a wet road - poor road surface
- Steering too harshly
- Braking too harshly is the most common cause of skids - this leads to your vehicles wheels locking up. Braking on a poor road surface would increase your chance of skidding (wet, icy, etc.,)

### ABS brakes

Anti-lock braking systems - most modern cars have ABS brakes - these have a sensor control which releases the brake and immediately applies it again, therefore preventing the wheels from locking.

### Correcting a skid

If the wheels have locked up (your car has been put into a skid) you need to release the footbrake and re-apply brake not so harshly - apply firmly and progressively.

### What if your back end swings to one side?

Steering or braking too harshly on a bend could lead to loss of control, with the back end of your car swinging out. This could happen where you failed to slow down enough before a turn and may possibly be in the wrong gear!  
How to correct: Ease off the accelerator and steer into the skid as on diagram - if your back end swings out to the right, then turn your wheel to the right which will help straighten up your car.

### Avoiding skids

Look out for hazardous road conditions. Adjust your speed to suit the road conditions - you may need to pump the brakes on a poor surface.

## Bends

Make sure your speed isn't too fast to enable you to drive around any bends under control, the sharper the bend the slower you should approach making sure you select the appropriate gear for the speed, if you can drive into the bend, this will give you extra grip on the road. Try not to leave braking until too late, braking too much on a bend can result in losing control of your vehicle.

## Sharp change of direction chevrons

Used where the road changes direction sharply enough to create a hazard or to reinforce a bend warning sign where stronger emphasis is needed.

## Keep a safe following distance

When the vehicle ahead passes a stationary object (here the warning sign) keep 2 seconds apart. "only a fool would break the 2 second rule" - if you have time to say this before you pass the same object then you will be at a safe distance. You will need to increase this in poor weather.

## Causes of accidents

The vast majority of accidents will be down to **THE DRIVER** of the vehicle - some of the main reasons could be put down to either inexperience, being distracted, being unfit to drive or simply driving irresponsibly.

Possible distractions:

- Loud music
- Mobile phone use
- Passengers in car
- Looking for directions in an unfamiliar area

Being unfit to drive:

- Drink driving
- Drugs
- Tiredness
- Medical conditions
- Poor eyesight

The driver will be responsible for keeping the vehicle maintained - fit to be on the road. **THE VEHICLE** should be checked regularly see "[Show me - tell me](#)" which shows how to check things such as oil level, minimum tyre tread (1.6mm) etc. It is also important to keep the windscreen, windows and lights clean to ensure the car is safe to drive.

**ROAD CONDITIONS** The driver should take into account the road conditions - this could mean wet or icy surfaces.