

Rural roads vs urban streets

driving tips



Most drivers and riders are oblivious to the risks on rural roads. Unlike urban areas, country roads are a deadly mix of long, straight runs punctuated with sharp bends, tractors and vulnerable road users and higher average speeds. Although collisions are more frequent in urban areas, there's a greater chance of dying on a rural road with 60% of fatalities occurring on them. These road safety tips will help you stay in control and anticipate the unexpected.

What you should do and why

Plan ahead

Make sure you research the route before the journey, especially if you are unfamiliar with the area. This will help with navigation or you may find it is easier to take an alternative route if that is an option.

Adjust your speed

Drive at a speed where you are in control and does not affect your decision-making ability. Sharp bends, unexpected hazards and changing conditions often mean road users are travelling at a speed well below the designed speed limit. Remember, the speed limit is not a target.

Slow down

Rural roads can be fairly winding with blind bends, sometimes one after the other. Reduce your speed to allow you to stop should a hazard emerge around the corner. If you are braking as you enter, you are probably going too fast for the conditions and not in full control.

Give space

Allow plenty of space when passing cyclists and slow down when overtaking horses so not to startle the animal.

Fuel up

Always fill up before your journey as petrol stations can be scarce.

Be vigilant at night

Country roads are rarely lit, therefore, you will need to use your full beam to see the road. To stay safe:

- Aim your headlights correctly and ensure they are working and clean
- Avoid being dazzled by bright lights – dim your dashboard and sat-nav and don't stare at oncoming lights
- Keep the windscreen clean to eliminate streaks.
- Slow down to compensate for limited visibility and reduced stopping time
- Remember to dip your beam when another vehicle approaches

Don't cut corners

Cutting corners is one of the reasons drivers and riders end up hitting another vehicle or leaving the road. Country lanes tend to be winding and narrow, so it is important to stay on your side of the road and slow down when negotiating bends.

Think safety before overtaking

Only overtake when it is safe and legal to do so and scan the road properly before, during and after the manoeuvre. Before overtaking, make sure the road is clear ahead, no one is beginning to overtake you and that there is a suitable gap in front of the vehicle you plan to overtake.

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