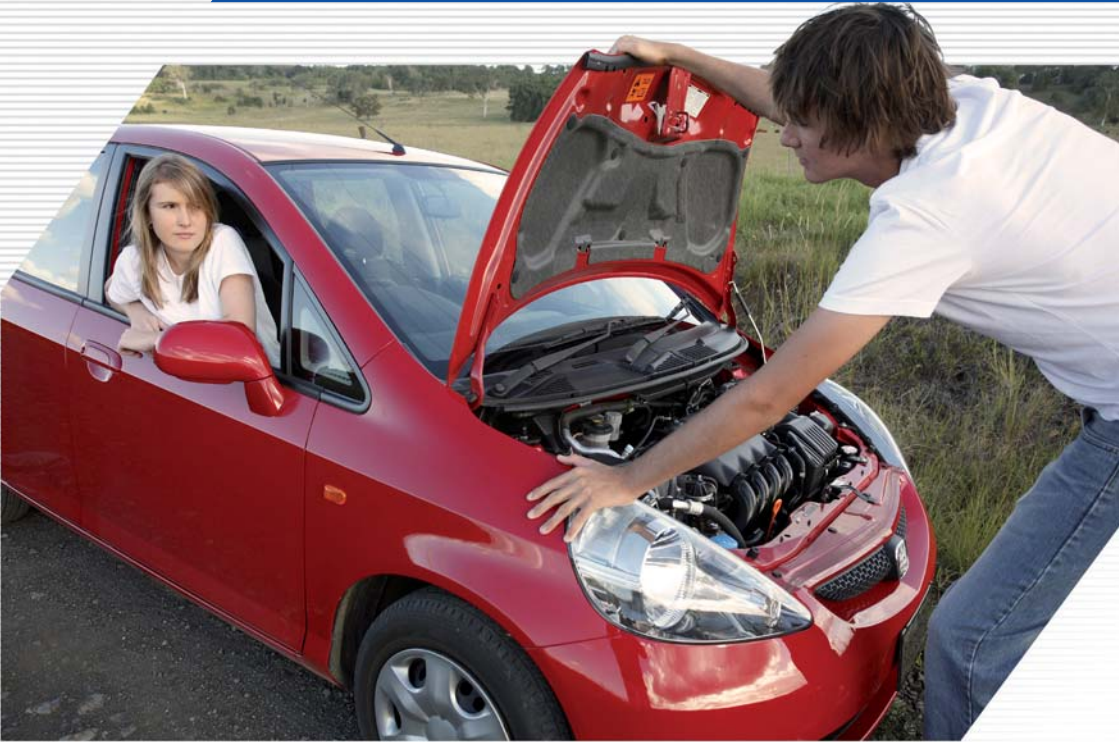


# Motorists' breakdown and emergency guide





**The Viscount Simon,**  
President, GEM Motoring Assist.  
Road Safety Parliamentarian of the Year



We live in a world governed by ever-tightening deadlines and pressures of time. Whether travelling for business or leisure purposes, we all need to feel that we can reach our destinations without incident.

No doubt we have all experienced the inconvenience of a breakdown at some stage; many of us will also have suffered the trauma and stress of a road traffic collision. Following the advice in this guide will assist you in putting your safety first and will also help reduce any disruption and delay.

Education and enforcement are important factors when it comes to reducing the number of collisions and casualties. We have made significant reductions in the number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads in recent years, but there is still much to be done and further improvements to be made. Through working in partnership with police forces, government and other agencies we can contribute toward these improvements. I am pleased to commend the excellent information contained in this guide and I hope you will take the time to read it.



# What to do if you break down

If your vehicle breaks down, think about safety first:

## Consider your own safety

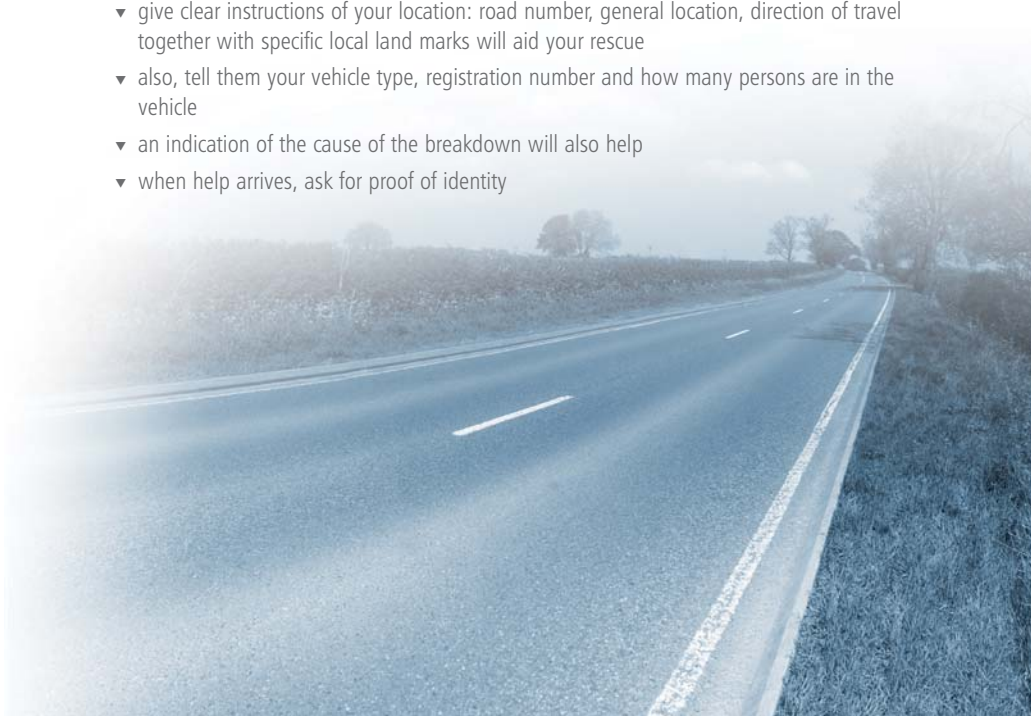
- ▼ get your vehicle off the road if possible
- ▼ ensure your passengers are safe and that animals are kept under control

## Warn other road users

- ▼ warn other traffic by using your hazard warning lights if your vehicle is causing an obstruction
- ▼ put a warning triangle on the road at least 45 metres (147 feet) behind your broken-down vehicle on the same side of the road, or use other permitted warning devices if you have them. Always take great care when placing them, but never use them on motorways as this may put you in danger from oncoming traffic
- ▼ keep your sidelights on if it is dark or visibility is poor
- ▼ do not stand (or let anybody else stand) between your vehicle and oncoming traffic
- ▼ at night or in poor visibility, do not stand where you will prevent other road users seeing your lights
- ▼ Wear a fluorescent/reflective jacket or tabard

## Calling for help

- ▼ do not use mobile phones if there is a danger from petrol spillage or fumes
- ▼ contact the emergency services by dialling 999 or 112 (international emergency code) and/or your breakdown recovery operator
- ▼ give clear instructions of your location: road number, general location, direction of travel together with specific local land marks will aid your rescue
- ▼ also, tell them your vehicle type, registration number and how many persons are in the vehicle
- ▼ an indication of the cause of the breakdown will also help
- ▼ when help arrives, ask for proof of identity



# What additional things to do if you break down on a motorway



Try to leave the motorway at the nearest exit or pull into a service area.  
When this is not possible:

## Safety first

- ▼ use your indicators or hazard warning lights and pull on to the hard shoulder. Stop as far to the left as possible, with your wheels turned to the left
- ▼ try to stop near an emergency telephone (every mile on the hard shoulder)
- ▼ you must leave the vehicle by the left-hand doors
- ▼ do not try to cross the carriageway
- ▼ keep passengers well away from the carriageway and children under control
- ▼ you must leave animals in the vehicle or, in an emergency, keep them under proper control on the verge
- ▼ do not attempt even simple repairs and do not leave the car bonnet open

## Get help

- ▼ follow the arrows on the posts (every 100m) at the back of the hard shoulder to the nearest emergency telephone – calls are free and connect directly to the police
  - ▼ give full details, also inform them if you feel vulnerable e.g. woman travelling alone or with young children
  - ▼ return and wait near your vehicle, behind the barrier on the motorway embankment
- When rejoining the motorway, always increase speed on the hard shoulder and watch for a safe gap in the traffic

# Crashes

In the event of a collision:

## Stop. Apply handbrake. Turn off engine

- ▼ you are legally obliged to stop if you collide with a vehicle, person, dog, certain livestock or property

## Assess conditions

- ▼ remain calm. Assess the scene and seriousness of the collision. Determine what happened, how many people and vehicles are involved and the exact location

## Make safe

- ▼ make sure you stay safe: keep off the road. If you need to stop or warn approaching cars, signal to them from the pavement. Wear fluorescent reflective clothing, use warning triangles, flashing lights and hazard warning lights. Don't smoke
- ▼ if you are in a car and you come across an accident, first park safely and turn off the engine before you get out to help. Use a hazard triangle if necessary
- ▼ consider the safety of others. Immobilize the vehicle/s, look out for hazards - leaking fuel, chemicals, broken glass or shed loads – guide uninjured passengers to a place of safety

## Assess casualties

- ▼ how many casualties are there? What is the severity of the injuries? Is anyone trapped? Is there a danger of fire?

## Call for help

- ▼ dial 999 (or 112) for the emergency services. If there is no phone nearby, recruit help and send two people in opposite directions
- ▼ do not use mobile phones if there is a danger from petrol-spillage or fumes

## Apply emergency first aid

- ▼ remain calm. Reassure the victims. **See over for first aid advice**
- ▼ do not allow smoking or offer food or drink to casualties as this could hamper urgent medical treatment

## Exchange information

- ▼ give your name and address, your vehicle registration number, and provide details of your vehicle insurance to anyone who has reason to need it

55% of deaths caused by road accidents occur in the first few minutes after a crash. Up to 85% of these deaths could be prevented if first aid was given.

The first person on the scene of a collision will almost certainly be another road user. So as a driver your knowledge of first aid could make a real difference to someone.



# First Aid

## 1 Get help - call 999

Do this as soon as you can or get someone else to do it while you deal with an injured person. You will need to tell the emergency services: where you are; what has happened (describe the accident); how many people are injured; whether they are breathing or bleeding. The operator will talk you through what to do while you wait for an ambulance to arrive.

## 2 Assess casualties

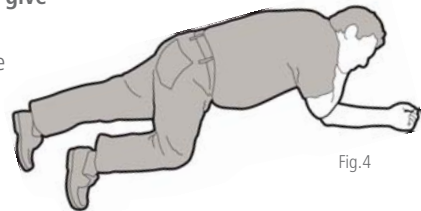
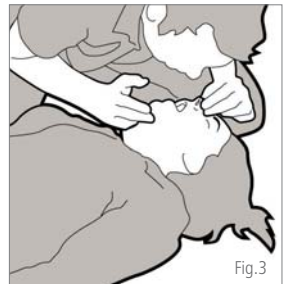
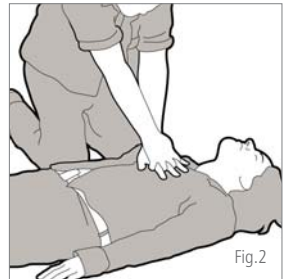
When there is more than one injured person, go to the quiet one first. They may be unconscious and need immediate attention. If it is safe to approach the injured person, do so, but don't move them. Check for a response – talk to them, tap them on their shoulder.

## 3 Unconscious - if there is no response

- A Open their airway; place one hand on their forehead and gently tilt their head back and lift the chin (Fig.1).
- B Check if they are breathing. Look, listen and feel for normal breathing.
- C If they're not breathing normally, you must **call an ambulance** then you'll need to start Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).
  - i Place your hands on the centre of their chest, press down (4-5cm) with the heel of your hand. After every 30 chest compressions give 2 breaths (Fig.2).
  - ii Open the airway. Pinch the person's nose. Place your mouth over their mouth and blow steadily one second, repeat (Fig.3).
  - iii Continue CPR until emergency help arrives or the person breathes normally.

**If you are unable or unwilling to give rescue breaths give chest compressions only.**

- D If the casualty is **unconscious but breathing normally**, place them on their side in the **recovery position** as shown (Fig.4). Make sure that the airway remains open by tilting the head back and lifting the chin, and check breathing. Monitor the casualty's condition until help arrives.



## 4 Stop bleeding

Use a dressing or clean cloth, press your hand on the wound. Elevate the wound above the level of the heart.



# Prevention

## Reduce the risk

Get to know your vehicle and ensure that it is regularly serviced as recommended by the manufacturer. Watch out for changes to the feel of the car or strange noises or smells and investigate. Don't ignore warning lights. Carry out regular checks as follows:

Weekly	
<b>Tyres</b> - check condition and pressure (including spare)	✓
<b>Battery</b> - top up fluid level and check terminals for corrosion	✓
<b>Oil level</b> - between marks on the dipstick	✓
<b>Coolant system</b> - check fluid level	✓
<b>Windscreen</b> - clean windscreen and check wipers for wear	✓
<b>Screenwash</b> - check fluid level and nozzle adjustment	✓
<b>Lights</b> - keep lights clean and check for faults and cracked lenses	✓
<b>Fuel</b> - never allow the fuel level to get low. Fill up when the gauge reads less than half full	✓
<b>Mirrors</b> - keep clean and check for cracks	✓

Monthly	
<b>Tyres</b> - check tyre tread for depth (minimum of 1.6mm) and uneven wear	✓
<b>Antifreeze</b> - check fluid level, particularly in winter (never open cooling system when hot)	✓

Before a long journey	
Condition and pressure of tyres	✓
Lights	✓
Coolant, screenwash and oil levels	✓

## Be prepared

Plan your journey in advance. Make sure you have clear directions. Carry with you in the car items that will help you cope with a breakdown:

Up to date road map	Warm waterproof clothing
Breakdown membership card	Note pad and pencil
Torch	Manufacturer's handbook for your car
Hi-visibility reflective jacket/tabard	First aid kit
Warning triangle	Tow rope
Mobile phone (not for use while driving or near fuel)	Spare bulbs and fuses

## In Winter

Ice scraper / de-icer	Rug
Wellington boots	Shovel

Ensure that you understand how to use the car jack. Practice changing a wheel occasionally.

## About GEM Motoring Assist

GEM Motoring Assist is a road safety organisation established in 1932. Our principal aims are to improve safety for all road users through the sponsorship and initiation of accident prevention measures throughout the UK and to provide motoring and safety information to our members.

**If you'd like to find out more about the benefits of GEM membership, you can visit [www.motoringassist.com](http://www.motoringassist.com) or call 0845 964 5505**

### Complete the details on this card and return it to us:

Please send me details of GEM membership.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Breakdown Cover

If you're looking for a low-cost breakdown policy, then GEM could be just the organisation for you. Your policy covers you in any vehicle, including motorcycles and when towing caravans (see Terms and Conditions for full details). No wonder GEM offers the best value for breakdown cover.

With breakdown cover from GEM Motoring Assist, help is only a phone call away. Our 24 hour Rescue Control Centre will quickly arrange assistance from one of our nationwide network of more than 1,200 breakdown specialists.

Average callout time is just 40 minutes and there are three levels of cover to choose from.

**Join today! Call 0845 964 5505 or visit [www.motoringassist.com](http://www.motoringassist.com)**



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RH18 5BR



## Providing the UK with comprehensive Breakdown Cover and Road Safety advice

Breakdown cover with GEM Motoring Assist ensures help is only a phone call away. Our 24 hour Rescue Control Centre will quickly arrange assistance from our nationwide network of over 6,000 recovery vehicles.

With an average callout of around 40 minutes and massive savings when compared to our competitors, it's not difficult to see why so many motorists have switched to GEM.

### More great reasons to choose GEM:

- ✓ 3 levels of cover to suit your needs
- ✓ Nil policy excess & No call out limits
- ✓ You're covered in any vehicle† you drive
- ✓ No limit to your age or the age of your vehicle
- ✓ Priority for vulnerable drivers – special attention if you are alone or with young children
- ✓ Personal advice on motoring and road safety matters
- ✓ 12 months FREE Keycare insurance
- ✓ FREE Accident Management



Station Road, Forest Row  
East Sussex, RH18 5EN  
T: 0845 964 5505

E: [info@motoringassist.com](mailto:info@motoringassist.com)

[www.motoringassist.com](http://www.motoringassist.com)

Designed by Agile Creative [www.agile-creative.co.uk](http://www.agile-creative.co.uk)

GEM Motoring Assist is a trading name of The Guild of Experienced Motorists which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority. † Terms and conditions apply on all breakdown policies, which are available on request. \*Auto Express Driver Power survey for Breakdown cover, winner July 08 and runners up October 09