

# Courtesy on the road



## Courtesy pays

Although you can do little to prevent other drivers becoming stressed at the wheel, you can avoid actions that might trigger conflict by being courteous yourself. It costs nothing to be polite and if you do make an error of judgement, a word of apology can usually defuse the situation and avoid confrontation. Likewise, a simple wave to say thank you for a courtesy extended to you will help to make the roads safer and more pleasant.

## Conflict on the road

Acts of conflict on the road are sometimes reported in the news, causing justifiable concern to motorists. Yet the truth is that unprovoked 'rage' is rare and usually occurs as a retaliation for perceived rudeness or aggressive behaviour.



# Reduce your own stress

## Stress is the major cause of conflict on the road.

The following tips may help you to remain calm and safer on the road:

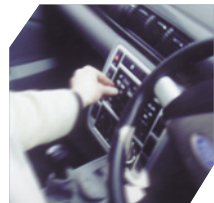
- Vehicle breakdowns can be stressful so ensure that your car is regularly serviced and well maintained. Carry out routine checks regularly and keep the windows and lights clean.
- Plan your journey carefully and know exactly the route to be used. Allow plenty of time for the trip. Never drive for more than two hours without taking a break and avoid driving further than 300 to 400 miles a day.



- Always obey the speed limit.
- Before setting off, ensure that you are comfortable in the car. Adjust the mirrors, seating and heating/ventilation for maximum comfort. Maintain a constant flow of fresh air into the car.



- Avoid heavy meals before a long journey.
- Drive to the highest standards and maintain concentration at all times.
- Be tolerant of other road users, and errors they may make.
- If you encounter a traffic hold-up, remain calm and accept that there is probably little that you could have done to prevent the delay.



- Try listening to the car radio or a CD. If necessary, stop the car and take a short break. Recognise the warning signs of oncoming stress and develop positive strategies to cope with it.

# The Motoring Assistance People

Established in 1932 as the Company of Veteran Motorists originally to combat the increasing number of road accidents, GEM Motoring Assist today remains the leading driver based road safety association with around 60,000 members. All set a good example on the road by agreeing to drive with care, courtesy and concentration.

Members enjoy our free quarterly magazine **Good Motoring**; free road safety, motor legal, technical and insurance advice; experienced driver assessments; and specially negotiated discounts on insurances and a host of other services. In addition GEM membership provides a free Accident Management Service which manages the whole claim process on your behalf if you are involved in a crash.

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# The Courtesy Driving Code

## Share the road safely

Give yourself time and space to react to the mistakes of others.  
Always leave a safe stopping distance between you and the vehicle in front.

## Keep calm, show restraint

Every journey brings a risk of frustration and conflict. Be patient. Do not sound your horn or make a gesture in anger.

## They are not out to annoy you

Most aggravating moves by other drivers are unintentional. We all make mistakes, be patient and accept that the action was not directed at you.

## Do not compete or retaliate

If someone's driving annoys you, do not try to 'educate' them.

## Be patient in traffic

Do not push into traffic queues. If you wait and clearly signal what you want to do, other drivers will usually let you in, but they do not like being forced in to doing so.

## Set an example to others

Do not hog the middle lane on a motorway.

## Give way at busy junctions

Do not queue-jump in traffic jams at roads works; look in the mirror and signal in good time **before** you carry out any manoeuvre.

## Put yourself in the position of the other driver

The things that annoy you such as 'tailgating' and 'cutting-in' annoy the other driver too!

## Say 'thank you'

Courtesy encourages co-operative safe use of the road.  
Get into the habit of giving a wave to say thank you.

## Say sorry

Apologising to the other driver when you make a mistake avoids confrontation and helps defuse anger.



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