

Top 10 misunderstood road rules in NSW



Transport
for NSW

A simple guide to the most misunderstood road rules in NSW

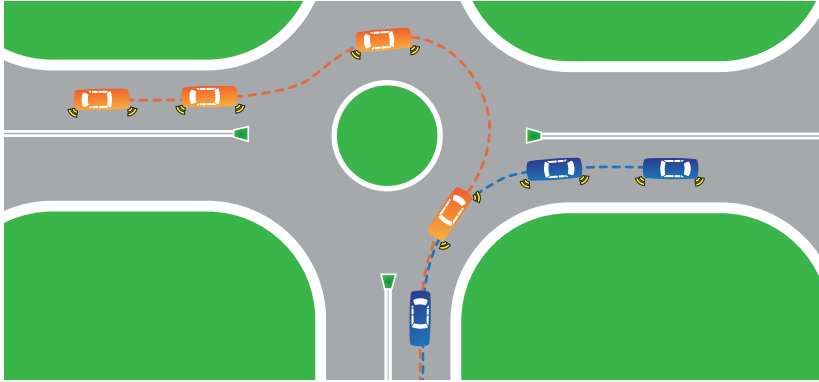
If you have further questions about road rules, call 132 213 or visit rms.nsw.gov.au

This document does not constitute legal advice and is provided only as a guide to the Road Rules 2008. Road users must ensure they are familiar with the Road Rules and comply with the requirements prescribed in law.

Contents

1	Roundabouts	4
	Approaching a roundabout	4
	Entering a roundabout	4
	Turning left	4
	Going straight ahead	4
	Turning right	5
	Making a U-turn	5
	Changing lanes in a roundabout	5
	Exiting a roundabout	5
2	Giving way to pedestrians when turning	6
3	Mobile phones	7
4	Merging	8
	Merging when the number of lanes is reduced	8
	Changing lanes when a marked lane ends	8
5	Keeping left	9
6	Using headlights and fog lights	10
	High beam	10
	Must not dazzle	10
	Fog lights	11
	Spot lights	11
	Lights	11
7	U-turns	12
8	Safe following distances	13
9	School zones	14
10	Yellow traffic lights	15

1 Roundabouts



Approaching a roundabout

Drivers approaching a roundabout must use their indicator if they intend to turn left or right, or make a U-turn at the roundabout. They must give other road users sufficient notice of their intent to turn.

Entering a roundabout

Drivers must slow or stop to give way to any vehicle already in the roundabout. Drivers must also continue to use their indicator if they intend to turn left, right or make a U-turn.

Turning left

Drivers must indicate left on approach and be travelling in the left-hand lane (unless there are road markings with other instructions), stay in the left lane and exit in the left lane.

Going straight ahead

There is no requirement for drivers to signal when approaching the roundabout, if they are going straight ahead.

Drivers may approach the roundabout from either the left or right lane (unless there are road markings with other instructions).

Turning right

Drivers must indicate right on approach and be travelling in the right-hand lane (unless there are road markings with other instructions).

Making a U-turn

When using a roundabout to make a U-turn, drivers must approach in the right lane and signal right.

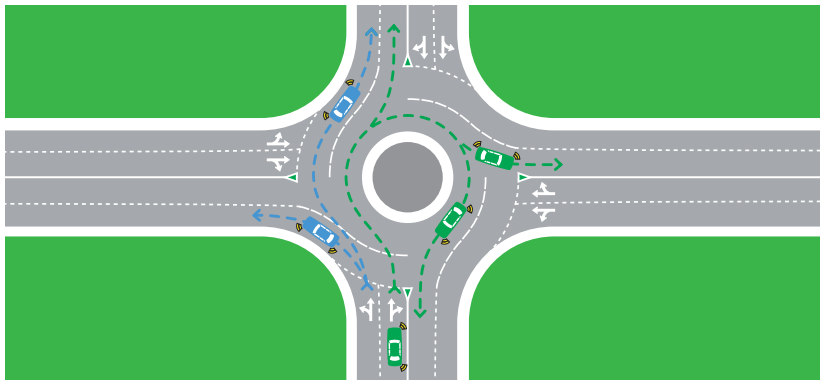
Changing lanes in a roundabout

Drivers may change lanes in a roundabout if they wish. The usual road rules for changing lanes apply. Drivers must use their indicator and give way to any vehicle in the lane they are entering.

Exiting a roundabout

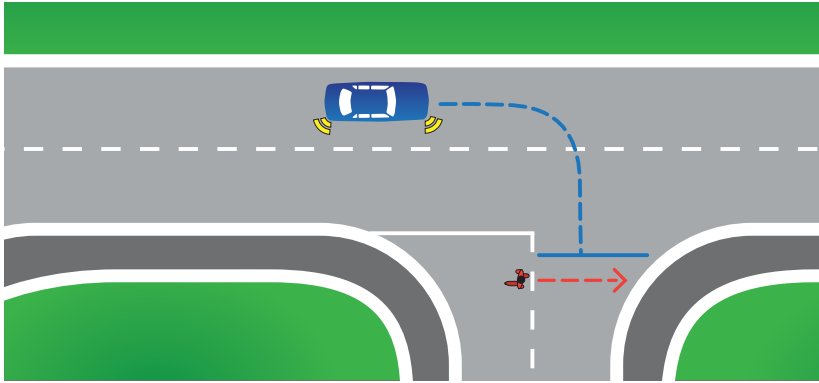
Just like exiting any road, drivers must signal left when leaving a roundabout, if it is practical to do so, and stop indicating as soon as they have exited the roundabout.

When travelling straight ahead on a small single lane roundabout, it may be impractical to indicate left when exiting.



All drivers are required to drive carefully and slow down or stop when there is a chance of a crash with another vehicle.

2 Giving way to pedestrians when turning



If a driver is turning left or right at an intersection, the driver must give way to any pedestrian crossing the road the driver is entering.

This applies to intersections with and without traffic lights. However, this rule does not apply at roundabouts.

For their own safety, pedestrians should always check their surroundings before crossing the road.

3 Mobile phones

A mobile phone may only be used while driving:

- if it is secured in a commercially manufactured and designed mounting which is fixed to the vehicle and does not obscure the driver's view of the road, or
- if it can be operated by the driver without touching any part of the phone, for example through the use of Bluetooth technology or voice activation.



While driving, a mobile phone cannot:

- rest on the driver's leg, between the shoulder and ear, or on any other part of the driver's body,
- be used for text messaging, video messaging, emailing or similar, or
- be held in the driver's hand other than to pass it to a passenger.

Drivers can only use a hand-held mobile phone if their vehicle is parked in an authorised parking spot. They cannot use a hand-held mobile phone while stopped at traffic lights.

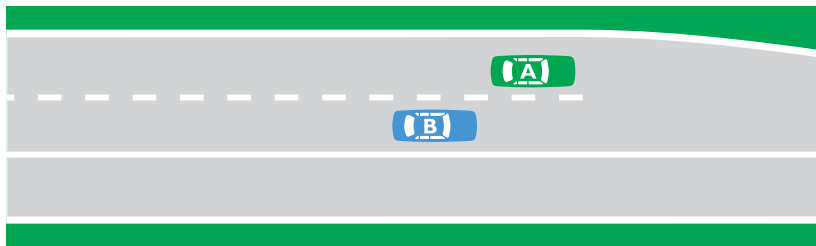
Drivers may use the navigational or GPS function and audio functions of a phone while driving, provided the phone is secured in a fixed mounting.

L Learner and **P** P1 drivers are not permitted to use any function of a phone while operating a vehicle.

4 Merging

Merging when the number of lanes is reduced

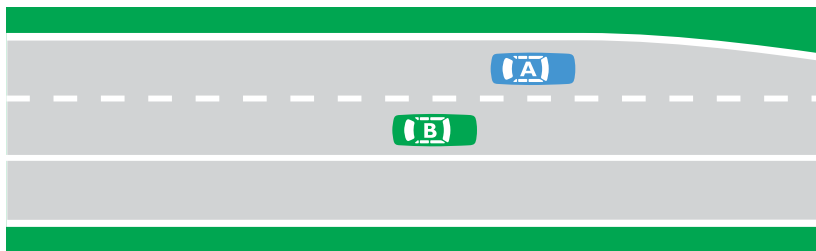
When a driver is travelling on a road without lane markings and the number of lanes or lines of traffic is reduced, they must merge by giving way to any vehicle that is ahead of them. This is often called a zipper merge.



Car B gives way to Car A.

Changing lanes when a marked lane ends

When a driver is travelling in a marked lane which is ending and is required to cross a broken painted line to enter the adjacent lane, the driver must give way to the traffic travelling in the lane being entered.



Car A gives way to Car B.

5 Keeping left



On multi-lane roads with a speed limit of more than 80km/h, motorists must not drive in the right-hand lane unless they are:

- overtaking
- turning right or making a U-turn
- avoiding an obstacle
- driving in congested traffic
- driving in a special purpose lane or if there is a *Left Lane Must Turn Left* sign or a left traffic arrow and the driver is not turning left.

If a *Keep Left Unless Overtaking* sign is displayed, the requirement applies regardless of the speed limit.

6 Using headlights and fog lights

High beam

A driver must not use their headlights on high beam if travelling:

- less than 200m behind a vehicle travelling in the same direction
- less than 200m from an oncoming vehicle.

It is an offence to flash the vehicle's headlights unless the vehicle is being used to respond to an emergency.



Must not dazzle

A driver must not use any light fitted to their vehicle that may dazzle another road user.

Fog lights

A driver is only permitted to use fog lights if driving in fog, mist or other atmospheric condition that restricts visibility.

Spot lights

A driver may only use a spot or search light if:

- The vehicle is stationary and the light is being used for making adjustments or repairs to a vehicle. The light must not be projected more than six metres.
- The light is used temporarily to read a house number or notice board.

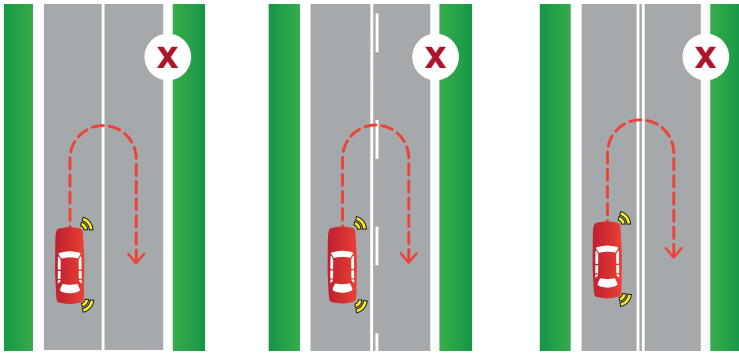
Lights

When driving at night, or in conditions where there is insufficient daylight to render a person dressed in dark clothing discernible at a distance of 100m, a driver's vehicle must have clearly visible:

- headlights
- tail lights
- number plate lights
- clearance lights and side marker lights if they are fitted to the vehicle.

It is recommended that in some daytime situations driving with the vehicle's headlights on can improve the likelihood of being seen by other road users.

7 U-turns



Making a U-turn

When making a U-turn a driver must:

- have a clear view of any approaching traffic
- be able to make the turn without unreasonably obstructing the free movement of traffic
- give way to all vehicles and pedestrians.

Drivers are not allowed to make a U-turn:

- at an intersection without traffic lights, where a 'no U-turn' sign is displayed
- at a break in a driving strip where a 'no U-turn' sign is displayed
- across any of the following:
 - a single continuous dividing line
 - a single continuous dividing line to the left of a broken line
 - two parallel continuous dividing lines.

At traffic lights

Drivers are not permitted to make a U-turn at traffic lights unless there is a *U-Turn Permitted* sign displayed or a green U-turn traffic light is displayed.

8 Safe following distances



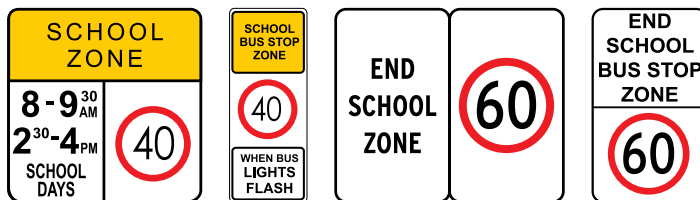
Drivers must keep sufficient distance behind a vehicle travelling in front of them to safely avoid a collision.

Safe following distances may vary depending on the conditions, the type of vehicle and the speed at which the vehicle is travelling. As a general rule, when following a vehicle, the driver should travel three seconds behind the vehicle in front to provide sufficient time to avoid a crash.

To calculate a three second space when following another vehicle, drivers can use the basic time-lapse method technique:

- Drivers should select a mark or object on the left hand side of the road, for example a sign or a power pole.
- As the rear of the vehicle ahead passes the chosen object, the driver counts 'one thousand one, two thousand two, three thousand three'. This should take about three seconds.
- If the driver's car passes the chosen object before finishing the three second count, then they are travelling too close to the vehicle in front. There is not enough crash avoidance space so the driver should slow down and repeat the exercise to ensure the three second gap is achieved.
- In poor conditions such as rain, gravel roads or dim light, it may be necessary to increase the travelling distance to four seconds to increase the crash avoidance space.

9 School zones



A school zone is the area around a school with a speed limit of 40km/h. Between the *School Zone* and *End School Zone* signs, drivers must obey the school zone speed limit.

The school zone speed limit applies on NSW gazetted school days and during the times detailed on the school zone sign. School zone hours are normally 8:00am–9.30am and 2.30pm–4:00pm.

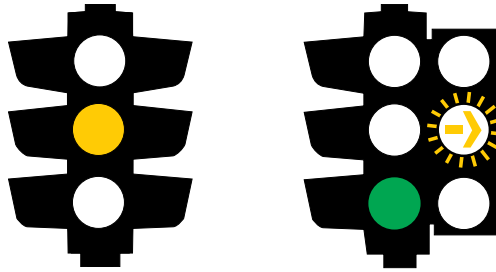
Pupil free days fall within the gazetted school days, thus school zones are operating and enforceable.

Details on NSW gazetted school days can be located at:
www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/events/vacations.html

Some non-government schools do not operate on gazetted school days. Motorists should be aware that school zones still operate and are enforceable on these days.

There are a small number of schools with different school zone times – these will be detailed on the school zone sign.

10 Yellow traffic lights



A yellow (amber) traffic light or arrow means stop. A driver approaching traffic lights showing a yellow traffic light must stop if the driver can stop safely before reaching the stop line or traffic lights.

Penalties apply for drivers who fail to stop at a yellow light, unless it is unsafe to do so.

© **Transport for NSW**
rms.nsw.gov.au

Top 10 misunderstood road rules NSW,
April 2013
TfNSW 13.004
ISBN 978-1-922194-14-5
Catalogue No. is 45094066.