

General road rules and amendments – questions and answers

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General road rule and amendments - questions and answers:

Bicycles

Bicycle storage areas

Rules for bicycle storage areas at intersections now apply. These rules impact cyclists and drivers.

Question: What are bicycle storage areas?

A bicycle storage area is an area of road close to an intersection with traffic lights to allow cyclists to wait at the lights in front of the vehicles stopped at the intersection.

Question: How do I identify a bicycle storage area?

Bicycle storage areas are usually painted green and would have white bicycle symbols painted on the road.

Question: As a motorist, what must I do at an intersection with a bicycle storage area?

If the traffic lights change to red, you must stop at the first stop line. Cyclists are allowed to proceed beyond the first stop line up to the second stop line inside the bicycle storage area.

Question: As a cyclist, what must I do at an intersection with a bicycle storage area?

- you must enter a bicycle storage area from a bicycle lane (unless it is impractical to ride in the bicycle lane)
- you must give way to any vehicle that is in the bicycle storage area
- you must give way to any vehicle entering the bicycle storage area where there is a green or yellow traffic light.

Question: What is a bicycle hook turn storage area?

Cyclists are permitted to turn right at intersections by doing a hook turn. A bicycle hook turn storage area is a designated space in an intersection for bicycle riders, to enable cyclists to conduct a hook turn and turn right across an intersection in a safe manner.

Bicycle passengers

You can only carry a passenger on a bicycle if the bicycle has a passenger seat.

Question: What is the new rule regarding bicycle passengers?

If you carry a passenger and they are not seated on a passenger seat you risk being fined \$40.

You must not carry passengers on a bicycle if there are no seats for passengers (that is, on the handlebars). If your bicycle has a passenger seat on it then the passenger must be seated properly and be wearing a bicycle helmet.

Bicycle helmets

If you are riding a bicycle, both you and your passenger must wear a helmet.

Question: What is the new rule regarding bicycle helmets for passengers?

Carry a passenger who is not wearing an approved bicycle helmet and both you and the passenger risk being fined \$100.

Question: What if my passenger is a paying customer?

The rule for paying passengers has not changed. Paying passengers are not required to wear a helmet. It is advised that where possible, all persons travelling on a bicycle wear a helmet.

Carrying an animal

If you are carrying an animal in your vehicle or on your motorcycle, you must be in control of the vehicle or motorcycle at all times.

Question: What is the new rule regarding carrying animals?

If you carry an animal on your lap while driving a car, or on the petrol tank of your motorcycle, you risk being fined \$233.

Question: Can I sit an animal on my lap while driving?

No, animals are unpredictable and distract drivers and riders. If a dog moves in the vehicle, or becomes agitated in response to some outside influence, the driver risks losing control of the vehicle or motorcycle.

Question: How should I carry my animal in my vehicle?

So long as the animal is not in your lap (or sitting on the petrol tank of your motorcycle) and not affecting your control of the vehicle, there are no rules prohibiting how you should carry your animal. It is advised however, that you securely restrain your animal using either a restraint or house the animal in a suitable cage or container.

Question: Can I carry my dog on the petrol tank of my motorcycle?

You must not allow an animal to ride or sit on your motorcycle petrol tank. However, if a farmer needs to cross a road to travel to an adjoining private property, a farmer may carry an animal on a motorcycle petrol tank for 500 metres only while traversing the road.

Question: Can I carry a dog or another animal in another place on my motorcycle?

Yes, so long as the dog or animal is secure and the stability of the motorcycle is not affected.

Fog lights

You must only use fog lights in fog or other hazardous weather conditions, irrespective of whether it is day or night.

Question: What are the new fog light rules?

Fog lights must be turned off in clear weather, day or night. Drive with fog lights on in clear weather and you risk being fined \$40.

Question: How do I identify fog lights on my vehicle?

Fog lights are usually placed just below the headlights on the front of a vehicle, that is, in the front bumper. Rear fog lights are usually positioned in the existing tail lights or below the tail lights, that is, in the rear bumper.

Question: What is the difference between fog lights and driving lights?

Fog lights are designed to improve illumination of the road in adverse weather conditions and must be fitted not less than 250mm above ground level. Driving lights are additional high beam headlights.

Fog lights must be able to be switched off independently to the headlights. The vehicle owner's handbook (or vehicle manufacturer's website) should identify where the lights are and where the switch is to operate them. Fog lights are also required to have a tell tale light in the vehicle to indicate when they are switched on. Driving lights only operate while high beam headlights are switched on.

Question: What if I cannot turn my fog lights off?

If you cannot turn off your fog lights then they are not classed as fog lights or alternatively, you have an electrical fault in your vehicle. By definition, the driver must be able to switch a fog light on or off separately from other lights on the vehicle.

Question: How do I know if the visibility is bad enough to warrant the use of fog lights?

The rules do not specify the level of visibility degradation required before using fog lights. However, if you are having trouble seeing other vehicles or objects around you due to the adverse weather conditions (that is, heavy rain or fog), fog lights can be used.

Medical exemptions

New requirements apply if you are exempt from wearing a seatbelt for medical reasons.

Question: What is the new rule regarding the exemption for medical reasons?

If your medical certificate does not have an expiry date within 12 months from the date of issue, you must wear a seatbelt or risk being fined \$300 and three demerit points.

Previously, a person who was exempt from wearing a seatbelt was required to carry a medical certificate at all times. The person must still carry the medical certificate, but the medical certificate must have an expiry date that is less than 12 months from the date the medical practitioner provided the certificate.

Painted islands

There are new restrictions on driving on or across a painted island.

Question: What is the new rule for driving on or across a painted island?

Drive on or across a painted island when you are not permitted to do so and you risk being fined \$40.

Question: When can I drive on a painted island?

You may drive on a painted island provided it has only one continuous line surrounding it or partly surrounding it, and the island separates traffic flowing in opposite directions, if you need to:

- enter or leave the road
- or
- enter a turning lane.

Question: When can't I drive on a painted island?

You cannot drive on a painted island if it has two continuous lines (that is, double lines) surrounding it or partly surrounding it.

Also, if the painted island separates traffic flowing in the same direction, regardless of whether it has a single or two continuous lines surrounding it, the driver must not drive over the painted island.

Safety ramps and arrester beds

You must not drive on a safety ramp or arrester bed.

Question: What are safety ramps and arrester beds?

Safety ramps or arrester beds are sometimes used on steep winding roads to allow space for an out of control vehicle to veer off the road. You must not drive on a safety ramp or arrester bed unless it is necessary for the driver to do so in the interests of safety. Safety ramps and arrester beds are clearly identified and signed.

Drive on a safety ramp and arrester bed and you risk being fined \$140 and three demerit points.

Seatbelts

As a driver you are responsible for ensuring that any adult passenger wears a seatbelt, and that children are appropriately restrained in your vehicle.

Question: What are the new seatbelt rules?

The driver and all passengers must wear seatbelts. Drive with a passenger of any age without a seatbelt or approved child restraint and you risk being fined \$300 and three demerit points.

Drivers will receive an additional penalty of \$300 and three demerit points for each unrestrained or incorrectly restrained passenger.

The driver is responsible for ensuring that all passengers are appropriately restrained, including children under 16 years of age. If the passenger is under seven years of age, the driver is responsible for ensuring that they are secured in an approved child restraint.

For further information on child restraints visit www.transport.qld.gov.au/childrestraints

Question: Do the new seatbelt rules apply to ten or eleven seater vehicles?

Yes, although these vehicles may be registered as a bus, for the purposes of the road rules legislation, they are in fact classed as cars. Therefore, the driver must ensure that all passengers, including children, are wearing seatbelts and are appropriately restrained, otherwise the driver risks being fined \$300 and three demerit points.

Question: Do the new seatbelt rules apply to bus drivers?

As a driver of a bus with 13 seats or more (including the driver's seat) you are under no obligation to ensure that any passenger, irrespective of age, is appropriately restrained. This is an existing exemption which is not affected by the amendments.

If the bus is fitted with passenger seatbelts, a passenger aged 16 or above is required to wear a seatbelt. The passenger may face a \$300 fine and 3 demerit points if they do not wear a seatbelt where one is available. This is an existing requirement which is not affected by the amendments.

A bus driver is required to wear a seatbelt if one is fitted. The penalty for failing to wear a seatbelt is a \$300 fine and 3 demerit points. This is also an existing requirement which is not affected by the amendments.

Question: Do the new seatbelt rules apply to taxi drivers?

Taxi drivers are currently responsible for ensuring that a child between the ages of one and 16 is properly restrained. As of 11 March 2010, a taxi driver will be responsible for ensuring that children between the ages of seven and 16 are properly restrained in a seatbelt. A taxi driver will be exempt from ensuring that children up to the age of seven are restrained, whether in an approved child restraint or adult seatbelt. If however, an appropriate child restraint is available for use in the taxi, the taxi driver must ensure that it is used.

Also as of 11 March 2010, a child under the age of seven must not be seated in the front row of seats in a taxi.

Taxi drivers are exempt from ensuring that a passenger aged 16 or more wears a seatbelt. This is an existing exemption which is not affected by the amendments.

Securing your motor vehicle

You must wind your windows up when leaving your vehicle unattended.

Question: What is the rule for securing a vehicle?

You must wind up your windows (leaving no more than a 5cm gap) and secure your vehicle or risk being fined \$40.

The rule for securing your vehicle has not changed apart from now allowing a window to be open by up to 5cm.

If you are leaving your vehicle unattended you must:

- turn off the engine
- apply the parking brake
- remove the key if there is no-one over 16 years of age remaining in the vehicle
- lock the doors (if possible)
- wind up the windows (if possible), however a gap of 5cm or less is acceptable.

Question: Is a sunroof considered a 'window'?

Yes, a sunroof is considered a window and must be secured.

Question: What if my vehicle is a convertible or does not have doors (that is, some types of 4wd)?

You are only required to secure your vehicle as much as possible. If the vehicle's design means that locking the doors or closing the windows is not possible, this is not required.

Single continuous lines

You must not cross a single continuous white line to do a U-turn.

Question: What is the new rule regarding U-turns over single continuous white lines?

Do a U-turn over a single continuous centre line and you risk being fined \$180 and three demerit points.

Therefore as a driver, you must not do a U-turn across:

- double continuous centre lines
- single continuous centre lines
- a single continuous centre line to the left of a broken line.

Question: If I can turn into a driveway across a single continuous centre line, why can't I do a U-turn?

A single continuous centre line is used in potentially dangerous situations, to restrict traffic manoeuvres. A right turn into a driveway or road takes a shorter time to complete than a U-turn. A driver doing a U-turn may cause vehicles in the new direction of travel to slow unexpectedly, potentially creating a safety hazard.

Therefore there is a higher safety risk when drivers conduct a U-turn across a single continuous centre line.

Question: Can I overtake another vehicle across a single continuous centre line?

No, you are not permitted to overtake another vehicle across a single continuous centre line or a single continuous centre line that is to the left of a broken line, as this is a lengthy manoeuvre and could create a safety hazard.

Question: Are there different rules for other types of continuous lines that are painted on roads?

Yes, the rules for continuous edge lines or continuous separation lines are not the same as the rules for single continuous centre lines. For further information, please refer to the Lines section on www.transport.qld.gov.au/roadrules

Slip lanes

You must turn left from a slip lane if one is available.

Question: What is the new rule regarding slip lanes?

Fail to turn left from a slip lane and you risk being fined \$60 and 2 demerit points.

Question: What if there is congested traffic in the slip lane?

The only exception to the rule using a slip lane is if the slip lane is obstructed. A typical obstruction would be a broken down vehicle that is blocking the road. In this situation, you may turn left at the main part of the intersection (that is, traffic lights). A queue of congested traffic is not considered an obstruction.

Wheeled recreational devices (WRD)

New restrictions apply if you are riding a WRD, such as a foot scooter (including a motorised foot scooter), skateboard or rollerblades.

Question: What are the new rules regarding WRD?

Ride a wheeled recreational devices when and where you are not permitted to and you risk being fined \$40.

Question: Where and when can't I ride my WRD?

You cannot ride:

- on a main road (a road with a white dividing line or median strip)
- on a road with a speed limit over 50km/h
- on a road at night but you may cross a road while riding your WRD by the shortest route (if you need to ride at night, you can ride your WRD on a footpath)
- where there is a sign prohibiting the use of WRD.

Question: Where and when can I ride my WRD?

You can ride:

- on all paths except the pedestrian side of a separated footpath
- a WRD on the side of a separated footpath reserved for bicycles but you must give way to any bicycles on the path
- on nature strips
- on streets and roads that are not main roads and have a speed limit of 50km/h or less so long as you stay close to the left side of the road.

Question: What type of motorised WRD can I ride?

The only type of motorised WRD allowed in Queensland is an electric powered foot scooter where the motor is rated at no more than 200 watts power output and where the maximum speed of the device is 10km/h. In addition to complying with the rules for WRDs, you must also wear an approved bicycle helmet when riding a motorised foot scooter.

White edge lines

You can only drive over a continuous white edge line in certain circumstances.

Question: What are the new rules regarding white edge lines?

Cross a white edge line when you are not permitted to do so and you risk being fined \$80.

You must not drive on or over a continuous white edge line unless you are:

- overtaking a vehicle that is turning right or making a U-turn from the centre of the road
- avoiding an obstruction
- driving a slow moving vehicle where other vehicles need to overtake you
- driving a vehicle that is too wide or too long to fit within the marked lane to the left of the centre line.

There are additional circumstances when you can drive on or over a continuous white edge line for up to 100 metres only. These circumstances are when:

- turning left at an intersection
- entering or leaving the road
- stopping at the side of the road.

Question: Do these rules apply to the rider of a bicycle?

No, a bicycle rider may ride in the space behind an edge line (the road shoulder) at any time.