

GUIDELINE for Highway Driving

Highway driving is new to us and there are certain fundamentals that everyone should know to safely drive and get the maximum out of the highways in Sri Lanka. We are sincerely happy to prepare this guideline and distribute free of charge among vehicle owners in Sri Lanka for their safe driving on the highways.

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1. Before you decide to drive on highway

Ensure your vehicle is in good working condition. Especially check the engine, brake system, headlamps, wipers, signal lights, mirrors and tires, The condition that may be good for normal road s may not be suitable for fast driving on the highways **E.g.** You may manage driving with partly worn out tires on the normal roads but on the highway, it could be very dangerous with high speeds. Further, check whether your vehicle has enough fuel in the tank to complete the journey and money in your pocket to pay the toll.

2. When Entering the Highway

As soon as you enter the highway, judge the speed of other vehicles on the road and keep pace with them for a smooth and safe journey.

3. Use mirrors

Inside rear view mirror and the side view mirrors are very important in highway driving. You need to use them to join the highway as well as every time you change lanes to overtake and come back to the left lane

4. Check the blind spots

Mirrors may not make you see the blind spots near your vehicle. In speed driving, look over your shoulder when changing lanes to see the blind spots.

5. Stick to the speed limits

Speed limit is not always 100 kms. Certain areas of the road have lower limits. During the road repairs, rainy days, clearing of accident vehicles etc. will have lower speed limits. Always look for the speed limit signs and illuminated digital signboards that regularly update about the changes to speed limits. Check the speedometer regularly as you may not notice whether you are driving at a higher speed than allowed.

6. Overtake correctly

Once you have joined the highway, you should stay in the left-hand lane unless you are overtaking slower moving traffic. If you decide to overtake, use the usual mirror signal maneuver' procedure when moving in and out of lanes.

7. Keep to the left

As a rule, always keep to the lane furthest to the left unless overtaking slower traffic. If you keep on driving on the right lane, you will get a fine at the exit point as the surveillance police will inform the exit points about your right lane driving

8. Keep your distance

With vehicles driven at high speeds, you need to allow far more space to stop. If you are driving at 100 kms per hour, you must at least have a distance of 100 meters from the vehicle in front of you. Follow the 2-Second rule to ensure there is enough space car in front

The 2-second rule

The 2 Second rule is a handy way of getting your spacing right. Choose a fixed point such as a lamppost or bridge and when the car in front passes it, start counting 2 seconds. As you finish counting you should be reaching that same point. On rainy or slippery conditions, you may have to keep a longer distance.

9. In case of a breakdown

Move into the hard shoulder as soon as possible and switch on your hazard lights. Stop the vehicle and call for help by using your mobile phone or emergency phones by the roadside for assistance. Emergency number is 1969

10.Never use mobile phone while driving

Using a hand held phone whilst driving is an offence. For your own safety, refrain (or at least restrict) from using even the hands free facility of the phone. A simple distraction could lead to a wrong judgment and it could be disastrous at high speeds

11.Exit the highway properly

Plan your route and keep an eye for the exit signs - that will let you know how far it is to the exit you need to take. If you miss the exit, you have no way of turning back and would have to take the other exit and come back. It would waste your time and money too.

12.Seat belts

For your own safety, driver and all the passengers including the passengers seated in the rear seat should wear the seat belts.

13.Children

Should not take children (toddlers and little kids) who cannot be secured by seat belts in the front seat. They should not even be taken on laps of the adults sitting on the front seat. They should be taken only on the rear seats. In North America and many other developed countries, such babies or kids can be taken only on an approved baby seat securely fixed to a rear seat. Highway accidents can seriously injure unsecured children.

14.Avoid wearing slippers

Wearing slippers could slip and lose the grip or entangle in your legs in an emergency maneuver. As such, it is advisable to use shoes when driving on the highways.

15.No Photos

Do not stop on the way to take photos or selfies as stopping on the hard shoulder on the highway is only for emergencies.

Do not be taken by surprise

The surveillance cameras and highway police will let know your driving violations to the police officers at the exit points. As such, you may not know whether you have violated any traffic rule until you are given a ticket to pay a fine at the exit point. Therefore, stick to traffic rules and drive safely on the highways.

We wish you a safe journey

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