

Country driving tips



Preparing for your trip includes preparing yourself.

Plan your trip

Plan your route in advance so you know where you'll be heading. Ensure you:

1. take regular breaks – include a break or rest stop at least every two hours
2. avoid driving for more than eight to ten hours a day
3. share the driving when possible
4. have a good night's sleep before driving, so you can start afresh
5. start your trip early in the day, and avoid driving during the night or straight after work
6. avoid driving at times when you're usually asleep.

Loading your vehicle

Ensure you can still see through the rear-view mirror when packing the car. If you're towing a trailer/caravan, or even if just driving a car, pack heavy items securely and as low as possible to the floor.

Be seen

Turn on your headlights or daytime running lights (DRLs) so your vehicle is more visible to other road users. Avoid driving at night when possible.

Courtesy to other road users

Whether driving or riding, exercise care and attention at all times, and consider other road users. Show courtesy by allowing other drivers to overtake using overtaking lanes, and, where possible, use slow vehicle turnouts when vehicles are behind you.

We must all share the road together.

Avoid distractions

Inattention and distraction are contributing factors in around a third of fatal crashes and nearly half of serious crashes in South Australia.

Driving is a complex task requiring coordination of a wide range of skills. To anticipate and avoid hazards on the road, drivers must give their full attention at all times. Any distraction or lapse in concentration increases the risk of a crash.

Safe following distance

The 'following distance' is the space between your vehicle and the vehicle directly in front. It's important to allow a safe following distance so you can stop in time if the car ahead brakes. A car travels 17m per second at 60km/h and 28m per second at 100km/h, so you must maintain a longer following distance when driving at high speed.

To measure a safe distance, allow three seconds between the time the rear of the vehicle ahead passes a stationary object – like a signpost – and when the front of your vehicle reaches that same point. You can estimate this time by counting, 1001, 1002, 1003. Your vehicle should not have reached the object before the three second count is complete.

You may need more than three seconds when:

- the road is wet or slippery
- visibility is poor
- it's dark
- you have a heavy load
- the road is unsealed.

Heavy vehicles

Take care around heavy vehicles, which are common on regional roads. These vehicles have a much longer stopping distance than passenger cars, so give them plenty of room to stop. Don't overtake a turning truck unless it's safe to do so.

Beware of trucks with oversize loads. Prepare to move over, slow down or stop to allow them to pass safely.

Animals

When driving in the country, it's not uncommon to encounter native animals and livestock, which can be more active at dusk and dawn. Although hitting an animal is an unpleasant experience, swerving or braking heavily to avoid a collision can cause loss of control and result in a more severe crash.

It's best to gradually and safely slow down to prevent or reduce the impact of a collision.

Injured animals may become stressed or aggressive, so seek expert advice if you injure an animal. Call the **RSPCA** on **1300 477 722**, **Fauna Rescue** on **8289 0896** or contact the nearest police station.

If the animal is no longer alive, call the **Traffic Management Centre** on **1800 018 313** or contact the nearest police station. They'll arrange for it to be collected.

Driving on gravel and dirt roads

When travelling in country areas, you're likely to encounter unsealed roads. Your car will handle differently on gravel and dirt roads, so you'll need to adjust your driving.

Reduce speed to suit the conditions and increase the distance between you and any vehicles ahead.

Dust may cause an obstruction to drivers so slow down as you pass other vehicles.

You might also notice tyre tracks from other traffic – in most cases you'll want to follow these, as the compacted dirt makes for a smoother ride.

Steer and brake gently to avoid skidding and take particular care around corners.

Remember

Stop, Revive, Survive. Fatigue is a killer, and the only way to reduce this is to take plenty of rest stops and get enough sleep at night, so you're well rested for each day's drive.

We're here to help

Call our Road Safety team on **8202 4570** or email motoringroadrules@raa.com.au
raa.com.au/roadrules