

SAFE DRIVING IN IRELAND

Like many of us, you may have passed your driving test a long, long time ago and have never looked at the rules of the road since that last night before the test.

As we are heading into a Bank holiday weekend it is a timely opportunity to revisit the rules of the road so that you know what to do in the event of an accident or if you are amongst the first to arrive on the scene.

What drivers must do at an accident or emergency.

- **STOP**
Stop your vehicle and remain at the scene for a reasonable time.
- **Mark and Remove**
If vehicles are blocking the roadway or posing a danger to other road users, the roadway should be marked and the vehicle should then be removed as soon as possible.
- **Give Your Details**
If you are asked by a Garda, you must give your name and address, the address where the vehicle is kept, the name and address of the vehicle owner, the vehicle's registration number and evidence of insurance, such as the name of your insurance company or a disc or motor insurance certificate.
If there is no Garda at the scene, you must give this information to any person involved in the crash or, if requested, to an independent witness.
- **Report**
If you or another person are injured and there is no Garda at the scene, the accident must be reported to the nearest Garda station.

If the accident damages only property and there is a Garda in the immediate vicinity you must report it to the Garda. If there is no Garda available you must provide this information to the owner or the person in charge of the property. If, for any reason, neither a Garda nor the owner is immediately available you must give all relevant information at a Garda station as soon as reasonably possible.

- **Disposable Camera**
You are advised to keep a disposable camera with built-in flash in your vehicle and if possible take photographs of the scene and any damage done.
- **Warn Others**
Hazard Lights
Take care when moving damaged or broken-down vehicles and make every effort to warn oncoming traffic of the accident.
You can warn them by using your hazard lights.

If you need to ask for another road user to help to warn traffic, do so right away.

Reflective Triangle

If you have a reflective advance-warning triangle, (heavy vehicles and buses must have one), place it on the road far enough from the scene of the accident to give enough warning to approaching traffic.

When placing a triangle you should take account of prevailing road conditions, traffic speed and volume. This is particularly important on motorways and dual-carriageways.

- **High Visibility Vest**
It is recommended that you carry a high visibility vest or jacket and a torch in your vehicle. If there is an accident, wear the vest or jacket and use the torch to alert other road users of your presence.
- **Bends in the Road**
If the breakdown occurs near a bend in the road, make sure you give warning to traffic on both sides of the bend.
- **Leaking Fuel - DANGER**
Leaking fuel from a crashed vehicle is dangerous, so be careful approaching any vehicle after an accident.

What to do if you arrive at the scene of an accident

- **Do** remain calm.
- **Do** switch off the engine and apply the handbrake.
- **Do** use a reflective advance-warning triangle if available.
- **Do** switch on hazard warning lights and parking lights.
- **Do** make sure you are safe as you try to help others.
- **Do** make sure others are safe, however you should keep any injured people warm, by placing coats or rugs around them.
- **Do** organise bystanders to warn oncoming traffic from both directions, if this has not already been done. Be particularly careful at night so that people giving help are visible (by wearing reflective armbands or bright clothes or carrying lit torches).
- **Do** call for help. Contact the emergency services on 999 or 112.
- **Don't** panic - assess the situation before taking action.
- **Don't** stay at the scene if there are enough people helping and keeping it under control.
- **Don't** get injured yourself - park your vehicle safely out of the way
- **Don't** move an injured person unless there is a risk of fire or of the vehicle turning over.
- **Don't** attempt to lift a car off an injured person without help.
- **Don't** remove helmets from injured motorcyclists. Neck injuries are common in motorcycle collisions, and any attempt by inexperienced people to remove the helmet may leave the injured person paralysed from the neck down.
- **Don't** allow anyone to smoke at, or close, to the scene.

- **Don't** give an injured person anything to eat or drink.

Accidents involving dangerous goods

If a vehicle carrying petrol, heating fuel or acid is in an accident, you should:

- keep well clear of the scene,
- if possible, position yourself to make sure that the wind is not blowing from the accident towards you,
- warn other road users about the danger,
- Give as much information as possible about the marking labels on the vehicle when summoning help.
- Let the emergency services do any rescuing.

The signs for vehicles carrying hazardous chemicals are shown below.



Penalty points, fixed charges and driving bans

Encouraging good road user behaviour is important and Ireland has adopted a system of penalty points to support this change. This system is a key part of road safety policy in this country, and is designed to save lives.

If you break the law, there's a price to be paid. The system will record your failure and the penalty on your driver license record. For minor offences, the penalty is a sum of money, a fixed charge, and points that attach to your license record: penalty points. For more serious offences you may be brought to court. The system applies to both full and provisional license holders.

If you break the law and are caught, you will be fined and you will build up penalty points

REMEMBER If you collect 12 points in 36 months, you will be banned from driving.

This information is from the Road Safety Authority website