

Highway Code – Changes introduced in 2022

Changes to the current Highway Code (2015 version) were introduced on 29th January 2022. The new edition of the Code is the Highway Code 2022 edition and will be available from mid April to purchase. The changes are also set out on-line on the Department for Transport's website at: [The Highway Code - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/the-highway-code). The changes cover 8 principal areas of road user behaviour.

1. Introduction to the code of a “Hierarchy of road users”

The hierarchy places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy. It does not remove the need for everyone to behave responsibly.

It's important that all road users:

- are aware of The Highway Code
- are considerate to other road users
- understand their responsibility for the safety of others

2. People crossing the road at junctions

The updated code clarifies that:

- when people are crossing or waiting to cross at a junction, other traffic should give way
- if people have started crossing and traffic wants to turn into the road, the people crossing have priority and the traffic should give way
- people driving, riding a motorcycle, or cycling must give way to people on a zebra crossing and people walking and cycling on a parallel crossing

A parallel crossing is similar to a zebra crossing but includes a cycle route alongside the black and white stripes.

3. Walking, cycling or riding in shared spaces

There is new guidance in the code about routes and spaces which are shared by people walking, cycling and riding horses.

People cycling, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle should respect the safety of people walking in these spaces, but people walking should also take care not to obstruct or endanger them.

People cycling are asked to:

- not pass people walking, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle closely or at high speed, particularly from behind

- slow down when necessary and let people walking know they are there (for example, by ringing their bell)
- remember that people walking may be deaf, blind or partially sighted
- not pass a horse on the horse's left

4. Positioning in the road when cycling

There is updated guidance for people cycling about positioning themselves which includes:

- riding in the centre of their lane on quiet roads, in slower-moving traffic and at the approach to junctions or road narrowings
- keeping at least 0.5 metres (just over 1.5 feet) away from the kerb edge (and further where it is safer) when riding on busy roads with vehicles moving faster than them

People cycling in groups

The updated code explains that people cycling in groups:

- should be considerate of the needs of other road users when riding in groups
- can ride 2 abreast - and it can be safer to do so, particularly in larger groups or when accompanying children or less experienced riders

People cycling are asked to be aware of people driving behind them and allow them to overtake (for example, by moving into single file or stopping) when it's safe to do so.

People cycling passing parked vehicles

The updated code explains that people cycling should:

- take care when passing parked vehicles, leaving enough room (a door's width or 1 metre) to avoid being hit if a car door is opened
- watch out for people walking into their path

5. Overtaking when driving or cycling

You may cross a double-white line if necessary (provided the road is clear) to overtake someone cycling or riding a horse if they are travelling at 10 mph or less (Rule 129).

There is updated guidance on safe passing distances and speeds for people driving or riding a motorcycle when overtaking vulnerable road users, including:

- leaving at least 1.5 metres (5 feet) when overtaking people cycling at speeds of up to 30mph, and giving them more space when overtaking at higher speeds
- passing people riding horses or driving horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 10 mph and allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space
- allowing at least 2 metres (6.5 feet) of space and keeping to a low speed when passing people walking in the road (for example, where there's no pavement)

Wait behind them and do not overtake if it's unsafe or not possible to meet these clearances.

People cycling passing slower-moving or stationary traffic

The updated code confirms that people cycling may pass slower-moving or stationary traffic on their right or left.

They should proceed with caution as people driving may not be able to see them. This is particularly important:

- on the approach to junctions
- when deciding whether it is safe to pass lorries or other large vehicles

6. People cycling at junctions

The code has been updated to clarify that when turning into or out of a side road, people cycling should give way to people walking who are crossing or waiting to cross.

There is new advice about new special cycle facilities at some junctions.

Some junctions now include small cycle traffic lights at eye-level height, which may allow cyclists to move separately from or before other traffic. People cycling are encouraged to use these facilities where they make their journey safer and easier.

There is also new guidance for people cycling at junctions with no separate facilities.

The code recommends that people cycling should proceed as if they were driving a vehicle where there are no separate cyclist facilities. This includes positioning themselves in the centre of their chosen lane, where they feel able to do this safely. This is to:

- make them as visible as possible
- avoid being overtaken where this would be dangerous

People cycling turning right

The code now includes advice for people cycling using junctions where signs and markings tell them to turn right in 2 stages. These are:

- stage 1 - when the traffic lights turn green, go straight ahead to the location marked by a cycle symbol and turn arrow on the road, and then stop and wait
- stage 2 - when the traffic lights on the far side of the junction (now facing the people cycling) turn green, complete the manoeuvre

People cycling have priority when going straight ahead at junctions

The code clarifies that when people cycling are going straight ahead at a junction, they have priority over traffic waiting to turn into or out of a side road, unless road signs or markings indicate otherwise.

People cycling are asked to watch out for people driving intending to turn across their path, as people driving ahead may not be able to see them.

7. People cycling, riding a horse and driving horse-drawn vehicles on roundabouts

The code has been updated to clarify that people driving or riding a motorcycle should give priority to people cycling on roundabouts. The new guidance will say people driving and or riding a motorcycle should:

- not attempt to overtake people cycling within that person's lane
- allow people cycling to move across their path as they travel around the roundabout

The code already explained that people cycling, riding a horse and driving a horse-drawn vehicle may stay in the left-hand lane of a roundabout when they intend to continue across or around the roundabout.

Guidance has been added to explain that people driving should take extra care when entering a roundabout to make sure they do not cut across people cycling, riding a horse or driving a horse-drawn vehicle who are continuing around the roundabout in the left-hand lane.

8. Parking, charging and leaving vehicles

The code recommends a new technique when leaving vehicles. It's sometimes called the 'Dutch Reach'.

Where people driving or passengers in a vehicle are able to do so, they should open the door using their hand on the opposite side to the door they are opening. For example, using their left hand to open a door on their right-hand side.

This will make them turn their head to look over their shoulder behind them. They're then less likely to cause injury to:

- people cycling or riding a motorcycle passing on the road
- people on the pavement

Using an electric vehicle charge point

For the first time, the code includes guidance about using electric vehicle charging points.

When using one, people should:

- park close to the charge point and avoid creating a trip hazard for people walking from trailing cables
- display a warning sign if you can
- return charging cables and connectors neatly to minimise the danger to other people and avoid creating an obstacle for other road users

Information available within the Rotherham and wider South Yorkshire area.

As members of the Safer Roads Partnership, changes to the highway code have been conveyed through via a number of different streams as part of their communications plan. These include:

- Issuing of an initial press release on Monday 31 January;
- Uploading an article on their website: <https://sysrp.co.uk/News/codechanges>;
- Delivering a week of social media w/c 31 January around #HighwayCode (as per the DfT toolkit);
- Circulating our proposed plan of action, assets and links to all SRP communications teams;
- Introducing a Highway Code landing page on the website where more details of the changes can be found <https://sysrp.co.uk/Highway-Code>;
- Providing a media interview to Sheffield Live TV on 3 February;
- Sharing information with stakeholders and relevant business contacts to enable them to distribute messages amongst their workforce and networks;
- Delivering paid-for advertising w/c 28 February and 7 March boosting posts on Facebook about the new safe passing distances when overtaking cyclists;
- Providing a further week of social media messaging w/c 28 February using DfT artwork;
- Issuing a further press release w/c 28 February linked to World Book Day;

- Featuring the Highway Code changes as part of the Safer Roads Manager's blog in March;
- Continuing to distribute messages and provide reminders of the changes when at events or delivering relevant training.

In Rotherham we have also used the variable message signs on the local road network to display reminders to drivers, signposting them to the .GOV website for further information.

Given the extensive number of changes, it is not possible to communicate all the updates at once. Therefore, as a partnership we propose to provide an ongoing Highway Code communications drive, focusing on a small number of updates/changes each time. In this way we can provide more easily digestible bitesize chunks of information but also continue to promote the wider changes and signpost people to the detailed materials. We will also align with any future DfT communications activity and convey messages locally.

Further details can be found at: [The Highway Code - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code)

South Yorkshire Safer Roads Partnership details on this are at: sysrp.co.uk
