

# Highway Code changes 29th January 2022

On the 29th January 2022, some major changes to the Highway Code will come into effect. If you drive, whether for Post Office or otherwise, these changes will affect you, so it's important that you take some time to be aware of them. Whilst the contents of the Highway Code are not all legal requirements in themselves, many are and failing to drive in accordance with the Highway Code is also used as evidence of driving offences under the Road Traffic Act 1988 and other laws. In short, you can be prosecuted if you don't follow it.

**To help, here are a few of the key changes coming into force:**

**1) Rule H1 - introduces a new hierarchy of road users, recognising that drivers of larger vehicles have a greater responsibility towards more vulnerable road users:** So, truck drivers have the greatest responsibility, followed by van and car drivers, then motorcyclists, horse riders and cyclists, before affording pedestrians the most protection.

This may sound unfair but when you think about it, makes perfect sense ... a mistake from a truck or van driver will cause far more harm to a cyclist or pedestrian, than a mistake by them will cause to a truck or van driver.

**2) Rule H2 – states that you should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross a road into which or from which you are turning.** This is arguably the most significant change being made and one that you need to be very aware of particularly if driving in areas with lots of pedestrians.

**3) Rule H3 – states that you should not cut across cyclists going ahead when turning into or out of a junction or changing direction or lane,** just as you would not turn across the path of another motor vehicle. You should stop and wait for a safe gap in the flow of cyclists if necessary.

This is mostly obvious, however you should take particular care when in slow moving traffic to give way to cyclists who may be passing on the left, whether in a cycle lane or on the road.

**4) Rule 163 – provides guidance for overtaking motorcyclists, cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians:**

- leave a minimum distance of 1.5 metres at speeds under 30 mph
- leave a minimum distance of 2.0 metres at speeds over 30 mph
- large vehicles should leave a minimum distance of 2.0 metres in all conditions
- pass horse riders and horse-drawn vehicles at speeds under 15 mph and allow at least 2.0 metres space

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– allow at least 2.0 metres space where a pedestrian is walking in the road Safety, Health and Environment the Highway Code Changes to be introduced from 29th January 2022 pass them at low speed – you should wait behind the motorcyclist, cyclist, horse rider, horse drawn vehicle or pedestrian and not overtake if it is unsafe or not possible to meet these clearances. In other words, “pass wide and slow” and always wait until it is safe to pass.

**5) Rule 239 – will introduce a new technique, known as the ‘Dutch Reach’.** This advises that road users should open the door of their vehicle with the hand on the opposite side to the door they are opening which naturally causes the person to twist their body making it easy to look over their shoulder and check for other road users. You are then more likely to avoid causing injury to cyclists or motorcyclists passing you on the road, or to people on the pavement.

**6) The rules for cyclists instruct that on quiet roads, in slow-moving traffic, or at the approach to junctions or road narrowing’s; they should ride in the centre of the lane to make themselves as clearly visible as possible. Where it is safe to do so, they should move over to the left if vehicles wish to overtake.**

You should therefore expect to see cyclists riding in the centre of the lane rather than the left. If they don’t move over immediately, bear in mind that they may be aware of hazards that you cannot see. Potholes or even painted lines in wet weather create hazards for cyclists that you may not be aware of.

Full details of the changes can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/highway-code-road-safety>