

Driver Awareness Scheme (DAS)

Webinar Workbook



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Register on to the relevant course 24 hours prior to the course start time – failure to register will result in the course off being withdrawn and referred back to the Fixed Penalty or Prosecution process depending on eligibility criteria.

Complete the mandatory pre-course workbook (approximately 60 mins) prior to the online seminar start time, as this will form part of the Webinar and reference will be made to it during the course.

Please ensure that you have downloaded the GoToTraining application and are ready to start the course 20 minutes before the event. **If you arrive after the course start time you will be dismissed from the course.**

To gain access to the course participants MUST;

- Have photographic ID available should you be requested to show it.
- Engage in all modules
- Fully participate in all polls and set quizzes
- Be focussed and prepared to answer questions

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- Disruptive behaviour, intoxication, wilful non-compliance, or wilful misbehaviour whilst on a course is unacceptable.
- Using a mobile phone is prohibited throughout the course as this can cause disruption and is a distraction in a learning environment. As mobile technology can be used for recording and photography there is also a Safeguarding and Data Protection issue. The only exception would be if you are using this as your device to complete the course, which is not recommended as there are known issues with using a mobile phone for this purpose.
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Introduction



As you have been registered to complete the Dorset Driver Awareness Scheme (DAS) Course, you must complete all sections and exercises in this workbook before attending.

Many drivers assume that passing their driving test means they have the necessary knowledge and skills to drive through to old age, but there can be many human factors that affect your driving abilities along the way. You can make mistakes when driving no matter how experienced you are or how well you have been trained. Sometimes, you may deliberately break the road traffic law believing that it will not be a risk to do so.

Road traffic injuries are consistently one of the top three causes of death for people aged between 5 and 44 years and it is often stated that human error is a major contributor to road traffic crashes.

As more technology is introduced to reduce human error, some level of driver disengagement is inevitable. As well as new skills being required for the assisted driving task, concerns have also been expressed about how increasing automation may lead to driver skills fading so that drivers are ill-prepared for taking over manual control.

As human beings, we tend to make basic mistakes in our thinking. We can't stop ourselves from making these mistakes. But if we're aware of them, then we can make sure they don't put us at risk on the road.

The Dorset DAS Course is not a 'Speed Awareness Course'. It is offered for a range of offences including driving through a red traffic light or careless and inconsiderate driving. It may also be offered to people as refresher training if they drive for work.

This workbook will take you through some of the human factors underpinning driving behaviour, whether your offence was due to an error, lapse of concentration or a deliberate violation.

Risk

1.0

1.1 True or False?

First of all, tell us which of these statements you believe are true or false.

It's important that you do this first as we will be discussing your answers during the course. Make sure you give your honest opinion or belief and not what you think should be the 'right' answer.

No.	Statement	True or False
1	It's illegal to eat a sandwich whilst driving	
2	It's illegal for cyclists to ride two abreast	
3	Cyclists must use cycle lanes so they don't cause crashes	
4	Cyclists don't pay road tax so those that do have a priority	
5	It's an offence to use a touch screen device whilst driving	
6	A road marked with 3 lanes is a dual carriageway (depending on direction of travel)	
7	I'm ok to use my mobile phone while stationary in a queue	
8	An amber light on a traffic light means 'get ready to go'	
9	Everyone speeds	
10	If you leave a gap, other road users jump in	

1.2 What's the Risk?

Most road traffic incidents are due to risk-taking behaviour such as,

- poor decision making
- driving when tired
- not leaving enough space between the vehicle and other road users
- using a mobile phone whilst driving

You have the ability to influence how much demand you place on yourself as a driver. The easiest way to reduce risk, especially when the traffic situation is difficult, is to reduce your speed.

For example, the faster you drive, the less time you have to,

- process information
- make safe decisions
- take action
- correct errors

Multi-tasking and other distractions such as talking on the mobile phone or using a music system – make the task of driving even harder. The fact is that a lot of us overestimate our driving ability and we underestimate the risks we face on the road.

The next few sections will cover some biases in the way we think. These are mental shortcuts the brain uses based on our beliefs and values which influence our decisions or judgements about different driving and traffic situations.

1.3 Optimism Bias

As humans we generally believe that bad things don't happen to us. For example, we think we're less likely than other people to get ill.

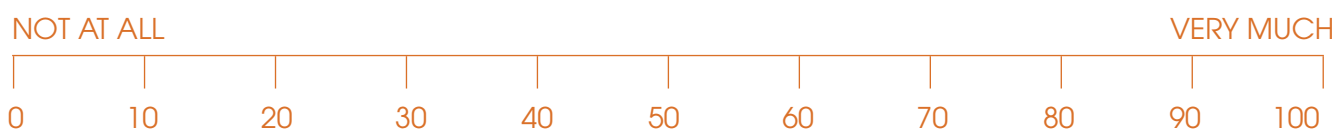
The same applies to things like being stopped by the police if we break a traffic law or crashing if we take a risk. We think we're more likely than others to get away with it.

We don't want to believe something bad will happen to us. It's a kind of defence mechanism.

In life as a whole, optimism bias is quite a good thing. It helps us get through the day!

Test yourself

Compared to other drivers, how likely do you think you are of being involved in a crash when you are driving?



Where did you place yourself? If you believe there's little chance that you'll have a crash, then you're more likely to take risks and increase your statistical risk by the way in which you choose to drive.

Typically, you will have shown some optimism bias if you score yourself as anywhere below 50. This means that you believe you are safer than other drivers. Whether your self-rating is realistic or not is difficult to determine but most people judge themselves to have a lower probability of being involved in a crash compared with others – and they can't all be right.

- Your self-rating should be similar to that of your rating for your peers.
- If there is a big difference between your rating for yourself and your rating for others, ask yourself whether this difference is realistic.
- Is your driving really that much better than your peers?

IMPROVE YOUR RISK

Through self-reflection, make a note of how you could reduce your risk in future.

1.4 Self-Enhancement Bias

When we compare ourselves to other people, we naturally pay more attention to things that show us in a positive light and dismiss the things that show us in a negative light – we say they are “bad luck” or “someone else's fault”. This is called ‘self-enhancement bias’. For drivers one of the effects is the belief that they are skilled and experienced enough to take risks.

Assess your Driving Skills

Have a look at the following questionnaire and estimate how much skill you have in each aspect of driving. Tick the box that best represents your judgement of your skills using the following scale:

1 = Well below average 2 = Below average 3 = About average 4 = Above average 5 = Well above average

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Tolerating other drivers' blunders calmly					
2	Performance in a critical situation					
3	Perceiving hazards in traffic					
4	Driving in a strange city					
5	Conforming to the traffic rules					
6	Managing the car through a skid					
7	Prediction of traffic situations ahead					
8	Knowing how to act in particular traffic situations					
9	Fluent lane-changing in heavy traffic					
10	Fast reactions					

		1	2	3	4	5
11	Paying attention to other road users					
12	Driving fast if necessary					
13	Driving in the dark					
14	Keeping sufficient following distance					
15	Adjusting your speed to the conditions					
16	Overtaking					
17	Conforming to the speed limits					
18	Avoiding unnecessary risks					

How did you score?

Look carefully at those areas where you have scored yourself as above average. Are you sure your skills are above average all the time? Under what circumstances are you less likely to perform these driving tasks competently? You might rate yourself differently when you are in a hurry or in a bad mood?

There are a number of reasons that will have influenced how you rated your skills as a driver:

1. The tendency to ignore times when you were not driving well
2. You only focus on times when your driving was skilled and ignore times when you were not driving well
3. A belief that bad outcomes are because of other drivers' decisions and not yours
4. You tend to see what you expect to see
5. The tendency to overestimate your control in risky situations
6. A hindsight bias that means safe outcomes are interpreted as the result of actions you took as a driver rather than due to good fortune

Whatever your perception of your driving skills, there is often a difference between what you think and your actual driving skills. This is due to the way humans think. For example you may have a tendency to misperceive the way traffic events unfold and selectively process information in your favour.

Errors (mistakes) and Violations (breaking the law)

There is no such thing as a perfect driver. An error is when you make a mistake or have a failure in your concentration. A violation is a deliberate action which breaks the law.

Look at each item below and think about how often you've done these kinds of things over the last year.

Statement	Error or Violation
Attempt to overtake someone that you hadn't noticed to be signalling a right turn	
Fail to notice that pedestrians are crossing when turning into a side street from a main road	
Drive especially close to the car in front as a signal to its driver to go faster or get out of the way	
Cross a junction knowing that the traffic lights have already turned against you	
Disregard the speed limits late at night or very early in the morning	
Fail to check your rear-view mirror before pulling out, changing lanes, etc.	
Become impatient with a slow driver in the outer lane and overtake on the inside	
Underestimate the speed of an oncoming vehicle when overtaking	
Brake too quickly on a slippery road, or steer the wrong way in a skid	
Drive even though you realise you may be over the legal blood-alcohol limit	

How did you do?

Look carefully at those areas that apply to you most often.

If you assessed yourself honestly, you'll know that thinking about why you have made a mistake or committed a violation is the first step to finding out how you can avoid this in the future.

Ask yourself: What are the circumstances under which I am more likely to commit errors and violations?

Every time you make a mistake or commit a violation there is an opportunity to be a better driver by reflecting on the reasons why it happened. These are the triggers for self-reflection - the first step in developing safer driving habits by acknowledging your weaknesses - not necessarily due to poor driving skills - but due to the belief that your driving skills are above average and that you can therefore afford to take risks.

When you understand how your beliefs about risk and confidence in your driving skills might influence your driving behaviour - then take steps to recognise this tendency when you're behind the wheel - you can make safer decisions.

1.5 Confirmation (What's Worked Before) Bias

Confirmation bias is the tendency to search for, interpret, favour, and recall information in a way that supports your beliefs and ignores contrary information. Are you prone to confirmation bias when driving?

What's Worked Bias

Think carefully about the following driving scenarios and answer whether a personal bias has affected any of your driving decisions in the last 12 months.

Driving Scenario	Yes / No
You believe it is OK to drive faster than others around you because nothing bad happens and everyone else does it.	
You think it is OK to overtake on a bend because you know the road and there's hardly ever any oncoming traffic.	
You drive really close to the car in front because this always gets them to move out of the way.	
You cross a junction knowing that the traffic lights have already turned against you because there's plenty of time to make it across before the waiting traffic moves.	
You don't stick to the speed limits late at night or very early in the morning because there's no police around and hardly any traffic.	

How did you do?

Could you identify which scenarios might trigger you to be vulnerable to confirmation or what's worked bias? Think about the potential consequences of making decisions based on past experiences. You are taking a calculated risk. A risk is an event that "may" occur. The probability of something going wrong with your decision can range anywhere from just above 0% percent to just below 100%. The question is -do you feel lucky? The law of probability means that you cannot escape the negative consequences of risk taking all the time. Eventually, your luck will run out.

IMPROVE YOUR RISK

Confirmation and What's worked bias increases your risk of being involved in a crash.

- Be aware of when you are most likely to make decision based on bias.
- Consider the potential risks in these scenarios.
- Attend to information that might run contrary to your beliefs.
- Allow for a high chance that the scenario may not unfold as safely as you think it will.

1.6 Good Enough Bias

This is a bias in which you choose the satisfactory 'good enough' option, when choosing from different paths of action. Driving is a complex and difficult task at times, and you may develop a habit of exerting less than optimum effort and consider this to be acceptable. However, there are risks when you are influenced by the good enough bias.

Think about each of the different examples below and honestly rate yourself for how frequently you do these things: -

	Not at all		All the time		
	0	1	2	3	4
Staying in the same lane when you should move left.					
Following the speed of the vehicle in front when you should be looking ahead to make your own decisions about speed.					
Not checking your mirrors as often as you should or when you should.					
Accelerate to get through traffic lights before they turn red to avoid the effort of having to stop.					
Cut across the corner rather than turn at right angles into a junction because it's less effort.					
Staying in the same gear when you should change up or down.					
Pay little attention to road signs.					

How did you do?

Look carefully at those areas where you have recognised that you may not drive to the best of your ability. Think about the potential consequences of not putting in the effort whilst driving. For example, staying in the same lane might mean putting in less effort, but it may also result in other road users becoming frustrated and overtake you at risk.

IMPROVE YOUR RISK

- Good enough bias means you may not exert an optimum level of effort in driving. Self-reflection point
- Next time you have a near miss, consider what element of your driving needs to be improved.

For example

- Should you have changed lanes earlier?
- Should you have been checking your mirrors more?
- Should you have followed the road signs better?

Look again at the responses and ratings you gave for each of the biases. Consider whether your probability of being involved in a crash is optimistic. Have you underestimated your risk?

Think about what the errors and violations you are likely to commit. For example, you have a tendency to,

- drive too fast for the circumstances and may lose control of your vehicle.
- use your mobile phone whilst your driving and become distracted.

- drive too close to other vehicles in a traffic queue and might go into the back of another car.
- emerge from junctions without looking out for fast moving vehicles in the far distance.

Once you have thought about these things it is easy to discover how to reduce your risk. To be a better and safer driver, recognise your mistakes and think about how to make safer decisions every time you drive.

IMPROVE YOUR RISK

Biases in your beliefs about your driving skills are a common human tendency that we are mostly unaware of.

Next time another driver is aggressive towards you for making a mistake, instead of automatically defending your actions, consider what element of your driving needs to be improved.

For example

- Were you driving too close?
- Did you force another driver to brake quite harshly? Were you driving too fast for the conditions?
- Did you fail to look in the mirror and see this road user?



Influences

2.0

The association between stress and crash involvement has been well established. Studies have found that individuals who have experienced recent traumatic life events (e.g., divorce) have a greater risk of crash involvement.

There may be two main reasons for this link:

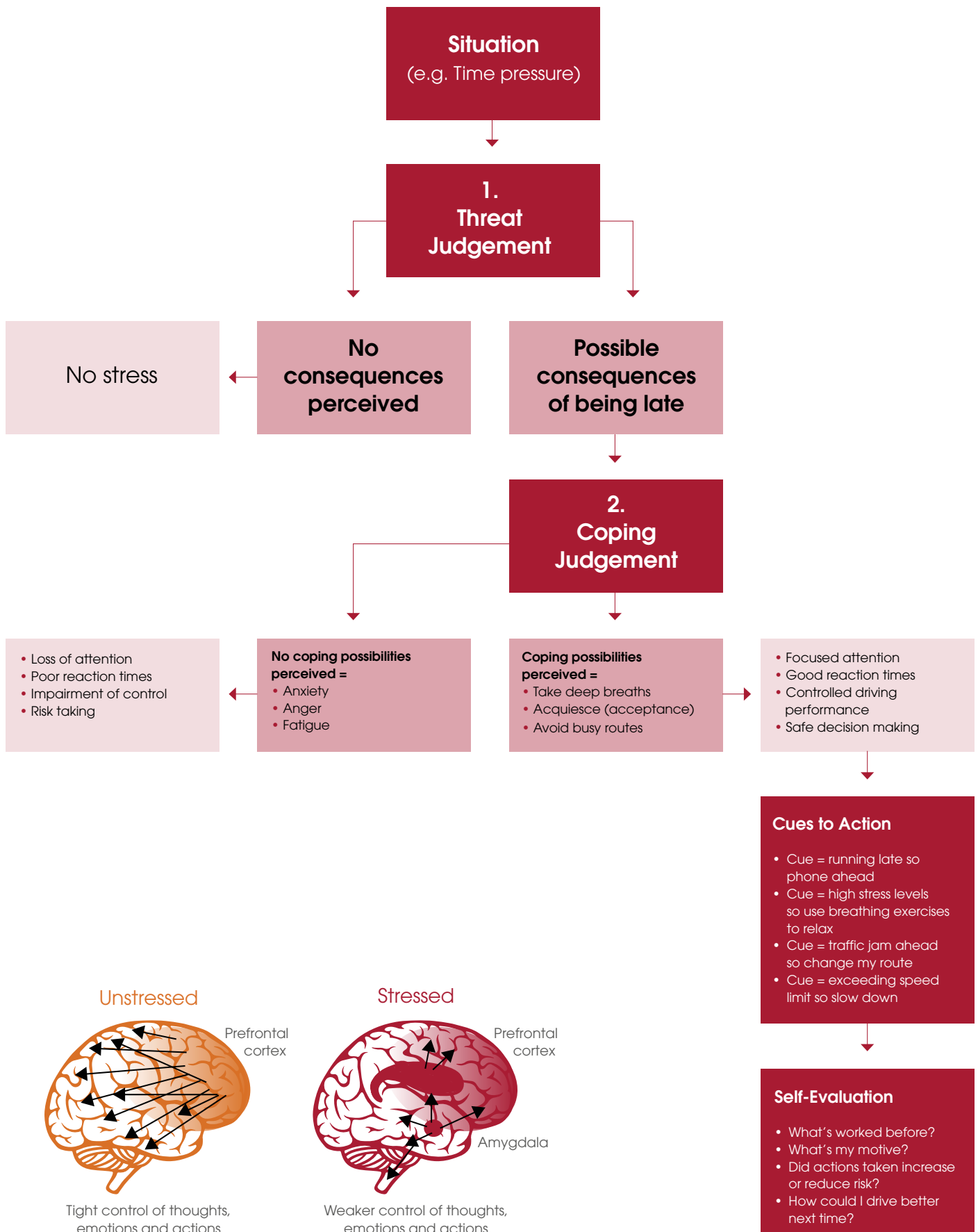
- Drivers who are stressed may be distracted by thoughts about their personal problems.
- Stress may cause drivers to lack the necessary motivation to avoid hazardous driving situations.

The Behavioural Model of Driver Stress

The Behavioural Model of Driver Stress shows how we commonly react to a situation based upon our first thoughts and coping mechanism which usually results in some stress.

Understanding your own triggers to emotions behind the wheel is the first step to controlling your responses and improving your risk.

2.1 The Behavioural Model of Driver Stress



2.2 Time Pressure

Driving under time pressure often leads to high risk driving such as speeding and dangerous overtaking. This is particularly the case for those people driving for work or with a busy schedule. For many situations you can call ahead to remove any perceived pressure due to being late.

SELF REFLECTION POINT

Think about how you drive when you are under time pressure compared to when you are not. Do you often find yourself running late and wishing you had organized things better? Are you more likely to take risks when you are running late?

- Are the few minutes saved really worth the risks you're tempted to take by driving too fast?
- Question what you think the consequences of lateness really are. Will being late really affect you?
- Ask yourself whether others would really want you to increase the risk of a crash and the consequences to you, other road users and the vehicle so that you are not so late?

2.3 Using Safe Coping Strategies

When you feel stressed you have different coping options. Safe coping strategies like looking out for hazards and increasing your concentration will improve your safety whereas as unsafe coping strategies like getting angry will increase your risk.

Imagine yourself in this scenario...

You are driving on a country road on the way to visit a friend. You are running a little late and notice that you are going over the speed limit.

Unsafe Coping

- Keep checking the time and thinking about whether you will make it.
- Get annoyed when you see a slow-moving tractor ahead of you.
- Keep driving over the speed limit so you can be on time.

ASK YOURSELF

- How much time am I really likely to save by driving a few miles over the speed limit?
- Am I accurately assessing the risk of driving too fast on country roads?
- Am I feeling stressed, will this mean that I might miss hazards because I'm thinking about being late?

Safe coping options

- I'll just take it easy and enjoy the drive instead – my friend won't mind if I'm a little late.
- I'm going to relax on the journey so I can enjoy time with my friend.
- I can pull over and let my friend know I'm going to be a little late.
- I'll make a special effort to focus on my driving.

Do you use mostly safe or unsafe coping strategies? Try and focus on increasing your use of safe coping strategies and reduce your use of poor coping strategies. On your next journeys make sure you follow the coping strategies below to help you be a safer driver.

When driving is difficult...

1. Make a special effort to look out for hazards
2. Make an extra effort to drive safely
3. Make an effort to stay calm and relaxed
4. Concentrate on what you have to do next
5. Learn from your mistakes

When you might have a difficult journey to do....

1. Plan your journey in advance
2. Give yourself as much time as possible by leaving early.
3. Avoid travelling at busy time whenever you can.
4. Recognize how the stress of being under time pressure might affect your driving
5. Take some deep breaths and relax.

2.4 Angry Driving

Another emotion that can often lead to crashes is anger. Angry drivers frequently express their irritation by behaving aggressively towards other road users. This can include: -

- verbal abuse,
- gestures,
- flashing lights,
- tailgating
- horn-blowing
- lane hogging

Angry drivers frequently express their irritation by behaving aggressively towards other road users. Not surprisingly, such behaviour is known to be dangerous. This is because strong emotions such as anger tends to take up a lot of your brain's processing capacity, leaving less for you to concentrate on your driving. Angry drivers spend less time assessing situations and are quicker to allocate blame to others.

Imagine yourself in this scenario...

You are driving in the city at rush hour when someone pulls right out in front of you, and you have to brake sharply. You are very annoyed and use your horn and shout at the driver. You then accelerate sharply around the driver and continue on your way. You can feel your blood pressure has gone up.

ASK YOURSELF

- What was going through my mind? Did I think that the driver deliberately pulled out in front of me?
- What if the driver was distracted and made a mistake? Would that change how I reacted?
- Does getting annoyed help the situation or change anything for the better?
- How has my reaction increased my risk?

Safer coping: -

- I should give other drivers the benefit of the doubt.
- Getting annoyed will only put me at risk
- I'll change the way I think about mistakes by other road users.

2.5 Test Yourself

Think about how angry each of the following traffic situations would typically make you feel.

		Not at all Angry	A little Angry	Fairly Angry	Very Angry	Extremely Angry
1	Someone in front of you doesn't move off straight away when the traffic lights turn green					
2	Someone is driving too fast for the road conditions					
3	A pedestrian walks slowly across the middle of the street, slowing you down					
4	Someone is driving too slowly in the outside lane, and holding up traffic					
5	Someone is driving very close to your rear bumper					
6	Someone is weaving in and out of the traffic					
7	Someone cuts in right in front of you on the motorway					
8	Someone fails to indicate before turning					
9	Someone is driving more slowly than is reasonable for the traffic flow					
10	A slow vehicle on a winding road will not pull over and let people pass					
11	Someone backs out right in front of you without looking					
12	Someone runs a red light or 'Stop' sign					
13	Someone beeps their horn at you about your driving					
14	Someone coming towards you doesn't dim their headlights at night					
15	At night someone is driving right behind you with bright lights on					
16	Someone speeds up as you try to pass them					
17	You are stuck in a traffic jam					
18	Someone is driving well above the speed limit					
19	Someone shouts at you about your driving					

2.6 Summary

Reflect on the circumstances under which you may lose your temper when driving and what you can do to reduce your levels of stress and frustration. Finding different strategies on how to tackle difficulties and frustrations in traffic often makes you feel more in control and less prone to stress and angry outbursts. Understanding your own triggers to emotions behind the wheel is the first step to controlling your responses and improving your risk.



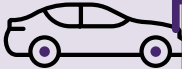





Strategies for Safer Driving

3.0

3.1 Speed Limits

Because we miss signs, something like a speed limit sign is not registered, possibly because of its position or possibly because we think we know the speed limit or make up our own speed limits. When driving, a few miles per hour can mean the difference between life and death. The faster you drive, the less time you have to stop if something unexpected happens.

For example, if someone steps into the road in front of you, the following table shows the difference travelling over the 30-mph speed limit makes.

Speed of vehicle (MPH)		Speed of vehicle (MPH) on impact
30	 	0
32	 	11
35	 	18
40	 	26

With a high level of concentration, as alert as you possibly can be, the average human reaction time is 0.7 of a second and we can only stop as quickly as we react.

The speed limit is the absolute maximum, and it doesn't mean it's safe to drive at this speed in all conditions. Speed contributes to around 1 in 4 fatal collisions on our roads, this includes collisions where the driver was within the speed limit but driving too fast for the road conditions.

Did you know? There are 2 'blanket' speed limits, 30 mph and the National Speed Limit (NSL), referred to as 'blanket' because they cover a large area. You will see where a speed-limit starts as there will be a sign. However, there is no specific requirement that signs indicating the beginning of a speed limit be placed on each side of the road. This relaxation has been made to reduce environmental impact, but a single sign must be clearly visible to all road users. In some instances, the sign might be placed on the off side of the road. When a blanket limit is declared you won't see any other signs.

The presence of streetlights generally means that there is a 30 mph (48 km/h) speed limit unless otherwise specified. [Highway Code - Rule 124](#)

SELF REFLECTION POINT

Do you sometimes go over the speed limit?

In what circumstances is this likely to happen?

What can you do to make sure that you keep to the speed limits?

Remember it's a limit, not a target!

3.2 Keep Your Eyes Moving

Drivers who rapidly scan the whole road environment looking for different kinds of hazards have a much lower risk of a crash than drivers who concentrate on one area. Eye scanning helps you to spot more hazards, process information and stay aware of the traffic situation as it changes.

Scanning is a continuous process and requires high levels of concentration. When you are approaching a junction, or looking to turn left or right, your eyes do not capture one continuous image. The scan itself does not capture information. It is when the eyes land, the fixation that creates a snapshot. Between fixations are a danger, and another road user could fall within these blind spots and not be seen.

On every drive, anew view opens out in front of you constantly. You need to quickly scan the new scene including the far distance, the middle distance, the near view, the sides and rear. This means that you will know where the areas of risk are all around you. Check and re-check these risk areas as the scene changes. Try not to focus too long on particular risk areas because this means that you might miss other areas that are also risky.

3.3 Commentary Driving

As a driver, you have to process information from several different sources through different senses at the same time – road conditions, traffic as well as navigate. Keeping your eyes moving is essential for situational awareness but sometimes the next step in being in control is required – especially when you're driving in a high-risk road environment in dense traffic. When your brain is required to process a lot of information, it can discard or forget new information from the road scene before it can be stored. If important information is filtered out, you might miss an unfolding hazard that can turn into a dangerous situation very quickly. Processing complex information can slow down your reaction times and you may fail to notice hazards. External distractions (e.g., passengers)

and internal distractions (e.g., stress) means that your attention is diverted from important driving-related information to other non-driving related matters.

One of the best strategies for concentrating and therefore being in control is to do a commentary drive. A commentary drive will help you to stay focused and to re-adjust your priorities as the situation develops. With practice you can learn to concentrate on the priorities. A running commentary means that you briefly say out loud the hazards you can observe and how you plan to deal with them. Hazards include road features such as junctions, other road users, and road signs. Hazards should be prioritized according to their danger including how close it is to you, whether the hazard is stationary or moving and how fast you are approaching it.

3.4 A Commitment to Change

Make a commitment to change the way you think and feel about your driving so that you can manage the risks you've identified and start with a personal goal.

MY GOAL IS:

.....

To achieve this, I will:

.....

My plan might not work because:

.....

The coping strategies I will use to overcome these barriers are:

.....

I will review my progress every:

.....

Keep reviewing your action plan to see how well you have achieved your goals and share it with someone you know to help you succeed.

Remember only you can meet the challenge of changing your driving behaviour if you believe you can. Once you understand how your beliefs about risk and your own driving abilities influence your driving behaviour, then you can take steps to recognise this tendency when you're behind the wheel. It's at this point that you have the opportunity to make safer decisions.

Safe driving!

There is no need to return this workbook, it is for your reference.



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