

# Road Safety in Ireland



**В Ірландії**



**Лівосторонній  
рух**



See [RSA.ie](https://www.rsa.ie)





## Introduction

Using the Road in Ireland

There are almost 100,000 kilometres of roads in Ireland. These roads range from Motorway to narrow single lane rural roads.. Whether walking, cycling, motorcycling or driving, this guide will provide you with some basic rules of the road to ensure you can stay safe.

## Driving In Ireland

Before driving on a road in Ireland you must ensure that you familiarise yourself with the Rules Of The Road. This document provides a brief introduction to some of the main rules of the road. The full rules of the road for Ireland are available on the Road Safety Authority (RSA) website [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie)

**All traffic drives on the left in Ireland.**

If you are driving plan your route. Know where the vehicle's safety equipment is located (hi-viz vest, warning triangle first aid kit etc). Know where you are going and where you plan to take rest breaks before setting off on your journey. If using satellite navigation be sure to set your journey before your drive.

The rules of the road are enforced by the national police force in Ireland which is called An Garda Siochana.

## Speed Limits

Speed limits in Ireland are measured in kilometres (km/h). Speed cameras are in use on Irish roads. Locations of cameras are available on [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

When driving always check the speed signs and check your speed.

## Slow Down

Driving too fast is a factor in 1 in 3 fatal crashes in Ireland. Speeding reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around bends and increases the distance necessary to stop a car.

Like most countries Ireland applies different speed limits to different types of roads. The table on the following page gives examples of the various default speed limits.








Special lower speed limits are used in some urban areas where there are lower volumes of traffic such as housing estates. These areas are referred to as Slow Zones and are designed to help manage the flow of traffic in high risk areas. Other traffic calming measures such as speed ramps are usually found at these zones.

**Slowing down saves lives.**

## Slow Zone

Special speed limit usually found in residential areas where there would be a high level of danger including children at play.



Sign	Type of Road	Speed Limit
	Motorway (Blue Signs — M Numbers)	120km/h
	National Roads: (Primary and Secondary) (Green Signs — N Numbers)	100km/h
	Typically found on non-national or rural roads, where a reduced limit of 80km/h is in place.	80km/h
	Non-national Roads: (Regional and Local) (White signs — R or L Numbers)	80km/h
	Special speed limit typically found in sub-urban areas with there is a high density of traffic.	60km/h
	Special speed limit typically found at an urban or sub-urban area where the reduced limit of 40km/h applies	40km/h
	Special speed limit used for some roads in built-up areas, such as cities, towns and boroughs. Usually with high levels of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.	30km/h

## Traffic Lights

A red light means “stop”. If the light is red as you approach it, you must not go beyond the stop line at the light or, if there is no stop line, beyond the light.

A green light means you may go on if the way is clear. Take special care if you intend to turn left or right and give way to pedestrians who are crossing.

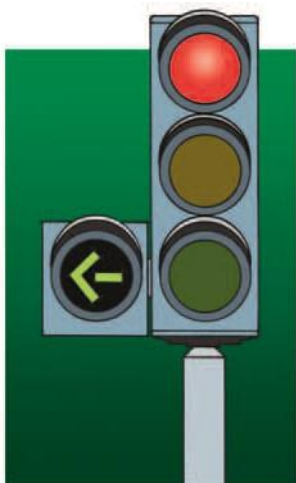


The sequence of traffic lights in Ireland maybe different to what you are used to. The usual sequence is green, amber, red and green again.

An amber light means that you must not go beyond the stop line or, if there is no stop line, beyond the light. However, you may go on if you are so close to the line or the light when the amber light first appears that stopping would be dangerous. An amber light always follows a green light and precedes a red light.

Sometimes a flashing amber arrow shows which means you may proceed in the direction of the arrow but only if it is safe to do so — you must yield if other traffic is approaching. A green arrow (also known as the filter light) means that you may move on in the direction of the arrow, assuming it is safe and the way is clear, even if a red light is also showing.

Always keep a look out for emergency vehicles who may be responding to an incident using blue lights and sirens.



# Traffic Signs

There are five types of traffic signs on Irish roads:

1. **Regulatory traffic signs.** These signs must be obeyed.



Yield



Keep Left

2. **Warning traffic signs.** These signs warn road users of a hazard ahead.



Roundabout



Dangerous Bends

3. **Warning signs for road works.** These signs are orange in colour and warn road users that there are road works ahead.



Roadworks Ahead

4. **Information signs.** These signs show directions and locations of services or other places of interest to road users.



Wild Atlantic Way



Advance direction to local services

5. **Motorway signs.** These signs are rectangular with blue back- grounds and white writing or symbols.



Motorway

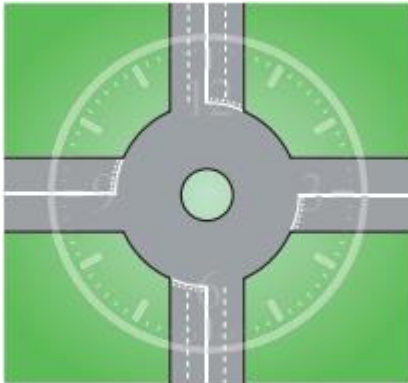


Entry To Motorway



## Roundabouts

By law, a driver must enter a roundabout by turning to the left. Treat the roundabout as a junction and give right-of-way to traffic already on it. If you are unfamiliar with driving on the left hand side of the road, roundabouts may pose a particular risk please take extra care.



## Never Ever Drink And Drive

It is a criminal offence to drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle above the legal limit for alcohol and the following levels will result in arrest and further testing at a Garda station (police station):

- Learner drivers, newly qualified drivers and professional drivers shall not exceed 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.
- All other drivers shall not exceed 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.



An Garda Síochána (Irish Police) has the power to test any driver stopped at a Mandatory Impairment Testing checkpoint for drugs and alcohol at the roadside. An Garda Síochána conducts mandatory testing of drivers for alcohol at the scene of a crash where someone has been injured, or of a driver who has been injured and removed to hospital. Maximum penalties on conviction for drink or drug driving is €5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment. All drink driving offences carry a minimum 3 month disqualification. You may also be breath tested if you commit a road traffic offence.

**The Road Safety Authority's advice is never ever drink and drive, as any amount of alcohol impairs driving.**

It is also an offence to drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle while impaired due to the influence of drugs. Gardaí have the power to carry out Chemical Roadside Testing for certain Drugs. It is an offence to refuse to perform drug impairment tests.

## Cyclists

Drivers must keep a safe distance when overtaking cyclists. They should give a 1 metre space when overtaking a cyclist in speed zones that are 50 km/h or under, and a 1.5 metre space when overtaking a cyclist in speed zones over 50 km/h.



## Driver Fatigue

The Road Safety Authority has the following advice for tired drivers:

Stop, park in a safe place and take a nap for 15-20 minutes (set your mobile phone alarm). This is the most important thing to do.

To really make the most of the break, take a caffeine drink before the nap (150mg of caffeine e.g. 2 cups of coffee). After the nap, the caffeine should have started to take effect.

Then get some fresh air and stretch your legs for a few minutes.

By following all of the above advice you should be able to drive for another hour or so.

***Never fight sleep at the wheel.***

## **Mobile Phones**

Drivers using mobile phones are 4 times more likely to be involved in a crash. Not only is it dangerous, but it's against the law and you could be fined.

It is an offence to use a mobile phone while driving, which includes touching or holding a mobile phone in your hand at any time.



## **Seat belts**

Seat belts are proven lifesavers and must by law be used on every single journey.

Without a safety belt, 3 out of 4 people will be killed or seriously injured in a 50 km/h (31 mph) head-on collision.

Every person in a car is legally required to wear a safety belt where one is fitted.

The driver is responsible for ensuring that passengers under 17 years of age use a safety belt or a suitable child car seat.

## Child Safety In Cars

All children under 150cm, 36kg must be restrained in the correct child seat/ restraint when travelling in a vehicle.

### Select a child seat that:

- Conforms to United Nations standard, ECE Regulations 44-04 or 129. (Look for the E mark).
- Is suitable for the child's **weight, height and size**.
- Is suitable for the type of vehicle it is being fitted in.
- Is correctly fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions.

It is safer to fit child seats in the rear of the vehicle.

**Never fit a rearward facing baby seat in the front seat where there is an active frontal airbag – this is both dangerous and illegal.**

*For further information on child safety in cars see [www.rsa.ie/childsafetyincars](http://www.rsa.ie/childsafetyincars)*



## Motorcyclists

It is compulsory for riders and pillion passengers to wear a safety helmet which must be properly secured. It is advisable to use dipped headlights at all times when driving. Hi-visibility clothing should be worn to allow other road-users to see you clearly.

**Important:** Some local roads in rural areas may present particular hazards. Take extra care. Many motorcycle collisions occur at intersections or while overtaking.



## **Pedestrians — Be Safe, Be Seen**

Rules when walking beside or along a road:

- If there is a footpath you must use it.
- If there is no footpath, you must walk as near as possible on the right-hand side of the road (facing oncoming traffic).
- Do not walk more than two abreast. If the road is narrow or carries heavy traffic, you should walk in single file.
- You should always wear reflective clothing and carry a torch at night when walking in areas with no street lighting
- You should always be aware of other road users.

### **Take care near buses or trams:**

Take extra care if crossing a road where there is a bus lane (especially a contra-flow bus lane), cycle lane or tram track. You should also be careful when getting on or off buses, when crossing the road at or near bus stops and be aware that trams are silent so you may not hear them.



## Cyclists

Here are some handy tips to stay safe on the road while cycling:

**Equipment Check:** Is the saddle the correct height? Are the tyres nice and firm, and the bell, lights and brakes all working properly? Wear a properly approved helmet and high visibility reflective clothing.

**Sharing the Road:** Cyclists need to be aware and mindful of other road users. As well as having to obey the same rules, they also have the same rights. Be careful when passing parked cars, cycling in heavy traffic and maintaining a safe distance from larger vehicles. Be very careful when turning left as other vehicles may not see you in their blind spot.

**Signalling:** Learn the proper signalling procedures for making turns and using roundabouts, as well as the cautionary aspects of dealing with other vehicles when signalling by visiting the Rules of the Road on the RSA website [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie)



## Useful Numbers

### An Garda Síochána (Irish Police)

*Web:* [www.garda.ie](http://www.garda.ie)

### Emergency Services

*Tel:* 112 or 999

### Road Safety Authority

*Tel:* 096 25000

*Web:* [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie)

### National Licence Driver Service (NDLS)

*Tel:* 0818 700 800 / +353 21 462 4810

*Web:* <https://www.ndls.ie/>

### Department of Transport

*Tel:* 01 670 7444

*Email:* [info@transport.gov.ie](mailto:info@transport.gov.ie)

*Web:* [www.gov.ie/transport](http://www.gov.ie/transport)

### Department of Foreign Affairs

*Tel:* 01 408 2000

*Website:* [www.dfa.ie](http://www.dfa.ie)

### Citizens Information

*Tel:* 0818 07 4000

*Website:* <https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/>

### Insurance Ireland

*Tel:* 01 676 1820

*Website:* <https://www.insuranceireland.eu/>