



Emergency vehicles



There are three main types of emergency vehicle you will encounter; Police, Fire, and Ambulance, all of which use **blue flashing lights**. Doctors will use **green lights**.

Mirrors.

A good driver is always aware of the situation behind them. If you hear a siren then check behind. If you cannot identify the location of the emergency vehicle then keep assessing front, right, behind and left. Remember, emergency vehicles might not use audible warnings in certain situations, so you must maintain a regular pattern of mirror use.

Signals.

If the emergency vehicle appears to require you to move over, then signal to do so, either/or both with brake lights and indicator signals. Remember to Mirror/Signal before moving away again. Be prepared that other road users will pass you before you have a chance to return to the traffic flow (sigh!).

Position and Speed adjustment.

If the likely path of the emergency vehicle requires you to change position on the road, and if you have signalled, then do so with care.

Do NOT:

- ◆ Stop near the brow of a hill, a sharp bend, or at a narrow piece of carriageway
- ◆ Mount the pavement. You may endanger pedestrians. You may also damage your vehicle.
- ◆ Brake harshly and unexpectedly. The vehicle behind you may not be able to stop
- ◆ Move away again without due care and attention

Do:

- ◆ Stay calm
- ◆ Keep checking behind
- ◆ Make your actions as predictable as possible with the use of signals and positioning
- ◆ **Listen for other sirens** before moving away again. If there are two or more emergency vehicles approaching then they should use different types of sirens.
- ◆ Pull over to allow the emergency vehicle to proceed only when it is safe



When you are in a **side road**

If you are about to emerge from a side road, or at a traffic light, and you see or hear a siren, then DO NOT proceed until you are sure that the threat has passed.

If you are passing through a **traffic light junction or roundabout**

If you are passing through a traffic light junction or a roundabout and you see/hear an emergency vehicle approaching from the side road, stay calm and check behind. DO NOT brake harshly. If you cannot stop with normal braking then keep travelling across the junction. The driver behind you may not be able to stop.



Emergency vehicles must treat red lights as give way signals, so they should not travel through traffic lights at high speed (*although the bank robbers they are chasing may do!*)

On country roads

Emergency vehicles may not overtake when the line which is closest to their vehicle is a solid line. If a police car is following and appears to wish to overtake, and if you have solid lines next to you, then proceed (not beyond the speed limit) until either there is a safe place to pull over, or until the lines become broken (at which point you will no doubt be passed). The emergency vehicle behind may switch off the sirens until you have achieved a safe location to pull in.

No Overtaking

Note: It is illegal for an emergency vehicle to overtake you when the line nearest to them is solid. So, if you slow down, they may not be able to pass! It may be better to continue at the speed limit until the line breaks, or until you reach a safe lay-by.

If the police wish you to pull over (if you have committed an offence, for example) then they will signal left and point to you and the edge of the road.

Emergency vehicles and the Law

When using blue flashing lights emergency vehicles are exempt from certain rules.

They can:

- ◆ Treat red traffic lights as give way signs
- ◆ Travel on the wrong side of a keep left sign
- ◆ Drive on motorway hard shoulders (including against flow!)
- ◆ Disobey the speed limit

They cannot:

- ◆ Ignore stop or give way signs
- ◆ Ignore 'No Entry' signs
- ◆ Travel the wrong way into one way streets
- ◆ Cross solid white lines along the centre of the carriageway (as per the highway code) which means that if you slow down they may not be able to pass.

Emergency vehicles. Main Points.

- ◆ Stay calm
- ◆ Check behind
- ◆ Brake safely not harshly
- ◆ Be predictable
- ◆ Move off again with due care and attention

