

Vehicle Lighting

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Side Lights



Side Lights are not always on the side of the car. They are dim lights (with small bulbs) which help other road users to see your car, but may not help you to see other road users.

They should be used for at least 1 hour after sunrise, and one hour before sunset.

You may also use side lights when visibility is poor, due to light rain for example.

When your side lights are on, your tail lights are also on.

Dipped Headlights



Dipped Headlights must be used at night, and when visibility is seriously reduced due to heavy rain, fog, or snow. The level of dip should be adjusted according to the weight in the rear of the car. Dipped headlights should not cause other road users to be dazzled.

Use your dipped headlights if you have the windscreen wipers on constantly.

Main Beam Headlights



These are also known as Full Beam, or High Beam. They should be used on unlit roads at night (for example, in the countryside.) They may also be used as a means of informing other road users of your presence (for example, when approaching a hump back bridge.) You must dip the headlights when there are other road users approaching you (see below for

more details).

Fog Lights



My car is only fitted with a rear fog light. Many cars also have front fog lights. They should not be used if visibility is better than 100m (25 car lengths). Using rear fog lights in good conditions creates dazzle for following drivers. On some models the fog lights can make the brake lights less conspicuous.

Parking Lights

Parking Lights are fitted to most cars. They must be used when parking on a road where the speed limit exceeds 30mph (even if you are parking all night!). This rule may seem strange, as leaving lights on all night may drain the battery. However, it is quite unusual to park on a road where the speed limit exceeds 30mph anyway. Normally you would park off-road.

Hazard Lights

Hazard Lights should be used to alert other road users of a hazard in the road. For example, if you are following a truck, and a box falls from the back of the truck, then you should use your hazard lights as a warning to others.

You may also use hazard lights when you have broken down, and need to warn other road users of your presence.

Brake Lights



Brake lights are activated by the footbrake, NOT by the handbrake. Many cars now have three lights at the back, so that it is more difficult to confuse them with tail-lights. Use the brake gently and early to warn following traffic of your intentions.

Indicators/Signals

Use directional indicators to give a Clear message to other road users of your intentions, and to eliminate confusion. If you think that another road user has not registered your signal, turn it off, and then on again. On many cars the signal is automatically cancelled after turns. However, it may automatically cancel too soon. You MUST repeat signals if they prematurely cancel.

Number Plate Lights

These are small, and may seem unimportant. However, they **MUST** work.

Every single light on the car **MUST** work. It is a good idea to carry a pack of spare bulbs around in the car.

Flashing Main Beam Headlights

Avoid using the high beam lights to say 'I am giving way'. Other road users may not receive the message you intended.



Bright lights bleach retinas

For example, if you flash a driver to pull out of a driveway, a pedestrian on the other side of the road may think you are flashing them, and step out into danger. The best policy (as advocated in the highway code) is to stop if you want to give way, and make eye contact. At night, just stop. The other road users will then be forced to think, which is a good thing.

Another equally important reason not to flash lights at other drivers is that the bright light may bleach their retina, rendering them temporarily blind. Also, avoid flashing lights to say thank you. The other driver may not appreciate partial blindness. You may not be able to thank another driver at night. They will get over it.

Hazard Lights to say 'Thank You'

A culture has developed where people use their hazard lights to say 'thank you' to a following driver. In time this may lead to the proper use of a hazard light warning to become less immediately clear, and so is not encouraged. For example, if someone in front of you shows their hazard lights, you may think they are thanking you for some kind act, whereas in fact they may be warning you that a cyclist has a puncture ahead. There is a good reason for sticking to the highway code!