



6

Overtaking

At times, even a perfectly executed overtake within the speed limit can be perceived as 'dangerous' by other road users. In fact, overtaking is the area where drivers are most likely to come into conflict with another road user; either as the driver of the vehicle being overtaken or as the driver of another vehicle that witnesses the manoeuvre.

Ask yourself whether any overtake you are about to attempt is necessary and worthwhile. What's the point in exposing yourself to unnecessary danger to jump one or two places in a queue of traffic?

As an advanced driver, you must therefore be keenly aware of your actions – and how others perceive them.

6a Overtaking positions

6b Information

6c Position

6d Speed

6e Gear

6f Acceleration

Competency sheet

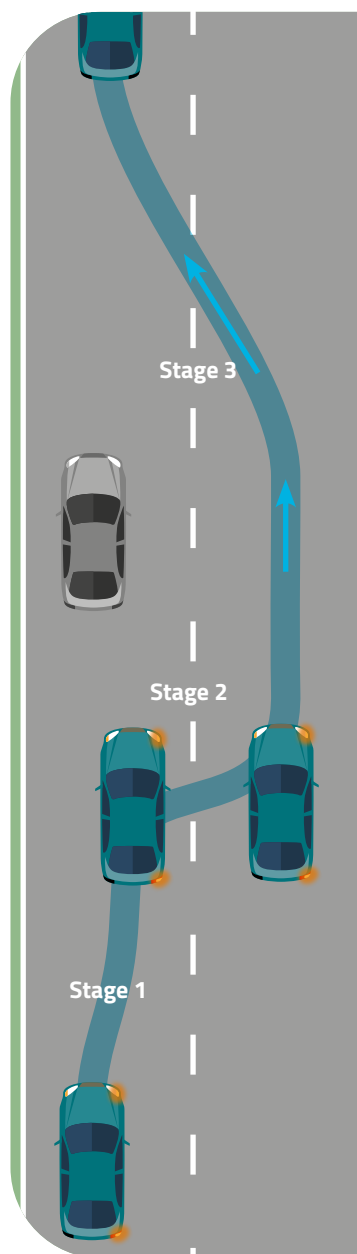
Overtaking



To be an advanced driver, these are the competencies that you should be able to demonstrate. Consider how confident you feel with each. Read on to learn more about each competency.

	Progress		
<p>Information</p> <p>Identify a safe imminent opportunity to overtake</p> <p>Identify a safe return gap</p> <p>Accurately judge the difference between your own speed and that of the vehicle(s) you plan to overtake</p>			
<p>Position</p> <p>Adopt the overtaking position – Stage 1</p> <p>Move out towards the offside – Stage 2</p> <p>Allow a safe gap between vehicles – Stage 2</p> <p>Move into the chosen return gap – Stage 3</p>			
<p>Speed</p> <p>Control speed to safely complete the overtake</p> <p>Adjust speed to safely return to the nearside of the road</p>			
<p>Gear</p> <p>Select and engage the correct gear for your chosen speed and the prevailing circumstances</p>			
<p>Acceleration</p> <p>Apply the correct acceleration to complete the overtake</p>			
<p>Achieved all competencies</p>	<p>Date <input type="text"/></p>		

6a Overtaking Positions



The overtake

When it's clear, check mirrors and blind spot. Move carefully to the offside of the road to increase your view. If the overtake is safe, accelerate quickly past the vehicle. If it is not, drop back behind safely and smoothly.

The final part of the manoeuvre returns you safely back to your side of the road in as straight a line as possible.

Use mirrors and/or a blind-spot check to make sure that you do not affect the vehicle you have just passed.

The overtaking position

If you anticipate an opportunity to overtake, close in on the vehicle in front until you are in the 'overtaking position'. This is normally closer than the 'following position' and towards the centre line, increasing your view ahead.

Match your speed to the vehicle in front and consider taking a lower gear to pass it.

If the overtake doesn't develop, consider dropping back to the 'following position' and then start the whole process again.

The following position

The following position is one that allows you plenty of time to react should the driver in front brake suddenly. Apply the two-second rule.

Adopt this position if you have no intention of overtaking, cannot do so imminently due to other hazards, or when prevented from doing so by solid white lines or no-overtaking signs. In the absence of any other hazards, and if it is safe to do so, you can move offside early and directly to (3), the overtake stage (this would be a momentum overtake). Check mirrors and blind spots carefully.

6b Information

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Identify a safe imminent opportunity to overtake

- When preparing to overtake, you should look as far down the road as possible to check for hazards
- Read and respond to road signs and markings
- Check hedges for any breaks in shadows that might signify a junction or entrance (offside or nearside)
- Be aware that any buildings will have entrances, identify them and clear as safe
- Keep gathering information to decide if there is enough space to make the overtake safely
- If in any doubt, you should delay the overtake, hold back and reassess
- Use mirrors to link the developing potential of the overtake to the information behind, and to the sides, prior to committing
- Always be prepared to cancel the manoeuvre if circumstances change for the worse

Identify a safe return gap

- During a multi-vehicle overtake, decide how many vehicles to overtake before committing
- Identify a safe 'return gap' that will not affect other traffic
- Remember: if the gap is likely to close, the overtake is not viable
- Be aware of any negative effect you may have on other vehicles

Accurately judge the difference between your own speed and that of the vehicle(s) you plan to overtake

- Accurately assess speed and position in relation to the speed and position of the vehicle(s) to be overtaken and the distance to the next hazard
- Be realistic about achieving a sufficient speed difference to overtake safely in the space available within the speed limit
- Never plan to exceed the speed limit, so if the other vehicle is travelling at close to the limit, recognise that overtaking may not be legal
- Be aware of overtaken vehicles speeding up as you pass them



6c Position

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Stage 1 – Adopt the overtaking position

- Be already positioned in a safe following position in line with Highway Code advice
- When safe and appropriate, move into an overtaking position; this will be closer than a regular following position, but safety must always be prioritised
- Be prepared to drop back if the circumstances change. Remember: remaining in the overtaking position can cause the driver ahead to be distracted and to focus on their mirrors rather than the road ahead

Stage 2 – Move out towards the offside

- When it is safe, move out towards the offside, keeping the vehicle stable and matching your speed with that of the vehicle to be overtaken
- You should continually update information and be prepared to abort if circumstances change, as safety is paramount
- From this position, make the overtake when safe

Allow a safe gap between vehicles

- Allow a safe gap between your own vehicle and the vehicle or other road user you are going to pass. (Give cyclists at least 1.5 metres at 30 mph, horses at least 2 metres at 10 mph, all other traffic as much space as possible, balancing your safety bubble)
- If the road is too narrow, consider the likely reaction before starting the manoeuvre
- If in any doubt, hold back and reassess
- Be particularly aware of vulnerable road users
- Remember: the safe gap also applies to parked vehicles (a door's width or at least 1 metre)

Stage 3 – Move into the chosen return gap

- After moving past, make sure you are able to move into the chosen return gap without causing other road users to alter course or speed
- Complete the return to the nearside of the road in a controlled fashion
- Avoid cutting in too close to the vehicle passed
- If there are other vehicles in view, albeit some distance off, try to display clear intent that you are returning to your own side of the road either by positioning or by showing a signal

6d Speed

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:

Control speed to safely complete the overtake

- Maintain speed with the vehicle being overtaken until ready to commence the overtake
- Adjust speed so that the overtake can be completed in the available clear road space, within the posted speed limit, brisk and businesslike
- Remember: advanced drivers do not plan to exceed the speed limit, so if the other vehicle is travelling at close to this speed, overtaking may not be legal

Adjust speed to safely return to the nearside of the road

- Adjust speed so as not to inconvenience other road users when returning to the nearside of the road

6e Gear

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:
Select and engage the correct gear for your chosen speed and the prevailing circumstances

- Consider which gear will be both flexible and responsive without causing the engine to labour or over-rev
- Try to engage a gear that is suitable for the whole overtake
- Avoid making a gear change while alongside the vehicle being overtaken
- Understand the operation of your automatic gearbox
- Understand that your EV will not change gear

6f Acceleration

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:
Apply the correct acceleration to complete the overtake

- Acceleration should be smooth and progressive throughout the overtake and return to the nearside of the road
- Make a considered effort to complete the manoeuvre within the shortest possible time, but within the speed limit

