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Spoken thoughts

Spoken thoughts is the practice of describing aloud everything you see, think and do while driving. This is a great way to hone your advanced driving technique

It not only highlights just how many thought processes a vigilant driver goes through on a drive, but can also bring focus to specific issues

For example:

- If you tend to rush gear changes, you might include 'changing first to second, slowly and smoothly' to encourage that action
- If you are heavy footed when releasing the brake pedal you might say 'gentle to firm brakes and then back to gentle' in an attempt to gain some third-stage braking

Increased focus through regular practice

In all circumstances, remember that safety is your number one priority

For example:

- If you are coming out of a bend, having correctly assessed the limit point on approach to the bend, and you see a tractor emerging, it is less important to verbalise 'there is a tractor moving slowly out of the farm entrance blocking my path, so rear-view mirror check, then gentle to firm brakes to avoid it' than it is to actually stop
- Once comfortable with speaking while driving, you will find your delivery becomes more ordered. So, in the same scenario, you may say 'mirror and brakes for the tractor, keeping brake lights on for the safety of following traffic'

Prioritise to stay safe in all circumstances

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:
Divide the speech into a small number of categories to help focus

Areas that must be included:

- Anything likely to affect safety. These should always be mentioned, so you can plan your response

■ ■ 'A hazard is anything that contains an element of actual or potential danger'

Areas that should be included:

- Road type and description
- Pedestrian activity
- Road signs

Areas that would be good to include:

- Observation links, such as the bins are out for the collection lorry or a church steeple, indicating a possible change in speed limit
- Remember: priority matters, for while it is excellent to say 'entering a built-up area expecting to see an increase in vehicular and pedestrian activity; I will mention junctions and driveways should they affect my drive', it is completely undermined if you fail to mention the school-crossing patrol person stepping out into the road

Tips to improve talking while driving

As an advanced driver, you should:

Talk back towards the car from your furthest point of vision, but remember to regularly lift your vision to continually prioritise the approaching hazard

Remember that in national speed limit areas, while hazards are fewer, they can arise quickly due to the speed of travel

Be prepared to interrupt your flow and prioritise IPSGA to keep the car safe

Hallmarks of good practice

As an advanced driver, you must be able to:
Inform the passenger (real or imagined) what allows you to drive this car, along this piece of road, in this position, at this speed

- Additionally, a very good driver will include information about how they are going to achieve this. And a great driver will tie all the information together and sound seamless with good intonation, reflecting the circumstances of the drive

