



THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

A9

THE HIGHLAND HIGHWAY

Advice for Drivers

1993 Edition

A9

The Problems

Even though the numbers of fatal, serious and slight injury accidents on the A9 between Perth and Inverness have been decreasing, they still give cause for concern. In the three year period between January 1990 and December 1992, 36 people were killed and 377 injured.

Lapses of concentration, loss of control and inconsiderate and dangerous overtaking are just some of the major causes.

In summer, traffic levels increase due to the large number of visitors coming to the area. This can make journey times longer and cause driver frustration.



The Objective

The objective of this leaflet is to reinforce good driving practices and advise drivers who use the A9 of features and seasonal conditions that they may encounter. The Scottish Office, in conjunction with Highland and Tayside Regional Councils, Northern Constabulary and Tayside Police, are all working together to improve safety on this route.

YOU CAN PLAY YOUR PART !

The Solution

By taking the advice in the leaflet it is hoped that drivers will be more aware of the factors that can contribute to accidents and adjust their driving behaviour accordingly.

A9

Advice to Overseas Visitors

Here in Scotland and elsewhere in Britain people drive on the left. This is a basic rule for safe driving and one which you obviously know.

However, remembering to stay on the left can be a problem for some visitors to this country. Each year accidents are caused by visitors straying on to the right, sometimes with terrible consequences.



These mistakes tend to happen in certain situations so remember, **STAY LEFT**, particularly when -

- ☐ starting off from the side of the road;
- ☐ joining a main road;
- ☐ negotiating roundabouts.

As a driver you have a responsibility for the safety of both your passengers and other road users. So **STAY ALERT** at all times.

Drive on the left...



Links fahren
Tenere la sinistra
Conduisez à gauche
Circule por la izquierda

To help you remember to **STAY LEFT** attach the enclosed sticker to the dashboard of your car. Detailed instructions are printed on the back.

A9 The Driver Fatigue Problem

Safe driving demands a high degree of concentration. When driver fatigue sets in, concentration and performance decline. If you drive for longer than 2-3 hours at a time your concentration and judgement will suffer.



The Solution

Before setting out on a long journey ensure you have had sufficient rest and during your journey, take regular breaks.

Tiredness can kill

Take a break – pull off the road, get out and walk about !

A number of new signs have been erected at various strategic locations along the route to reinforce this message to drivers. Stopping places are signposted.

A9 The Overtaking Problem

Inconsiderate and dangerous overtaking on this route is one of the causes of accidents.

Drivers often start an overtaking manoeuvre, especially in a convoy, without waiting for a gap in front of the vehicle which they are overtaking.



The Solution

Pay attention to the warning signs and road markings (for further details see page 8). They have been installed to inform and help you the driver.

There are two basic rules for overtaking on single carriageways:

- Be sure there is a space for you in front of the vehicle you want to overtake before you attempt to pass it.
- Don't make the vehicle you are overtaking, or an approaching vehicle, brake, or move over.

Judgement of speed and distance is crucial to safe overtaking, especially if you are in a convoy of traffic. Only overtake when you are sure you can do so without endangering others or yourself.

Check your rear view mirror regularly. If traffic is building up behind you, **DO NOT** hold up the queue unnecessarily. Pull into the next convenient lay-by to allow the following traffic to pass. This advice applies not only to drivers of heavy goods vehicles and car and caravan combinations but also to drivers of cars who may prefer to drive at a slower pace. Please be considerate.

If you are travelling in a convoy of traffic leave enough space between yourself and the vehicle in front to allow an overtaking vehicle to pull in safely.

If in doubt do not overtake !

A9 The Speed Problem

Excessive speed increases the severity of road accidents.

No matter how good a driver you are, potentially dangerous situations may result from someone else's actions. By keeping speeds down to a reasonable level the risk of some accidents can be minimised and the severity of others reduced.

The Solution

Reduce your speed !

Recent studies have shown that each 1kph reduction in speed can produce a 5% reduction in injury accidents.

Remember the national speed limits apply on the A9:

60 mph (96kph) on single carriageways.

70 mph (112kph) on dual carriageways.

These limits are the **maximum** speeds for motor cars as permitted by law.

Different limits apply to other types of vehicles:

Vehicle Speed Limits		Single		Dual	
		 MPH	 KPH	 MPH	 KPH
Cars (including car derived vans and motorcycles)		60	96	70	112
Cars towing caravans or trailers (including car derived vans and motorcycles)		50	80	60	96
Buses and Coaches (not exceeding 12 metres in overall length)		50	80	60	96
Goods Vehicles (not exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)		50	80	60	96
Goods Vehicles (exceeding 7.5 tonnes maximum laden weight)		40	64	50	80

Drive at a speed appropriate to the weather and road conditions.

Speed Cameras may soon be installed - Watch your speed !



The police patrol the A9 on a regular basis using both marked and unmarked cars which are equipped with video and speed detection equipment.



The police will **stop** and charge motorists who exceed the speed limit or are guilty of other driving offences, such as dangerous overtaking. They can now issue fixed penalty notices (including penalty points) on the spot.

As part of the Speedwatch Scotland Campaign enforcement activity by the Police has been increased.

The **penalties** have also been increased:

- **Exceeding the speed limit:**
A fine of up to £1,000, obligatory endorsement, discretionary disqualification and 3 to 6 penalty points.
- **Careless and inconsiderate driving:**
A fine of up to £2,500, obligatory endorsement, discretionary disqualification and 3 to 9 penalty points.
- **Causing death by dangerous driving:**
An unlimited fine, imprisonment of up to 5 years, obligatory disqualification, obligatory endorsement and 3 to 11 penalty points (shortly to be increased).

Don't speed !

A9 Signs and Markings

To drive safely you need to understand the meaning of road markings and signs and obey them. Most drivers know what they mean. If you have any doubts then read the explanations in the new Highway Code. Some signs and markings on the A9 have been given extra emphasis to warn of overtaking dangers.



The use of hatched markings in the middle of the carriageway will be seen at different locations along the route. These markings are to separate traffic lanes or to protect traffic turning right. Some of these areas have been highlighted with a red surface treatment.



Where the hatched area is bordered by an unbroken white line on your side of the road you **MUST NOT** enter it except in an emergency. It is an offence to do so!



On single carriageway sections of the A9, arrows and signs indicating two-way traffic will be seen at frequent intervals.

Do not enter hatched areas unless you can see it is safe to do so.

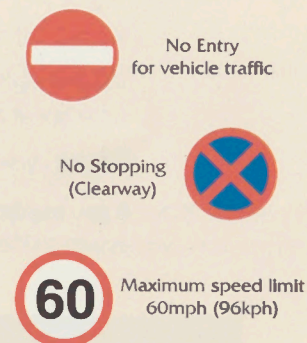
A9 Signs - What do they mean?

Some of the signs you will see on the A9 are:-

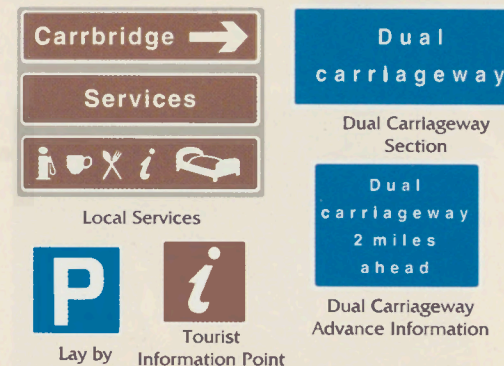
Warning Signs



Signs giving Orders



Information Signs



Direction Signs



Two way traffic (these signs are located at the start of single carriageway sections)

Maximum Speed Limit



Over its length the A9 has sections of both single and dual carriageway. Signs have been erected to remind drivers of the type of carriageway they are travelling on and to give drivers additional information.

These are just some of the signs you will see on the A9 and they and others are all explained in the new Highway Code.

A9 Cycling Advice

As a Cyclist / Motor cyclist BE SAFE, BE SEEN

- ☐ Kit yourself and your bike out properly
- ☐ Wear something fluorescent for daytime travel and something reflective at night
- ☐ **NEVER** cycle at night or in mist or fog without proper lights
- ☐ If you are cycling for pleasure consider using quieter alternative tourist routes where possible



As a Driver

- ☐ Be alert to other road users
- ☐ Make allowances for cyclists and motorcyclists, give them plenty of room

A9 The Weather Problem

At any time of the year the weather may deteriorate very quickly, particularly along the more remote sections of this route. Many drivers do not adjust their driving behaviour to suit the adverse weather conditions (ie heavy rain, fog, snow, ice) and as a result are liable to cause accidents.

Some drivers and their vehicles are **not** prepared for long journeys or for conditions that can occur.

The Solution

Check the weather forecast before setting out. If it's bad, ask yourself "is there an alternative route? Is your journey really necessary?" If it is necessary, allow more time for the journey – be patient.

- ☐ Reduce your speed
- ☐ Always leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front to stop safely if required
- ☐ Brake gently in poor weather conditions
- ☐ Use DIPPED headlights in poor light or bad weather conditions
- ☐ Ensure your vehicle is properly serviced

At a number of locations along this route you will find "Snow Gates" – it is unsafe to proceed past closed gates.

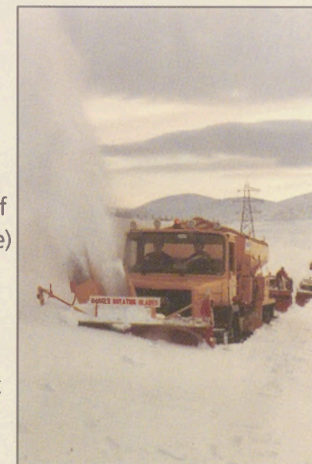
Carry equipment that you could find useful in the event of an emergency:

- ☐ Protective warm clothing in bright colours
- ☐ Rug or blanket
- ☐ Ample supply of hot drinks and food (avoid alcohol)
- ☐ Pole with brightly coloured flag/handkerchief
- ☐ Torch, shovel and radio (if no radio in vehicle)

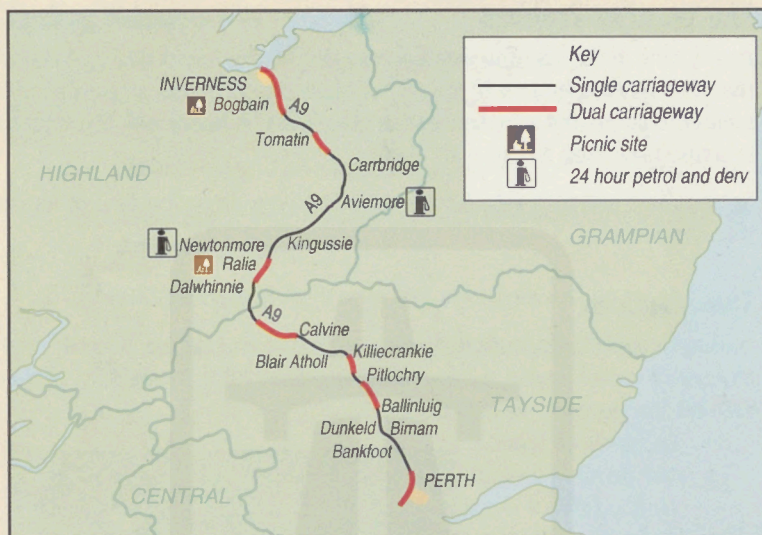
If stranded in winter conditions the following suggestions can be vital for survival:

- ☐ Remain in vehicle unless shelter is nearby
- ☐ Circulation can be maintained by movement
- ☐ Use pole to indicate location
- ☐ Switch off engine if exhaust cannot vent
- ☐ Ensure airway is maintained if snowed over

Do not travel in severe weather conditions !



A9 Perth to Inverness



A9 Services

Between Perth and Inverness, petrol stations and other services can be found in the communities bypassed by the A9 (see map above). There are two 24 hour petrol stations in this area and they are in Newtonmore and Aviemore. These are signed to show the services available (see example on page 9). Picnic sites can be found at Ralia, just south of Newtonmore (access from both directions) and Bogbain, south of Inverness (access for northbound only).

We hope this advice has been of use to you and we wish you a safe and pleasant journey on the A9.

A9 Useful telephone numbers:

Highland Roadline	0836 401363
AA Weather Watch	0345 500600 or 0336 401138
RAC	0345 333222
Northern Constabulary	0463 239191
Tayside Police	0738 21141