MWIRSA ADVISE YOU: SLOW DOWN AND ENJOY THE RIDE!

MID WEST INDUSTRY ROAD SAFETY ALLIANCE – INDUSTRY, POLICE, LOCAL AND STATE GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE ROAD SAFETY IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA’S MID WEST

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ENJOY OUR WA ROADS

A GUIDE TO SAFE TRAVEL THROUGH OUR UNIQUE AND EXPANSIVE STATE

KNOW YOUR VEHICLE

TOWING

OUTBACK ROAD HAZARDS

SAFE OVERTAKING

DRIVING WITH ROAD TRAINS

SHARING REST AREAS WITH HEAVY VEHICLES

SHARING THE ROADS

SAFE PULL-OFF AREAS
Our roads are unlike any other, traversing coastlines and deserts, full of incredible flora and fauna. They are also home to a community of travellers sharing their journey. Road trains, oversize loads, large slow-moving agricultural machinery are often matched one for one with leisure drivers - who are often pulling caravans, boats and off-road equipment.

This mix of vehicles sharing the roads makes for unique, and often challenging, driving conditions. Our goal is to educate and keep our driving community safe. We want everyone to enjoy the trip and return home safely.

Experience our incredible Western Australian roads, cherish the thrill of sharing them with some of the world’s largest trucks and arrive home with a great yarn or two.

— Mid West Road Safety Alliance

“You know, we do have unique roads, and with that comes unique problems for us to deal with.”
Our great state is built for adventure. Travelling with a boat, caravan or off-road equipment comes with additional risk, requiring unique driving and maintenance knowledge. Heavy, poorly-secured and/or unmaintained vehicles, combined with a lack of knowledge, regularly cause rollovers and accidents on our roads. Here are our tips for keeping you, your rig, and other road users, safe.

- Know the legal load limit for your vehicle and make sure your load is correctly secured. Heavy or poorly-secured loads regularly cause rollovers and accidents on our roads.

- Add 200kg to your vehicle’s tare weight to allow for bedding, travelling supplies and stores.

- Remember the legal speed limit outside a built-up area, unless otherwise signposted, for a vehicle towing a trailer or caravan is 100 km/h.

- Unless you are overtaking, you must keep at least 200m behind any similar car/caravan or long vehicle on all roads outside built-up areas if your car and caravan is longer than 7.5M.

- It is not recommended that you tow a caravan on unsealed roads in remote areas such as the Kimberley. If you plan to take a camper-trailer, make sure it is rated to four-wheel-drive conditions. It will need to withstand long stretches of rough road surfaces and corrugations.
The best defence against a break down is to get your mechanic to perform a safety check before heading out on a road trip. Do this a few weeks in advance to allow for any problems to be fixed.

Towing equipment, boats, trailers and caravans also need maintenance. Parts do deteriorate on these items whether used frequently or not. A common example is boat-trailer brakes due to water launching.

Your vehicle’s owner’s manual is an invaluable source of information on preventative maintenance that you can personally perform. Check your tyre pressure and match this pressure to the specific road conditions. Check your wipers, air-filters, fluid levels and oil level/quality. Replace as necessary.
MAKE SURE YOUR VEHICLE PASSES THE VEHICLE CHECK LIST

“HAVING TRAVELLED TO SOME PRETTY REMOTE AREAS IN MY 4WD, I NEVER HAVE THE OLD ‘SHE’LL BE RIGHT MATE’ ATTITUDE WHEN IT COMES TO THE HUNDREDS OF MOVING PARTS ON A VEHICLE AND WHATEVER IT MAY BE TOWING.”
— MARK, EUREKA 4WD

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SAFE OVERTAKING

Australia is home to some of the largest trucks in the world known as ‘road trains’. They can be up to 53.5m long with 2, 3 or even 4 trailers and require great care when overtaking. You need a long straight stretch of road that is clear as far as you can see.

Be aware that it may take some time to overtake one of these long trucks. If you are towing a caravan or trailer it is best not to try and overtake at all. Wait for an overtaking lane, where it is safe to do so.

Remember, never overtake a truck on a curve or a hill where visibility is limited, even if the truck is moving slowly. If you cannot see past the truck, wait for a better opportunity.

Western Australia also has some of the largest oversize loads in the world. The width may cover more than one lane of the road. Depending on the dimensions and mass, oversize loads may be escorted by pilots and police. If you encounter such a situation, you are legally required to follow the instructions indicated by the pilots or police to assist the safe passage of the load.

HOW TO OVERTAKE SAFELY

**TAKE YOUR TIME AND STAY SEVERAL CAR LENGTHS BACK. WHEN IT IS SAFE TO PASS, INDICATE, CROSS THE CENTRE LANE, ACCELERATE, STICK TO THE SPEED LIMIT AND OVERTAKE QUICKLY. INDICATE TO PULL BACK IN WHEN YOU CAN SEE THE TRUCK’S HEADLIGHTS IN YOUR REAR VISION MIRROR.**

**BE EXTRA CAREFUL WHEN OVERTAKING ON DIRT ROADS. DUST AND STONES CAN OBSCURE VISION AND BREAK WINDSCREENS.**
Western Australia has plenty of wildlife, so travellers need to watch for roaming animals such as kangaroos, emus, cattle and birds of prey.

Animals are more active around dusk and dawn and are often confused by the sound of a vehicle, running towards it instead of away. The most effective way to keep the local wildlife and yourself safe is to reduce your speed and be aware of the unpredictable nature of these animals.

Emus are unpredictable and often have a mate following close behind. Cattle like to camp on roads at night and are hard to see. Other animals that can be dangerous to motorists include wild horses, goats, donkeys, camels and large birds feeding on road kill.

Even if the animal appears stationary near the edge of the road or is moving away, slow down and be alert, as they are easily startled and can run in front of your car.

If a large animal such as a kangaroo or cow suddenly appears on the road in front of you, brake firmly and sound your horn. Do not try to swerve around the animal as you are likely to run onto the gravel verge and lose control of your vehicle.

If you do hit a large animal and kill it, try to remove the carcass from the road for the safety of other motorists. Injured animals are unpredictable, so take care when handling them. Be wary of the tail and rear legs of kangaroos as they can cause serious injury. Use towels and rugs for smaller animals. If it is unsafe to remove the carcass, please call Main Roads 24hr Customer Information Centre on 138 138.
Fatigue

Driver fatigue - driving when you are tired - is a major cause of road crashes. Research indicates that around 30 per cent of fatal crashes can be attributed to driver fatigue. Crashes caused by fatigue tend to be more severe as there is little to no breaking or avoidance action.

When you are driving it's essential that you remain alert. You will be more aware of what is happening around your vehicle, you will think more clearly and respond more quickly to any unexpected situations. It is important to recognise the early signs of fatigue because once it has set in, nothing can improve your concentration. The only cure for fatigue is to stop, take a complete break from driving and sleep.

Lookout for the warning signs:

- Feeling you have lost time
- Feeling dazed
- Day dreaming
- Loss of concentration (forgetting where you are going, missing a gear)
- Excessive blinking
- Heavy or droopy eyelids
- Blurred, dimmed vision
- Yawning
- Squinting
- Head nodding
- Drifting over the road
- Seeing ‘mirages’ ahead
- Braking too late
- Finding you have slowed unintentionally
There are many things you can do to reduce the onset of fatigue and reduce the chance of crashing because of tiredness.

- Schedule your trip so you drive during daylight. It is best to start your journey early and not drive late into the night.
- Get at least eight hours sleep before you set out.
- Avoid long hours of driving, particularly at night and after working all day.
- Share the driving, swapping drivers every two hours, or every 200km, or if you feel tired.
- If you are making a long journey, plan to stop overnight and get a full night’s rest.
- When travelling a long distance, take regular breaks - get out of the car, walk around to stimulate blood circulation, have a cup of coffee or tea, or drink plenty of fresh water and have something to eat.
- If you feel tired take a ‘power nap’, you will feel the maximum benefit from 15-20 minutes of sleep.
- Make sure the interior of your vehicle is well ventilated and not too warm. A warm vehicle can make you drowsy.
- Listen to music, talkback radio or talking books - anything to stimulate your mind.
- Stop and eat at regular meal times to ensure you maintain your energy levels.

While on your travels look out for the Driver Reviver stops. For further information and locations visit — Roadwise.asn.au/driver-reviver
“How many times have you driven down a straight road, and there are these skid marks — and you think — what went wrong? Were they on their phone, or looking for something in the glove box? Did their eyes close? You see it all the time, we call it the dance of death.”

“The other week I stopped at a car rollover on my way home from shift. The young guy at the wheel was very lucky. If there’s one thing I want to say its please don’t swerve for roos, brake in a straight line, over correcting can kill.”
SHARING THE ROADS

WA roads contain a unique mix of heavy haulage monsters, recreational travellers towing, and locals. This makes for a great sense of adventure on our remote roads, but also poses challenges with these diverse vehicles and rigs having different slowing, turning, accelerating and speed capabilities.

- Keep Left.

- Keep your distance – when travelling under the posted speed limit and in convoy with mates leave enough room in between you and your mates to allow other vehicles to pass you one by one.

- Indicate your intentions.

- Merging - where two lanes merge into one the vehicle in front has the right of way.

- Turn your lights on to be seen.

TRUCK DRIVERS REQUIRE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DISTANCE TO STOP THAN SMALLER VEHICLES. A LIGHT VEHICLE TRAVELLING AT 100KM WILL TAKE 122M TO STOP IN DRY CONDITIONS, WHEREAS A ROAD TRAIN WILL TAKE OVER DOUBLE THAT DISTANCE TO STOP.

DO NOT STOP SUDDENLY IN FRONT OF A TRUCK, UNLESS OF COURSE IT’S AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, OTHERWISE IT MAY NOT END WELL.
Our roads traverse some amazing landscapes. Between the oceans, deserts, flora and fauna, there is always an opportunity to pull off the road and experience amazing Western Australia first hand.

Caution should be exercised by all road users when pulling over. Large trucks and machinery can't easily swerve to avoid you if you're not completely off the road, and various vehicles have very different stopping capacities.

- Be alert and aware.
- Indicate your intentions.
- Give plenty of notice to the vehicles travelling behind you, especially road trains, as they can't brake as quickly as smaller vehicles.
- Ensure you park in a safe spot that is easily visible off the road.
- Never stop on a curve or where sight distance is poor.
Roadside rest areas and parking bays are designed to provide a road user with a safe place to pull up if you need to check your vehicle, have a stretch, enjoy a bite to eat or have a rest.

A parking bay with the symbol below are designated Truck Parking Bays, which are strategically located around our road-network to help truck drivers combat fatigue. If you use one of these bays, please be courteous to the truckies and make room for them.
TOP 5 TIPS FOR OUR ROADS

1. Avoid driving at dawn and dusk. If you must, slow down and stay alert.
2. Remember to take regular breaks from driving to keep fresh and admire the sights.
3. Drive and pull over with awareness of other road users, road trains, vehicles towing and large slow-moving agricultural machinery.
4. Make sure your vehicle and towing equipment is in top mechanical condition.
5. Dust and stones can obscure vision or break windscreens when travelling or passing on dirt roads.

WHATEVER YOU DO, WHATEVER YOU TOW AND WHEREVER YOU ARE GOING, WE HOPE YOU HAVE AN ADVENTURE OF A LIFETIME.