



# Defensive Driving Techniques (UK)

## 1. What Is Defensive Driving?

Defensive driving means anticipating hazards, staying aware, and reducing risk at all times.

It's about being prepared for what other road users might do - not just what they should do.

### Core Principles

- Stay alert and minimise distractions
- Keep safe following distances
- Expect mistakes from others
- Make decisions early and calmly
- Scan the road ahead, behind, and to the sides

## 2. Reading the Road Ahead

- Look 12–15 seconds ahead
- Spot brake lights early
- Watch for pedestrians, cyclists and emerging vehicles
- Identify hidden hazards (parked vans, bends, dips)



### **3. Safe Following Distances**

Use the **\*\*2-second rule\*\*** in dry conditions, and increase to 4+ seconds in rain or poor visibility.

#### **Why It Matters**

- Gives you time to react
- Reduces harsh braking
- Improves comfort and fuel efficiency

### **4. Managing Your Speed**

- Adjust speed before bends, not during
- Slow down near schools, crossings, and shops
- Drive slower in rain, fog, ice and at night

### **5. Awareness of Other Road Users**

- Cyclists may wobble or avoid potholes
- Motorbikes accelerate faster than they appear
- Children may run between cars
- Large vehicles have blind spots



## **6. Handling Emergencies**

- Brake firmly and progressively
- Steer smoothly—don't overcorrect
- If skidding: ease off brake, steer gently
- Use hazard lights only when needed

## **7. Avoiding Common Risks**

- Don't tailgate • Avoid sudden lane changes
- Don't drive when tired
- Avoid aggressive drivers—don't engage

## **8. Weather & Night Driving Tips**

- Use dipped headlights in poor visibility
- Watch for ice in shaded or rural roads
- Allow extra braking time in wet or icy conditions
- Reduce glare at night by adjusting mirror settings

## **9. Final Advice**

Defensive driving builds confidence and safety. Plan ahead, stay calm and make decisions with plenty of time.