

Highway Code for walkers

New update to the Highway Code – 29 Jan 2022



The Highway Code has been updated, with changes coming into force on 29 January 2022. The new version of the Highway Code puts walkers at the top of a hierarchy of road users, giving drivers and cyclists more responsibility to reduce the danger they may pose.

The biggest changes for walkers are:

- **The introduction of a hierarchy of road users, with walkers at the top.** This new rule will ensure that road users who can do the most harm – drivers of motor vehicles – have the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger they pose to other road users. Up until now, the Highway Code has treated all road users as if they have equal responsibility for their own and other's safety.
- **A strengthened priority for walkers on pavements waiting to cross the road.** The new code introduces a responsibility for drivers and cyclists to give way to walkers who are waiting to cross a side road or a junction. Walkers will also have priority when waiting to cross a zebra crossing, as opposed to the current rule that only gives priority once you are on the crossing.

The Highway Code for walkers

Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users along with cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders, but it's just as important for car and other vehicle drivers to be considerate of those on foot as it is for walkers to be familiar with the rules of the Highway Code and therefore not put themselves at unnecessary risk.

Except for motorways and slip roads (which should only be used in an emergency), all public roads are open to walkers. Even if you plan on walking off-road though, many walking routes will include at least some road walking if only to link between footpaths or areas of open access so it's important to take care, especially on country roads with no pavements where traffic could be moving very fast.

Key points to remember:

- Use the pavement (including any path along the side of the road) where there is one
- Use **safe crossings** where possible and follow the **Green Cross Code**
- Help others to see you by wearing or carrying something bright or fluorescent
- Use reflective materials at night such as armbands, sashes or jackets
- Take special care with young children, pushchairs and non-powered wheelchairs

What do when there is no pavement available

Different rules for walkers apply when there is no pavement depending on the size of your group. Small groups should keep to the right-hand side of the road so you can see oncoming traffic. Keep close to the side of the road and be prepared to walk in single file. If you come across a sharp right-hand bend, it may be safer to cross to the left-hand side of the road and cross back after the bend.

Large groups on organised walks should keep to the left when no pavement is available. There should be a look-out at the front and back of the group wearing fluorescent clothes in daylight and reflective clothes in the dark. At night, the front look-out should have a white light and the rear look-out a red light. People on the outside of large groups should also carry lights and wear reflective clothing.