



## Driving in the correct lane

On average, lane hogging wastes a third of motorway capacity by wasting the inside lane which often remains unused whilst other traffic sits in the middle lane. Where the M25 has been widened to four lanes through our area, we often see these drivers clogging up the middle two lanes whilst the inside remains clear.

The rules in this area are simple and covered by various legislation plus rules 264 and 265 of the Highway Code:

 **Rule 264** You should always drive in the left-hand lane when the road ahead is clear. If you are overtaking a number of slower-moving vehicles, you should return to the left-hand lane as soon as you are safely past. Slow-moving or speed-restricted vehicles should always remain in the left-hand lane of the carriageway unless overtaking. You **must not** drive on the hard shoulder except in an emergency or if directed to do so by the police, traffic officers in uniform or by signs.

**This same rule applies for dual carriageways.**

 **Rule 265** The right-hand lane of a motorway with three or more lanes **must not** be used (except in certain circumstances) if you are driving:

- ✗ *any vehicle drawing a trailer*
- ✗ *a goods vehicle with a maximum laden weight between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes, which is **required** to be fitted with a speed limiter*
- ✗ *a **goods vehicle** with a maximum laden weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes*
- ✗ *a **passenger vehicle** with a maximum laden weight exceeding 7.5 tonnes constructed or adapted to carry a driver plus more than 8 seated passengers*
- ✗ *a **passenger vehicle** with a maximum laden weight not exceeding 7.5 tonnes which is constructed or adapted to carry a driver plus more than 8 seated passengers, which is **required** to be fitted with a speed limiter*



If you are driving in the middle or right lane of a motorway or dual carriageway when the left lane is clear, the Police will usually deal with you for the offence of **Careless Driving**. This could mean being offered an educational course in lieu of prosecution (similar to the Speed Awareness course offers) or you could be given 3 points on your license and a £100 fine (you have the right to ask for a court appearance for both options but this could result in far higher costs).



Police can also issue you a section 59 warning for driving in this manner which could mean your vehicle was seized for any repeat within a year.

### Why do I need to stay in the slow lane?

There are no 'slow' or 'fast' lanes – all lanes within a road (unless clearly marked otherwise and in **very rare** instances) have the same speed limit for that vehicle type and all traffic should be in lane 1 (left) with the other lanes (2,3,4 or more) being overtaking lanes, for passing slower traffic if legal, safe and appropriate to do so before then moving back into lane 1 if/when clear.

### Surely you have better things to focus on?

Poor lane discipline, or 'middle lane hogging' as it is often known can and does **cause lots of accidents** - even if these don't cause any injuries, they hold everyone up unnecessarily which can in turn cause people to miss flights and meetings etc.

Being in the wrong lane is also a well-recognised cause of traffic jams- by using the middle lane when the inside one is empty you are in effect removing the left hand lane from use as people don't want to pass you on the inside (which can be illegal as well as dangerous).

Think to yourself how much slower the road would be if the left lane was closed and coned off for road works, by driving in the middle lane **you are** in effect **causing this**, however by moving into the left lane when clear all other lanes remain available meaning traffic flows better and others drivers aren't frustrated by avoidable hold ups.

People 'hogging the middle lane' is one of the biggest complaints we get from the public and we are constantly asked to do more to tackle it which is why you have received this warning/letter/ticket/other action, we have also stepped up patrols to stop and directly deal with vehicles when possible.

### The left lane is full of commercial vehicles?

HGVs do indeed tend to (correctly) remain in lane 1 and if they are bunched together with the gaps between not being large enough to realistically move into before having to move out again to pass then it may be reasonable to remain in lane 2 until lane 1 is sufficiently clear again however that is a judgement call and if an officer feels you could and should have moved into lane 1 between then this offence could still be made out.

### But I always see Taxis/minicabs doing this

As Roads Policing officers we are always disappointed to see professional drivers who should know better doing this and will, where we feel appropriate, make referrals to taxi licensing offices (we regularly refer to TFL).

