

### 3 - SIGNALS.

MotorCycle RoadCraft. Chapter 6. Pages 107 - 115.

The general rules as to whether signals are required or not are:

If you are moving away from other road user(s) **AND** they can/should be able to anticipate your actions, then a signal is **NOT** usually required.

If you are intending moving towards their path or lane

**OR**

they cannot anticipate your actions, then a signal **IS** usually required.

Before any signal is given ask yourself: -

Who will it benefit?      How will they benefit?

**GIVING SIGNALS THAT ARE NOT REQUIRED IS INDICATIVE (pun intended) OF POOR CONCENTRATION, OBSERVATION, ANTICIPATION AND PLANNING SKILLS.**

**KEY POINT: - in order to display this skill you MUST improve your observational skills and therefor your safety.**

**Do you signal prior to moving off from rest?** Generally a signal is not required, provided that you wait for a suitable gap in the traffic flow. On a single carriageway road you should certainly not give a right signal to move off whilst waiting for a gap to appear if traffic is flowing freely.

Doing this, in the hope that someone may slow to allow you into the traffic flow could be dangerous due to vehicles slowing unexpectedly and could cause a collision. Though if traffic has stopped, or virtually so, then "asking" for a space by signalling right, would not, I suggest, be dangerous.

Though if you are moving off from, say, a lay-by onto a dual carriageway, when lane 1 is empty, but lane 2 is occupied, then a right signal would be appropriate - to encourage those in lane 2 to remain there so that you could safely use lane 1.

Possibly, also if lane 1 had traffic in it, but lane 2 was empty - then a signal might prompt those in lane 1 to move over, in order, to create a lane for you to use. But not if lane 2 was occupied - too much disruption to traffic flow could/would occur.

Do you always signal left prior to slowing down or stopping on the left? Unless there is traffic behind or pedestrians/traffic ahead **who would benefit, then why bother?**

**Do you need a signal prior to overtaking?** This is a difficult one! There are so many variables - to mention a few: - is anyone behind you?

Particularly if they may be considering overtaking you - is the driver ahead aware of your presence/intentions? From how far back are you starting your overtake? How much safety space can you give? A large one hopefully, or don't attempt to overtake.

Though, in general, a signal is unlikely to be necessary, if you do need one, then as with all signals, it needs to be given **IN GOOD TIME**. **It is little more than useless to signal AS you make a manoeuvre**. Consider a long, horn note or headlight flash.

**Do you always give signals to turn at junctions?** Are they really necessary?

**Signals should only be given when they would help or assist other road users.**

So please, avoid giving needless signals (in order to be able to do this successfully, you have to improve your observational skills – the "information" phase of "the system") but surely, isn't this, at least partly, what advanced riding is about?

When on "group runs", where a junction is marked by a rider, surely the 8, 12 or 16 following riders don't need to signal their turn (except for the benefit of other road users who are not part of the group).

**Make sure you signal correctly at roundabouts;** study the Highway Code, if in any doubt regarding the correct procedure.

Remember, the exit signal can be of particular benefit to other road users who want to enter the roundabout system, especially from the road you are going into. Also, can benefit pedestrians.

Signals for lane changes in one-way systems, dual-carriageways and motorways - **late or sudden lane changes must be avoided**.

If they are not, then insufficient "concentration, observation, anticipation, and planning" has taken place.

Generally, if changing lanes early - and you are moving into an empty lane (providing that lane may not be about to become occupied), that is, for example, you are moving from lane 1 into lane 2 (when it is empty) and there are no vehicles in lane 3 or 4, who may also be considering moving into lane 2) then a signal isn't usually required.

However, if you wish to move into an occupied lane or a lane that may be about to become occupied then **ALWAYS** signal **WELL BEFORE** you begin, your smooth lane change (others **MUST** have **TIME TO SEE** and **REACT** to your signal, if necessary, **BEFORE** you begin to act upon it. REMEMBER a signal will never make an unsafe situation safe.

**Also REMEMBER a signal gives you NO RIGHT WHATSOEVER to act upon it.**

Similarly, a signal to move back from lane 2 to lane 1 would not normally be required, since you would be moving back into empty space – having got **WELL PAST** the other vehicle, you must leave them a safe braking distance before moving back, otherwise if you should need to stop quickly, **THEY** will run into the back of you. When moving back from lane 3 to lane 2, a signal may well be required - for the benefit of traffic in lane 1.

If a signal is required, it should be given to warn other road users of your intentions. It is of little use merely to tell other road users what you are doing, or have done - they can see that.

### **Do you signal to move back after overtaking?**

It should not normally be necessary - you should be moving into empty space and your speed should be taking you away from the vehicle(s) you have passed - though on narrow-ish roads you may need a left signal (to allay the fears of an oncoming driver).

If you find you do need a left signal in order to "squeeze into" a gap between vehicles, then you shouldn't have attempted overtaking in the first place!!!

To do so and cause another road user to brake is illegal, inconsiderate and potentially **DANGEROUS** (you are needlessly dependent on someone else for your safety) and are guilty of "aggressive" riding – which does the image of motorcycling no good at all.

### **WE CAN ALL RIDE LIKE "PRATS" IF WE WISH.**

The “slowing down” signal, when required, can be used much more easily by a motorcyclist (we don't have to wind a window down). This signal is especially useful approaching zebra crossings where pedestrians are waiting to cross.

**KEY POINT: - DO NOT ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIANS TO CROSS - THERE MAY OTHER (UNSEEN, BY YOU) VEHICLE(S) APPROACHING. IT IS THE PEDESTRIAN(S) RESPONSIBILITY TO DECIDE WHEN IT IS SAFE TO CROSS -**

**NOT YOURS.**

Don't omit to use arguably the most important signal of all. The "**thank you**" signal.

If someone moves over or allows a space to develop in front of them for your convenience, a “thank you” would be desirable.

The “thank you” can be done with the left hand (if you have large safety margins) or if conditions dictate that both your hands remain on the handlebars, then with an "exaggerated" slow nod of the head.

Please, **DON'T** play silly games with your indicators "a la" many, but not all, heavy goods, coach, and some car drivers e.g. "flash your hazards" (illegal) or use a "left-right-left" sequence of indicators or by "tapping" the brake lights.

These "games" could be very confusing to other road users.

The “hand-held-up” also acts as an “apology” if you inadvertently inconvenience someone.

**Do you signal to move out to pass parked vehicles, cyclists or pedestrians walking close to the edge of or where there is no pavement?**

**If so WHY?**

It should not normally be necessary, those behind will/should be able to anticipate your action (providing that the obstruction is not hidden from their view by, for example, a bend, brow of hill, or because of fog - NOT light mist).

Though of course, if you wanted to move into their lane or path, then a signal would be required (see lane changes, above).

**Similarly, a signal to move back is not, normally, required.**

**Signals in fog** (this does NOT include light mist) would almost always be required for the benefit of those behind you - they cannot see the obstruction as early as you and would not therefore be able to anticipate your change of position.

When waiting to turn or when stopped at junctions in fog, keep releasing and applying the brakes if possible, in order to "flash" your brake light, to alert rearward approaching traffic of your presence, certainly until you have one or two vehicles behind you.

Perhaps, using an indicator - even if you are not actually turning may highlight your position - but, turn it off again as soon as possible. In the absence of fog, when queuing to turn, especially at night, consider canceling your indicator, to avoid needless dazzle to the driver(s) behind, but do not forget to re-signal before moving off, if it would help others.

## **ROUNABOUT SIGNALS.**

Remember to use **EXIT** signals at roundabouts, even when following the road ahead, **IF** they would help or warn other road users, including pedestrians.

This signal is often particularly helpful to those wishing to join the roundabout from the road you intend entering.

If going more than ½-way around and using the right hand lane, use a right signal if other road users are present.

It can be very helpful to those wishing to join the roundabout who wants to use lane 1.

**ALWAYS ANALYZE YOUR RIDING  
BE SELF-CRITICAL.**

**OBSERVE, ANTICIPATE, AND DECIDE  
UPON YOUR RIDING PLANS.**