

# Top 5 Guide to Road Etiquette

**Road etiquette is not just about being courteous. It is about working together to create a safer environment for all road users, writes Associate Kaylene Gregory.**

Demonstrating how to share the road by observing good road etiquette sets a positive example for your passengers and fellow road users, and makes the journey safer for everyone. Here's our recommended and easy to implement top 5 guide to road etiquette - why not share it with others?

## 1 The 3 second rule

Did you know it can take nine car lengths for a car travelling at 60km per hour to stop completely? Maintaining a safe following distance is a safety must do. Tailgating is not only disrespectful, it can be very dangerous.

The Queensland Government recommends you should drive at least two seconds behind the vehicle in front in ideal driving conditions and you should add an additional second for each three metre trailer length.

**Tip:** To ensure you are maintaining a safe following distance, pick a landmark ahead of you such as a sign post and watch for the car in front of you to pass it. If you are driving in ideal conditions and are able to count two seconds or more before you pass the same landmark, you are driving at a safe following distance. Don't forget, if driving in less than ideal conditions or following a vehicle towing a trailer, be sure to stay further behind.

## 2 Indicate, indicate, indicate!

Your turning signal is an essential tool. If you are on a bicycle, ensuring you use appropriate hand signals is of utmost importance.

Failing to indicate is a common cause of motor vehicle accidents, and in Queensland can attract fines starting from \$78 for both motorists and cyclists. Motorists can also lose demerit points. The bigger potential cost though, is to the health and wellbeing of anyone who may suffer an injury in an accident.

You should also signal continuously until you have completed your manoeuvre. If you're changing lanes, this means leaving your indicator on until you are fully in the next lane so that other cars around you have a chance to see what you're planning on doing and adjust their movements if required.

**Tip:** Whether you're driving a car or riding a bike, make sure you always signal for at least five seconds before performing a manoeuvre to warn others of your intended action.

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### 3 Blinded by the lights

High beam headlights and fog lights can temporarily deprive other road users of their sight when used inappropriately. The Queensland Government recommends only using high beam headlights when a vehicle in front is 200 metres or further away from you.

Fog lights are to be turned off and only used in poor weather conditions such as heavy rain or fog.

**Tip:** Use your high beams sparingly and appropriately!

### 4 Bicycles are real vehicles, too

Some people can be guilty of thinking that cyclists are not in the same category as motorists. However, as I'm sure all MTBA members know, bicycles are legally recognised as a vehicle on the road, and therefore cyclists enjoy the same rights to use public roads as other road users.

**Tip:** Encourage your friends and family to treat cyclists with the same courtesy they would other road users, and don't forget to look out for cyclists and give them the space they need on the road, too! Minimum mandatory distance rules are now in place and need to be respected.

### 5 Reduce phone distractions

Using a mobile phone while driving is illegal. In Queensland, you can be fined \$391 and have 3 demerit points recorded against your traffic history if you are using your mobile phone while driving. You can also be fined \$391 for using your mobile phone when cycling.

Whilst it may be difficult to estimate the number of accidents caused or contributed to by improper use of mobile phones in Australia, it goes without saying that using your mobile phone while driving or cycling is dangerous to all road users.

**Tip:** When on the road, turn off your phone. Put it in the glove box of your car, in your handbag behind your seat or away from your hands when you're cycling.

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