

Low Speed Manoeuvring and Parking Cars

Guidance on how to manage the safe and efficient low speed manoeuvring and parking of cars

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Introduction

Low speed manoeuvring (LSM), such as reversing and parking, is a key part of everyday driving. Whether you're navigating a car park, reversing into a driveway, or performing a turn on a narrow street, your ability to control your vehicle at low speeds can make the difference between a safe journey and a stressful one.

Organisations have responsibility for the management of work related road risk that ensures the safety, health and wellbeing of drivers, passengers, and other road users. Appropriate control measures such as information, instruction and training should be introduced to ensure employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to conduct safe parking and manoeuvring.

Driver vehicle familiarisation ensures drivers safely understand a new or unfamiliar vehicle's controls, dimensions, blind spots, and handling characteristics before operating it, reducing risks for new company vehicles or different models. Proper familiarisation includes pre-journey checks, adjusting seating/mirrors, and training on advanced driver-assistance systems (ADAS).



Safe Vehicle Manoeuvring

The key elements for safe and accurate LSM and parking include a combination of driver focus, precise vehicle control, good observation skills, also understanding the vehicle dynamics and dimensions along with using appropriate in-vehicle technology.

Awareness and Observation

360° spatial awareness of your surroundings is very important, especially when manoeuvring in busy and/or confined areas. Drivers must avoid being distracted by passengers, in vehicle technology, mobile phones and tablets, turn off any audible distractions such as radios. Do not wear ear buds as these can reduce your awareness of any changes in your surroundings.

The continual checking of mirrors, blind spots, and in vehicle video monitors, where fitted, are paramount throughout any manoeuvre along with paying attention to reversing and proximity sensors. It is essential that correct observations are carried out especially the nearside and rear of the vehicle, technology alone should not be relied upon.

Drivers must be aware of any changes in the surrounding area of the vehicle this could include other road users, pedestrians, and roadside furniture. If in doubt, STOP and reassess the situation and if necessary, get out of the vehicle and look.

Vehicle Control

When manoeuvring at low speeds, accurate and controlled steering input is essential to ensure precise vehicle movement and positioning. Using smooth clutch and brake control, along with subtle use of the accelerator to ensure vehicle stability and reduce sudden movements. For vehicles with automatic transmission smooth use of the accelerator and brake will enable safe control throughout the manoeuvre.

When driving an electric vehicle take additional care when using the accelerator as the high torque developed by the motor can cause sudden acceleration.

Environmental Considerations

Always consider environmental factors such as inclement weather, slippery, uneven surfaces and potholes that may affect traction and vehicle control when carrying out any vehicle manoeuvre. Be aware of inadequate lighting and poor visibility especially at dusk, at night, and when driving in low level sun and adverse weather, as these factors can impact your awareness of vulnerable road users, obstacles, and other vehicles. Remember time of day, day of the week and the potential risks around shared spaces and built up areas such as schools, hospitals, shops etc.

Safety Practices

Always comply with The Highway Code, company policy, and to all parking restrictions. When driving on company business drivers should always demonstrate a high standard of driving with due consideration to other road users.

Warn and Inform Other Road Users

Due to the range of working environments drivers should warn other road users of their intended actions in good time before changing course, direction, stopping or moving off. Signals should never be confusing and must be cancelled after the manoeuvre is completed.

Hazard warning lights are only to be used to warn other road users of a hazard when your vehicle has broken down, or you are causing an obstruction. They should only be used long enough to ensure their purpose has been observed. Do not use them when driving unless on a motorway or unrestricted dual carriage way to warn others of a potential hazard ahead.

Patience and Practice

Low speed manoeuvring is not about speed; it's about remaining in control of your vehicle. Take your time, stay calm, and practice regularly to build up confidence.

Choosing the Right Spot

Look for a space that gives you enough room to manoeuvre safely and choose a parking space that allows enough space to enter and exit carefully. Avoid tight spots unless you are confident in your skills.

By reversing into a parking spot, you are allowing yourself a clear view of the area around you when it's time to leave, which reduces the likelihood of collisions.

Final Checks

Once parked, ensure your vehicle is straight, within the lines, and not obstructing traffic, other vehicles or pedestrians. Always apply the handbrake and check your surroundings, and if necessary, use the ‘Dutch Reach’ technique before exiting your vehicle.

Dutch Reach technique

When opening the door of parked vehicles, utilise the ‘Dutch Reach’ method to avoid injury to cyclists, motorcyclists and/or pedestrians.

When opening your vehicle door, use your hand **furthest** from the door to reach across your chest. This movement forces your body and head to turn, allowing you to scan your rear view mirror and side mirror and check over your shoulder into your blind spot, enabling you to see if it’s safe before opening your door.



Dynamic risk assessment

Reducing the risk of a collision occurring requires not only careful driving, but a driver’s ability to quickly assess a developing situation and take the appropriate action to keep themselves and other road users safe. A dynamic risk assessment involves identifying ‘on the spot’ potential hazards and making an appropriate quick decision on how best to complete the manoeuvre safely to reduce the likelihood of an incident occurring.

The use of Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)

ADAS are in-vehicle systems, designed to improve driver safety and help reduce the risk of collisions occurring. This equipment is designed to assist the driver to manoeuvre safely but should not solely be relied on. Some examples include Automatic Emergency Braking (AEB) forward and reversing, Blind Spot Detection (BSD), 360-view cameras and Parking sensors, these can help detect a potential hazard and reduce the risk of a collision if a driver does not react in time.

Checklist

An example Car Low Speed Manoeuvring and Parking Checklist is presented in Appendix 1 which can be tailored to your own organisation.

Specialist Partner Solutions

Aviva Risk Management Solutions can offer access to a wide range of risk management products and services at preferential rates via our network of Specialist Partners.

For more information please visit:

[Aviva Risk Management Solutions – Specialist Partners](#)

Sources and Useful Links

- [Safe manoeuvring - HSE](#) *
- [Parking - HSE](#)
- [The Highway Code - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- [The Highway Code - Waiting and parking \(238 to 252\) - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)
- [Vehicle Safety Technology - VUEgroup](#)

*Contains public sector information published by the Health and Safety Executive and licensed under the Open Government Licence.

Additional Information

Relevant Loss Prevention Standards include:

- [Dynamic Risk Assessments](#)
- [Protecting Vulnerable Road Users](#)

To find out more, please visit [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#) or **speak to one of our advisors.**

Email us at riskadvice@aviva.com or call 0345 366 6666.*

*The cost of calls to 03 prefixed numbers are charged at national call rates (charges may vary dependent on your network provider) and are usually included in inclusive minute plans from landlines and mobiles. For our joint protection telephone calls may be recorded and/or monitored.

Appendix 1 – Low Speed Manoeuvring and Parking Checklist

Location	
Date	
Completed by (name and signature)	

	Managing low speed manoeuvres and parking in a car	Y/N	Comments
1.	Have you included Car LSM and Parking in your: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving at Work Policy • Driving at Work Risk Assessment • Dynamic Risk Assessments • Safe Systems of Work 		
2.	Are the Driving at Work Policy and LSM and parking associated Risk Assessments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicated to all relevant employees? • Employees have signed that they have read and understood the Driving for Work policy and risk assessment content? • Employees understanding of the content has been validated and documented? 		
3.	Are the Driving for Work policy and risk assessments reviewed at the required intervals?		
4.	Are car drivers advised when planning journeys to determine safe parking areas?		
5.	Are drivers informed, instructed and trained to carry out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low speed manoeuvring safely and efficiently? • Parking safely and efficiently? 		
6.	Additional comments:		

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