

Round we go again

Driving along a dual carriageway you want to turn right, but are prevented from doing so because a car is on the inside of you, so what to do? You can pull in front of the car causing an upset and maybe an accident, drop behind and make the turn if time permits or carry on and take an alternative exit

Some time later, you are tootling along the same dual carriageway and the vehicle in front is hogging the left hand (overtaking) lane, so this time you might undertake and maybe meet an undertaker later on, stay behind and be patient or tailgate whilst honking your horn

With all of these manoeuvres the choice is yours; you are in control of only one vehicle, though you can influence the behaviour of other motorists and we all know that the roads are populated by idiots, a category that we never fit into!

Roundabouts

Recently I have witnessed a few near misses at roundabouts plus two minor accidents. On every occasion the area was populated by many expats, outnumbered by holidaymakers from Madrid who, like Londoners, have a unique driving style, a sure recipe for disaster. Many times I am asked about what to do at roundabouts and have written before on the subject, but even my most ardent fans (if I have any) will not have read all of my musings so consider this:

In the two scenarios mentioned above imagine that the road layout changes from straight to circular. The same principles apply, at least here in Spain. Going around a roundabout you want to exit by making a right turn; a car is blocking the exit by being inside of you so the same options are available to you, but most sane motorists would carry on round and try again. Later, you are following a slower car and a roundabout looms; the slowcoach sticks to the left hand lane so you remain behind him or undertake

Here in our adopted country the rules for roundabouts are the same as if driving on a normal road. A vehicle on the inside (right hand) lane has priority when exiting the dual carriageway or a roundabout. Undertaking is not allowed within normal circumstances; the left lane is for overtaking only and after the manoeuvre has been completed you should return to the inside lane

Indicators

Well my high horse is in full stallion mode now so let's look at how we can help ourselves and other motorists. Indicators as we all know seem to be an optional extra and can never be fully trusted. The vehicle in front may be indicating right, so you close up ready to accelerate forward. Oops he carries straight on forcing you to brake. Maybe worse is when you want to overtake and the car in front has been indicating left for some time; do you risk overtaking hoping that he has forgotten to cancel or just wait until there is plenty of room to give a wide berth? OK, so indicators are not

widely used, but they can certainly help you to influence the actions of others, hopefully keeping you safer. Whether others use them or not, it is in your best interest to do so in order that other drivers are not playing a guessing game; self preservation is important

Tailgating

Tailgating is a national pastime, a pet hate of mine that I share with many of you; it just makes me feel uncomfortable knowing that someone is inches from my rear end (read into that what you will!). There are three ways to deal with this, from accelerating away, pulling over to let him pass or slowing down to annoy the sod; like many of you I have done all three depending upon how bolshie I am feeling. Just like personal space when having a conversation, we are all comfortable with a certain distance between us. You know when your back is against the wall, arms spread out and spittle hitting your face that the other person clearly enjoys being cosier than you do.

In far away days back in the old country I used to teach defensive driving; this is primarily about keeping space around you and being alert to the traffic conditions. One of the tricks in order to judge a safe distance from the vehicle in front is to spot a stationary object ahead, a lamppost for example, and count slowly to two. If you get to “two” after the car in front had passed the marker, you are too close. The next time that you see signs on a motorway asking you to keep two chevrons between you and the driver ahead do this exercise and you will see that the chevrons are two seconds apart. This works at all speeds; the faster you are travelling the greater the distance needed to take up your two second gap. Two seconds; how much reaction time does that give you? Anything less and you too could be pushing someone into a wall

Shopping and footwear

I thought that the flip flop saga had fully run its course until a customer last week did a double take when he thought he saw me wearing a pair. Mine are quite sturdy sandals which have a strap at the back holding them firmly to my feet. This is the point; normal flip flops can fall off when using the car’s pedals so your footwear needs to be securely attached

Shopping bags in cars is another perennial; these along with other loose items must be kept in the boot when driving or sudden braking can cause you to be clattered by a flying can of baked beans or a dozen eggs which may scramble your brain. Dogs and other animals should ideally be caged but nevertheless cannot be loose in the car

All common sense stuff, but as we know common sense isn’t that common. OK, my high horse is out to pasture. Be safe

Spanish Number Plates
Graham Shelton
Orihuela, Alicante

www.spanish-number-plates.com

info@spanish-number-plates.com

966 753 375

605 319 889