

Filtering Through Traffic

The Law

You can filter through stationary or slow-moving traffic by law; however, this must be done at a speed that allows you to stop in an emergency. Only in exceptional cases, where a collision would be unavoidable, would a motorcyclist not be at fault whilst filtering, as you should be riding at a speed that allows you to stop.



Of course, you have to observe all overtaking laws, that is, the rider remains within traffic laws; no crossing double solid white lines, or crossing a single solid white line where the line is closest to the rider, where no overtaking signs are in force, on white zigzag lines at pedestrian crossings or using the hard shoulder on a motorway to filter.

Areas of white diagonal stripes or chevrons painted on the road, these are to separate traffic lanes or to protect traffic turning right. If the area is bordered by a broken white line, you should not enter the area unless it is necessary, and you can see that it is safe to do so. If the area is marked with chevrons and bordered by solid white lines you must not enter it except in an emergency.

The Highway Code

Rule 88 Manoeuvring

You should be aware of what is behind and to the sides before manoeuvring. Look behind you; use mirrors if they are fitted. When in traffic queues look out for pedestrians crossing between vehicles and vehicles emerging from junctions or changing lanes.



Position yourself so that drivers in front can see you in their mirrors. Additionally, when filtering in slow-moving traffic, take care and keep your speed low. Remember: Observation – Signal – Manoeuvre

Filtering in practice

Filtering is the act of overtaking slow-moving or stationary traffic by travelling between lanes to avoid congestion and progress safely through slow-moving or stationary traffic.

Top Tips When Filtering

1. Before deciding to filter through traffic you must decide whether you will gain an advantage by filtering, is it worth it, and is it safe to do so. Never feel pressurised to filter because the traffic is stationary or other motorcyclists are doing it.
2. Always filter at a safe speed (5-10mph) expecting to have to brake, swerve or stop. Cover your clutch and brake lever while you filter to reduce your relative time should you need to stop quickly.

3. Always be aware that drivers take unexpected actions, so never assume anything or take anything for granted. It is most likely that the driver is unaware that you are there and may signal late or move into your path. Try to get eye contact, look into the mirrors of cars, it might give you a clue that the vehicle is about to turn.



4. Watch out for gaps in the traffic ahead, is there a junction, are cars changing lanes or is the driver letting a pedestrian to cross. Be aware of solid white lines or white zig-zag lines, that signify that pedestrians may be crossing.

5. Plan how you are going to re-join the traffic, what type of road is it, ensure you have a safe gap to return to, always ride defensively.

6. Always filter through the centre line, undertaking on the near side is not illegal, it is just not recommended, so stick to where cars will expect you, and you're not allowed to undertake on the hard shoulder of motorways or bus lanes in the towns (unless specified).

7. On motorway's and dual carriageway's, be mindful of the road surface between lanes, it is often uneven from joins in the tarmac, will have painted white lines that are slippery in wet weather, and bumpy cat's eyes.

We hope this guide helps you to start filtering safely, but if in doubt DON'T FILTER.

