



Welcome to Darwin's September Newsletter

Schools are back, and September can bring busier roads, more pedestrians and plenty of distractions. Whether you're driving through town centres, residential streets or car parks, staying alert can help keep everyone safer.

Road conditions can change quickly, especially near schools and in areas with lots of pedestrians, cyclists and children. Here are some practical tips to help you spot potential hazards and make calmer, safer decisions behind the wheel.



How can drivers prepare for busier roads?

Rush hour and school drop-off and pick-up times can mean more vehicles, pedestrians and distractions. A little preparation can help your journey feel smoother and less stressful.

Check traffic updates

Before you travel, check for delays, roadworks or diversions. Knowing what to expect can help you plan your route and avoid unnecessary stress.

Give yourself time

Allow extra time, particularly at peak travel times. Leaving earlier can help you stay calm, focused and prepared for changes on the road.

Watch out for pedestrians

People may be crossing, walking between parked cars or waiting at crossings. Keep looking around and be ready to slow down or stop.

Keep a safe distance

Leave enough space between your vehicle and the one in front. This gives you more time to react if traffic slows or stops suddenly.

Why should you slow down in residential areas?

Residential streets can be busy and unpredictable. Driving at an appropriate speed and keeping within the speed limit gives you more time to spot hazards and react safely.

Children and pets can appear unexpectedly

Children or pets may emerge from driveways, gardens or between parked cars. Reducing your speed gives you a better chance to stop safely.

Look out for pedestrians, cyclists and scooters

People walking, cycling or scooting may change direction unexpectedly, so keep scanning the road and be ready to respond.

More time to react

The faster you travel, the less time you have to respond to a hazard. Slowing down gives you more time to understand what is happening around you and make a safe decision.

How to spot hazards around schools, parks and playgrounds

These areas can be particularly busy before and after school, at weekends and during school holidays.

Keep an eye out for:

- Sudden movements
- Children may run into the road without warning, perhaps while playing or chasing a ball.
- Warning signs and road markings
- Look out for signs, road markings and lower speed limits that indicate a school, playground or park is nearby
- Bikes and scooters
- Children riding bikes or scooters may wobble or change direction suddenly. Give them plenty of room and be prepared to slow down.

What should drivers look out for near crossings?

Crossings help people cross safely, but drivers still need to stay alert. Look out for:

- Pedestrians and cyclists waiting to cross
- People already crossing
- Children, older people and people with mobility difficulties who may need more time
- People who may be hidden by a blind spot or an obstruction

Approach crossings carefully, especially where parked cars, buses or other obstacles restrict your view.

Why should drivers stay alert in car parks?

Car parks can be busy with families, trolleys, reversing vehicles and people who may not be looking towards traffic. Watch out for:

Vehicles reversing

Drivers leaving spaces may have a restricted view. Slow down and look for moving vehicles and reversing lights.

Distractions

People loading shopping, checking directions or using their phones may not notice an approaching vehicle.

Blind spots

Parked vehicles, pillars and walls can make it difficult to see what is ahead. Take extra care near junctions and pedestrian routes.

Tight corners

Narrow lanes and sharp bends leave less room for error. Keep your speed low and look out for approaching vehicles and pedestrians.

Stay safe wherever you're driving

Safe driving is about staying aware of what is happening around you and being prepared for the unexpected. Looking out for pedestrians, cyclists, children and other road users gives you more time to react and make safer decisions.

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The Darwin Team