

9. Roundabouts

Introduction

Once you have learnt how to cross and join moderately busy traffic streams from crossroads, T-junctions and Y-junctions, it's time to look at dealing with major roundabouts.

Although you may have already dealt with roundabouts in quiet housing estates, in this lesson you will learn how to deal with much more complex roundabouts, on major roads with multiple lanes and multiple exits.

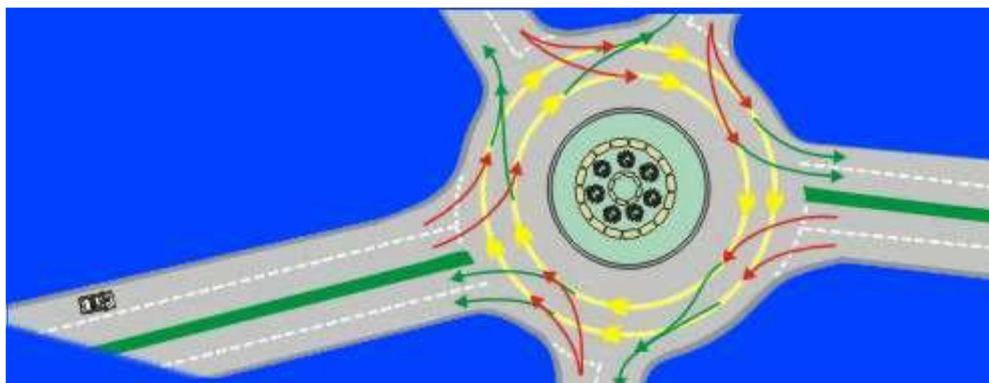
Lesson objectives

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Explain the procedure for joining and leaving complex roundabouts with multiple lanes and exits;
- recognize roundabouts early and take the necessary observations, to ensure you approach the roundabout in the correct lane, while looking for opportunities to proceed;
- give the appropriate signal on approach for the exit you intend to take;
- time your approach speed to make full use of any opportunities to proceed;
- identify and respond accordingly to any drivers ahead, who may stop unnecessarily at the give way line, because they haven't taken the appropriate observations on approach;
- exercise good lane discipline throughout the roundabout, while anticipating the actions of other drivers and in particular, those driving larger vehicles;
- correctly apply the hazard drill as you exit the roundabout, making sure to signal at the appropriate time and glance to the left as necessary.

Subject brief

During this lesson you will learn how to approach and negotiate roundabouts safely. Roundabouts are designed to keep the traffic flowing. Traffic should only flow in a clockwise direction around the island in the centre of the roundabout. This circular road is a one-way street and may be made up of one or more lanes. Traffic entering the roundabout must give way to traffic already on the roundabout, approaching from the right.

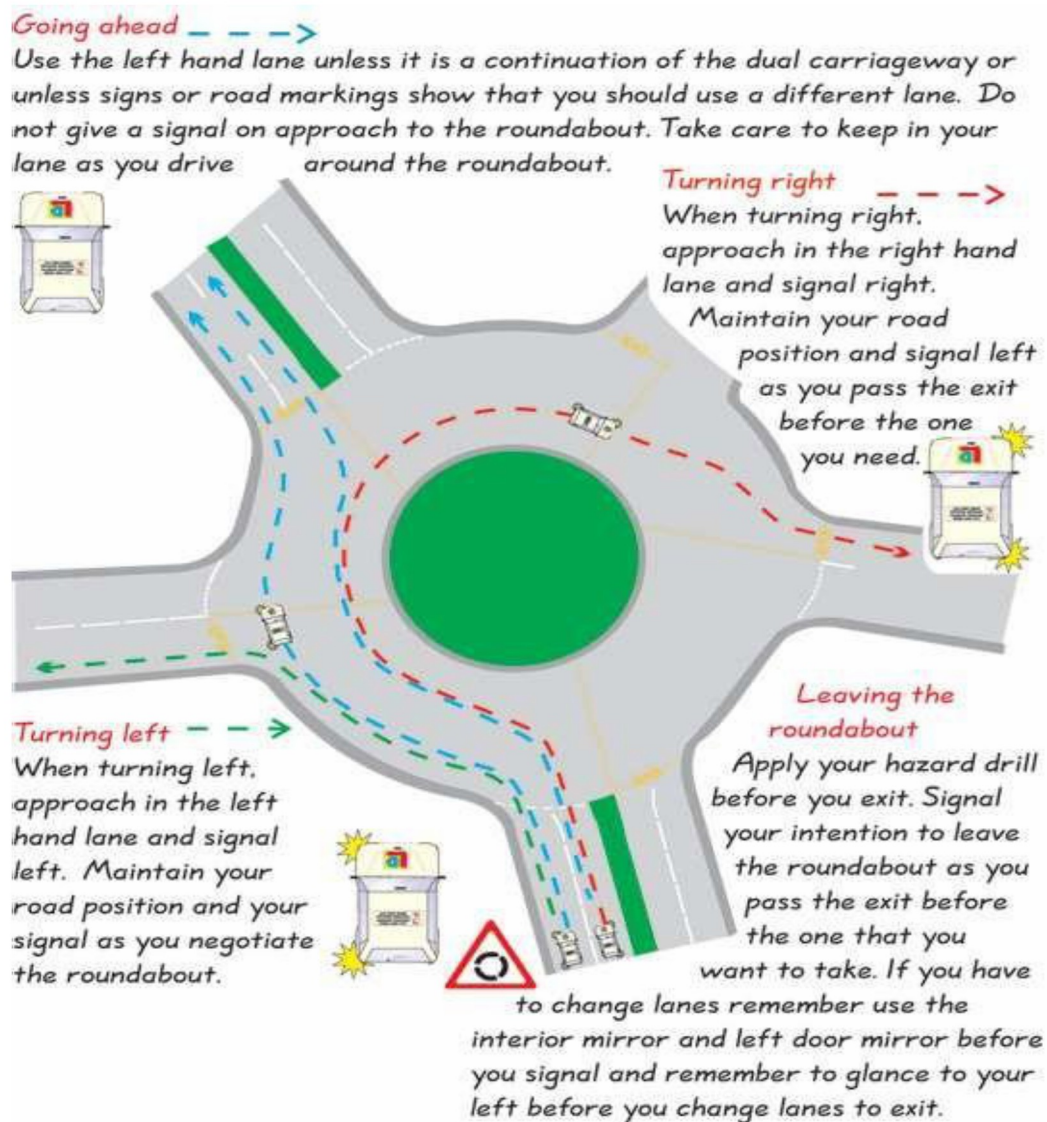


Approaching a roundabout

As with other junctions you apply your hazard drill and take observations of the major road ahead, as early as possible. However, unlike other junctions, most roundabouts are quite open, so that you can assess the flow of traffic on the roundabout at an

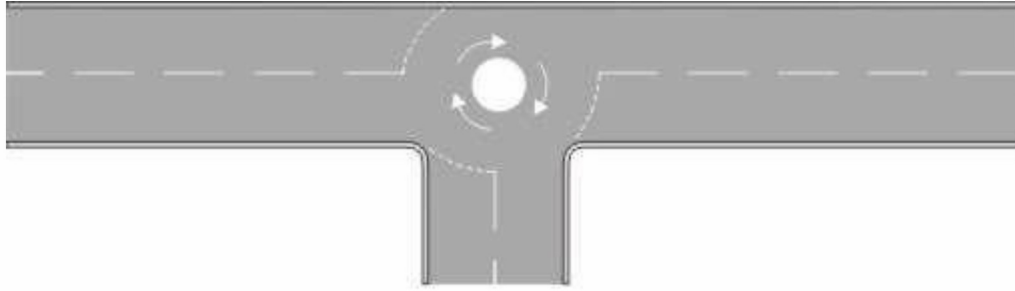
early stage, as you approach the give way lines. The purpose of this is to give you the time to adjust your speed, so that if possible, you can safely merge into any gaps in the flow of traffic from the right, without stopping. Unfortunately, some drivers use roundabouts as though they were stop junctions and only take observations to the right at the last minute. As a result they are prone to stopping at the give way line when it isn't necessary. Unfortunately, vehicles behind may end up running into the back of them, as they wouldn't expect them to stop if the way was clear. Therefore, don't make this mistake and do not assume that the vehicle in front will proceed, even if the way is clear.

How to proceed around a roundabout



Mini roundabouts

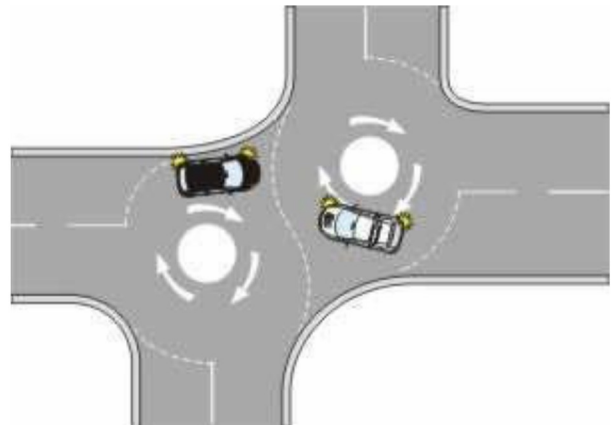
The same rules apply at mini roundabouts as apply at the larger roundabouts, although you will probably find that you have to reduce speed even further due to the lack of space to manoeuvre. There is often insufficient time to signal left when leaving.



You must pass around the central markings unless you are driving a large vehicle or towing a trailer, which is incapable of doing so. Try to avoid using a mini roundabout to do a U-turn, but be aware that other drivers may use it for this purpose.

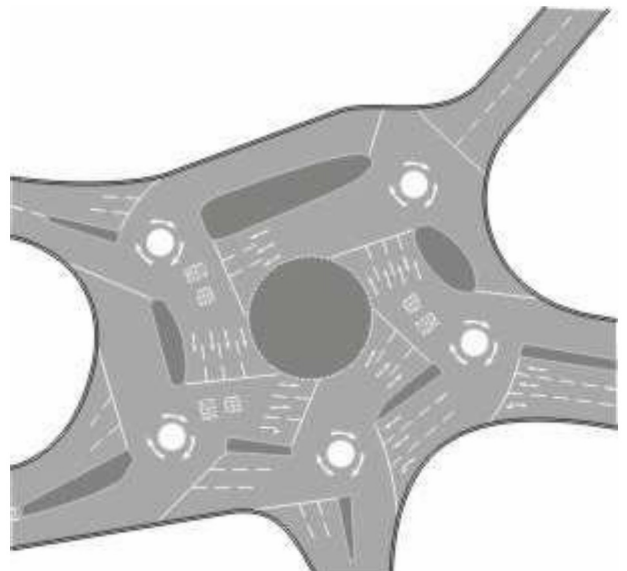
Double mini roundabouts

At some junctions you may encounter a double mini roundabout. Treat each roundabout separately and give way to traffic from your right. Take careful all round observations before you enter.



Complex mini roundabouts

Occasionally you may come across a complex junction with a large roundabout incorporating a series of mini roundabouts at the intersections. Treat each roundabout separately but take extra care as traffic can be travelling in both directions around the larger roundabout.



Remember as with all junctions, 'if in doubt, wait it out'.

Highway Code practical references

Rules: 55, 76-78, 150, 184-190.