

Introduction

The Highway Code for Northern Ireland (hereafter referred to as *The Highway Code* or *the Code*) is essential reading for everyone.

The most vulnerable road users are pedestrians, particularly children, older or disabled people, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. It is important that all road users are aware of *the Code* and are considerate towards each other. This applies to pedestrians as much as to drivers and riders.

Many of the rules in *the Code* are legal requirements, and if you disobey these rules you are committing a criminal offence. You may be fined, given penalty points on your licence or be disqualified from driving. In the most serious cases you may be sent to prison. Such rules are identified by the use of the words '**MUST/MUST NOT**.' In addition, each rule includes an abbreviated reference to the legislation which creates the offence. An explanation of the abbreviations is on page 125.

Although failure to comply with the other rules of *the Code* will not, in itself, cause a person to be prosecuted, *The Highway Code* may be used in evidence in any court proceedings under the Traffic Legislation (see page 125) to establish liability. This includes rules that use advisory wording such as 'should/should not' or 'do/do not'.

Knowing and applying the rules contained in *The Highway Code* could significantly reduce road casualties. Cutting the number of deaths and injuries that occur on our roads every day is a responsibility we all share. *The Highway Code* can help us discharge that responsibility. Further information on driving/riding techniques can be found in *The Official DSA Guide to Driving – the essential skills*, and *The Official DSA Guide to Riding – the essential skills*.



The Highway Code is based on the Great Britain version. Although Northern Ireland road safety legislation continues to be brought into line with that in Great Britain, there are some differences which it has been necessary to reflect in this issue. For example, many Northern Ireland road users may not be familiar with equestrian and puffin crossings or trams. References to these issues have however been included as Northern Ireland residents who plan to visit Great Britain might find them helpful. It is recommended that anyone, especially drivers, intending to visit Great Britain should also purchase the Great Britain version of *The Highway Code*. It is also recommended that anyone intending to visit the Republic of Ireland should purchase a copy of 'Rules of the Road' and note particularly that all speed limit signs in the Republic of Ireland relate to kilometres per hour. The Great Britain Highway Code is available online at www.direct.gov.uk under travel and transport. The Republic of Ireland Rules of the Road is available at www.rulesoftheroad.ie.

