



Using the Roads in Ireland

A Guide for Tourists

An tÚdarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority



Introduction

Using the Road in Ireland?

Welcome to Ireland! We hope you enjoy your stay whether it is for business or pleasure. There are almost 100,000 kilometres of roads in Ireland. These roads range from Motorway to narrow single lane rural roads. Using the roads in Ireland has never been safer.

Ireland is fourth safest country in the European Union with 27 fatalities per million population in 2021. Whether walking, cycling, motorcycling or driving, this guide will provide you with some basic rules of the road to ensure you can stay safe. The full rules of the road for Ireland are available online [here](#)

Driving In Ireland

Before driving on a road, you must ensure that you familiarise yourself with the Rules of The Road and that:

- You hold a current driving licence for the Category of vehicle you are driving.
- All Irish registered vehicles must have appropriate insurance cover and display an Insurance Disc, motor tax and certificate of roadworthiness (if applicable).
- Vehicles from other jurisdictions must have adequate insurance cover in place.

Failure to observe any of these requirements is an offence.

If you are driving a hire car, or one with which you are unfamiliar take time to study the vehicle's handbook and satisfy yourself that you can safely control the vehicle.













Know where the vehicle's safety equipment is located (hi-viz vest, warning triangle first aid kit etc).

Plan your route. Know where you are going and where you plan to take rest breaks before setting off on your journey. If using satellite navigation be sure to set your journey before your drive.

Speed Limits

Speed limits in Ireland are measured in kilometres per hour (km/h). Safety cameras are in use on Irish roads. Locations of cameras are available [here](#)

Check the signs — Check your speed.

SPEED SIGN CONVERTER			
km/h Limit	Approximate Equivalent	km/h Limit	Approximate Equivalent
	EQUIVALENT TO... 		EQUIVALENT TO... 
	EQUIVALENT TO... 		EQUIVALENT TO... 
	EQUIVALENT TO... 		EQUIVALENT TO... 










Certain Speed Limits That Apply To Certain Vehicles

Towing Vehicles/Camper Van = 80 km/h (50 mph)



All Traffic Drives On The Left In Ireland

Speed Limits in Ireland

Sign	Type of Road	Speed Limit
	Motorway (Blue Signs — M Numbers)	120km/h
	National Roads: (Primary and Secondary) (Green Signs — N Numbers)	100km/h
	Typically found on non-national or rural roads, where a reduced limit of 80km/h is in place.	80km/h
	Non-national Roads: (Regional and Local) (White signs — R or L Numbers)	80km/h
	Special speed limit typically found in sub-urban areas with there is a high density of traffic.	60km/h
	Roads in built-up areas, such as cities, towns and boroughs	50km/h
	Special speed limit typically found at an urban or sub-urban area where the reduced limit of 40km/h applies.	40km/h
	Special speed limit used for some roads in built-up areas, such as cities, towns and boroughs. Usually with high levels of vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians.	30km/h
	Slow Zone Special speed limit usually found in residential areas where there would be a high level of danger including children at play.	

Traffic Lights

A red light means “stop”. If the light is red as you approach it, you must not go beyond the stop line at the light or, if there is no stop line, beyond the light.

A green light means you may go on if the way is clear. Take special care if you intend to turn left or right and give way to pedestrians who are crossing.

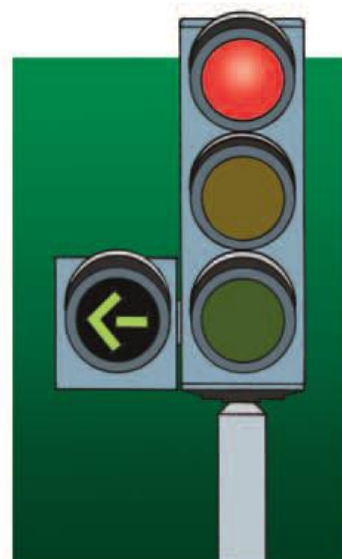
The sequence of traffic lights in Ireland maybe different to what you are used to. The usual sequence is green, amber, red and green again.

An amber light means that you must not go beyond the stop line or, if there is no stop line, beyond the light.

However, you may go on if you are so close to the line or the light when the amber light first appears that stopping would be dangerous. An amber light always follows a green light and before a red light.

Sometimes a flashing amber arrow means you may proceed in the direction of the arrow but only if it is safe to do so — you must yield if other traffic is approaching. A green arrow (also known as the filter light) means that you may move on in the direction of the arrow, assuming it is safe and the way is clear, even if a red light is also showing.

Always keep a look out for emergency vehicles who may be responding to an incident using blue lights and sirens.



Traffic Signs

There are five types of traffic signs on Irish roads:

- **Regulatory traffic signs**
These signs must be obeyed.

- **Warning traffic signs**
These signs warn road users of a hazard ahead.

- **Warning signs for road works**
These signs are orange in colour and warn road users that there are road works ahead.

- **Information signs**
These signs show directions and locations of services or other places of interest to road users.

- **Motorway signs**
These signs are rectangular with blue backgrounds and white writing or symbols.



1A. Yield



1B. Keep Left



2A. Roundabout



1B. Dangerous Bends



3A. Roadworks Ahead



4A. Wild Atlantic Way



4B. Advance direction to local services



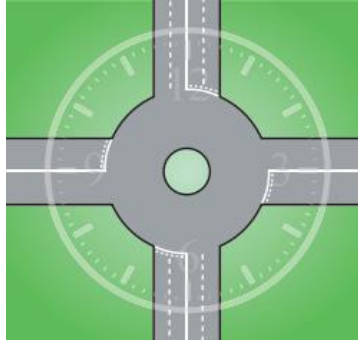
5A. Motorway



5B. Entry To Motorway

Roundabouts

By law, a driver must enter a roundabout by turning to the left. Treat the roundabout as a junction and give right-of-way to traffic already on it. If you are unfamiliar with driving on the left hand side of the road, roundabouts may pose a particular risk so please take extra care.



Slow Down

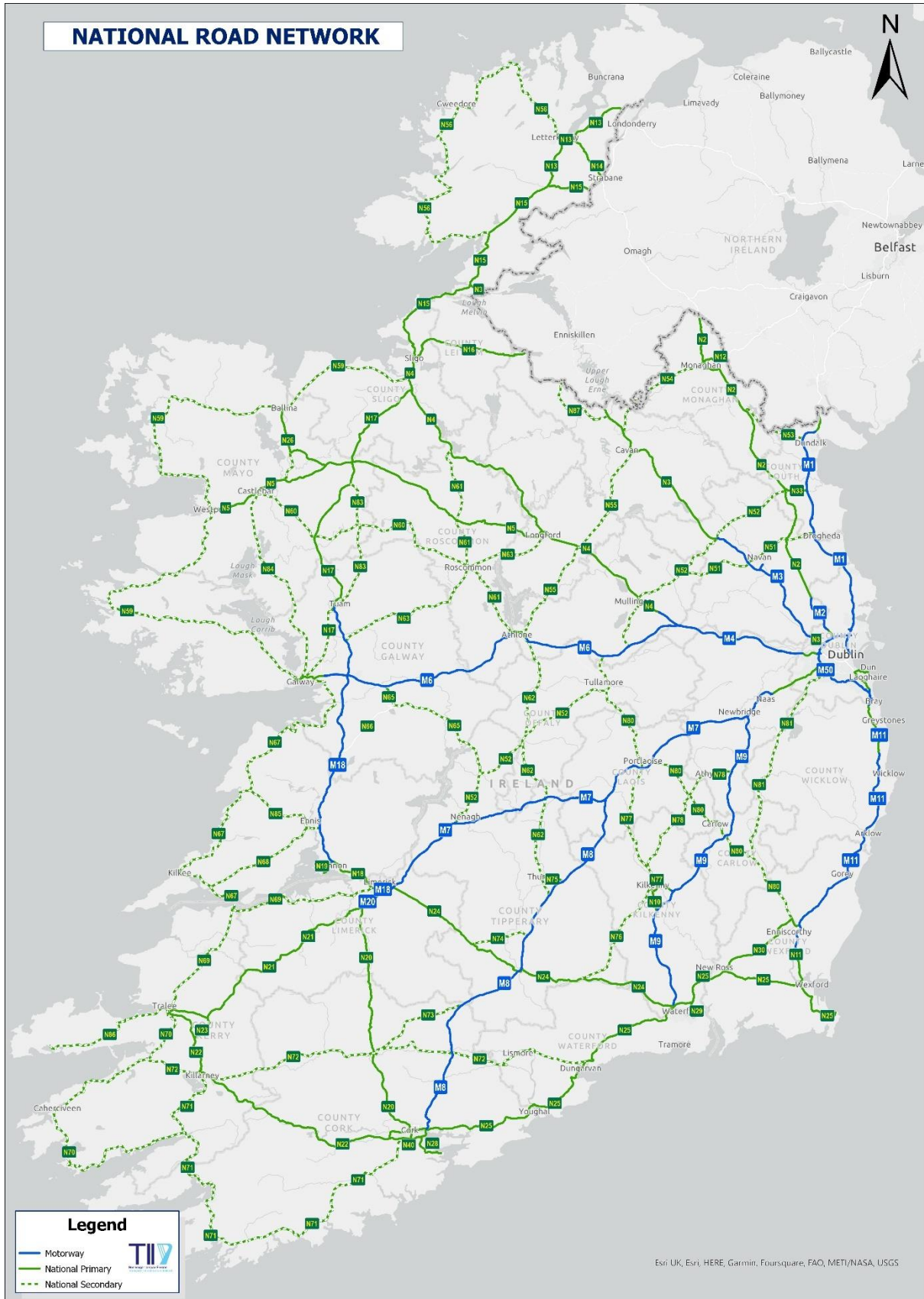
Driving too fast is a factor in 1 out of every 3 of fatal crashes in Ireland. Speeding reduces a driver's ability to steer safely around bends and increases the distance necessary to stop a car. A 100 km/h (62 mph) crash is the same as dropping a car from an eleven-storey building.

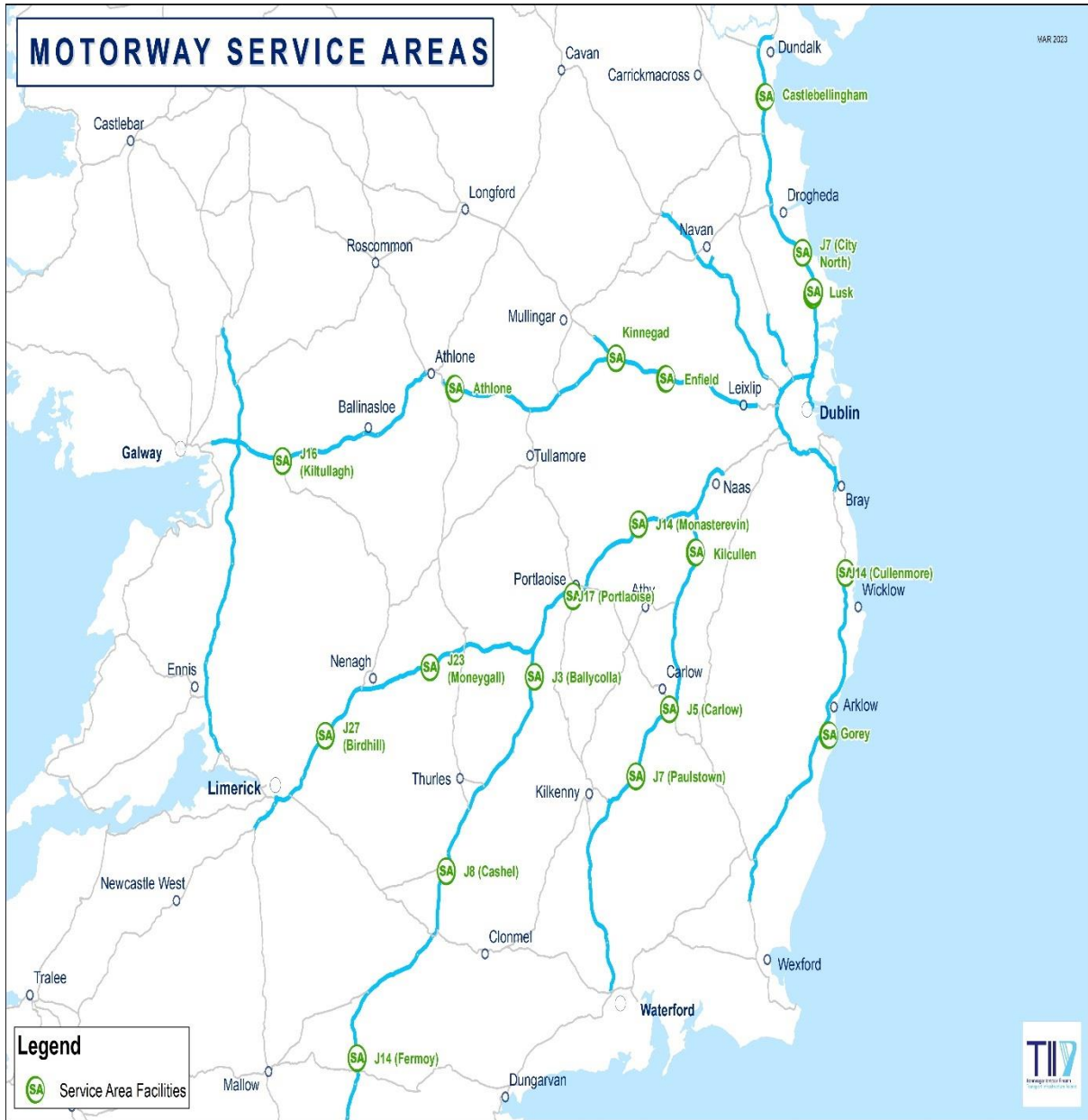
Like most countries, Ireland applies different speed limits to different types of roads. The table on the following page gives examples of the various default speed limits.

Special lower speed limits are used in some urban areas where there are lower volumes of traffic such as housing estates. These areas are referred to as Slow Zones and are designed to help manage the flow of traffic in high-risk areas. Other traffic calming measures such as speed ramps are usually found at these zones.



Slowing down saves lives.





Alcohol and Drugs

It is a criminal offence to drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle above the legal limit and the following levels will result in arrest and further testing at a Garda station (police station):

- Learner drivers, newly qualified drivers and professional drivers shall not exceed 20mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.
- All other drivers shall not exceed 50mg of alcohol per 100ml of blood.



An Garda Síochána (Irish Police) has the power to test any driver stopped at a Mandatory Impairment Testing checkpoint for drugs and alcohol at the roadside. An Garda Síochána conducts mandatory testing of drivers for alcohol at the scene of a crash where someone has been injured, or of a driver who has been injured and removed to hospital.

Drivers can also be tested if they commit a road traffic offence. Maximum penalties on conviction for drink or drug driving is €5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment. All drink driving offences carry a minimum 3-month disqualification. You may also be breath tested if you commit a road traffic offence.

Best advice is never ever drink and drive.

It is also an offence to drive, attempt to drive or be in charge of a motor vehicle while impaired due to the influence of drugs. The new preliminary roadside drug driving testing device, Securetec® Drugwipe 6s, (which looks similar to a COVID-19 test) can test for a greater range of drugs at the roadside.

It is more portable, faster at delivering results and can not only test for Cannabis, Cocaine, Benzodiazepines and Opiates, this device can, unlike its predecessor, test for Amphetamine and Methamphetamine.

DRINK DRIVE LIMITS AND PENALTIES

Under the limits if the level of alcohol present in the body (Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC) is between:

50mg and 80mg



A driver, (other than a learner, novice or professional driver) detected by a member of An Garda Síochána, with between 50 milligrammes and 80 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood, 107 milligrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of urine, or 35 microgrammes of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath, shall be disqualified for holding a driving licence for a period of 3 months and receive a fine of €200.

Under the limits if the level of alcohol present in the body (Blood Alcohol Concentration or BAC) is between:

80mg & 100mg



The driver will be arrested, brought to a Garda Station and required to provide evidential breath or blood or urine specimens. In all cases where the BAC is between 80 and 100mg, the driver will be served with a fixed penalty notice and receive a fixed charge of €400 and the person will be disqualified from holding a driving licence for a period of 6 months.

Under the limits if the level of alcohol present in the body for learner, newly qualified or professional drivers (Goods, Bus, Public Service Vehicle e.g. Taxi) is between:

20mg & 80mg



The driver will be arrested, brought to a Garda Station and required to provide evidential breath or blood or urine specimens. In all cases where the BAC is between 20 and 80mg, the driver will be served with a fixed penalty notice and receive a fixed charge of €200 and the person will be disqualified from holding a driving licence for a period of 3 months

Driver Fatigue

The Road Safety Authority has the following advice for tired drivers:

- Stop, park in a safe place and take a nap for 15 minutes (set your mobile phone alarm). This is the most important thing to do.
- To really make the most of the break, take a caffeinated drink before the nap. (150mg of caffeine e.g. 2 cups of coffee). After the nap, the caffeine should have started to take effect.
- Then get some fresh air and stretch your legs for a few minutes.
- By following all of the above advice you should be able to drive for another hour or so.

Never fight sleep at the wheel.

Stop.Sip.Sleep

Mobile Phones

Drivers using mobile phones are 4 times more likely to be involved in a crash. Not only is it dangerous, but it's against the law and you could be fined. It is an offence to use a mobile phone while driving, which includes touching or holding a mobile phone in your hand at any time



No Seat belt — No Excuse

- Seat belts are proven lifesavers and must be used on every single journey.
- Without a seat belt, 3 out of 4 people will be killed or seriously injured in a 50 km/h (31 mph) head-on collision.
- Every person in a car is legally required to wear a seat belt where one is fitted.
- The driver is responsible for ensuring that passengers under 17 years of age use a seat belt or a suitable child car seat.

Remember: no seat belt — 3 penalty points and a €120 fine.



Rules Of The Road

Full details on the rules of the road in Ireland are available [here](#)

Day Time Running Lights

If your vehicle does not have daytime running lights fitted as standard it is recommended that drivers have dipped headlights on at all times when driving in Ireland.



Child Safety In Cars

All children under 150cm, 36kg must be restrained in the correct child seat/ restraint when travelling in a vehicle.

Select a child seat that:

- Conforms to United Nations standard, ECE Regulations 44-03 or 44-04. (Look for the E mark).
- Is suitable for the child's **weight** and **height**. Do not use age as a guide.
- Is suitable for the type of vehicle.
- Is correctly fitted according to the manufacturer's instructions. It is safer to fit child seats in the rear of the vehicle.
Never fit a rearward facing baby seat in the front



For further information on child safety in cars see [here](#)

Motorcyclists

It is compulsory for riders and pillion passengers to wear a safety helmet which must be properly secured.

It is advisable to use dipped headlights at all times when driving. Hi-visibility clothing should be worn to allow other road-users to see you clearly.

Important: Some local roads in rural areas may present particular hazards. Take extra care. Many motorcycle collisions occur at intersections or while overtaking.



Pedestrians — Be Safe, Be Seen

Pedestrian deaths account for 1 in 5 deaths on our roads. The most important rule for all pedestrians is to be visible, behave responsibly, exercise care and not endanger or inconvenience other road users of the road.

Rules when walking beside or along a road:

- If there is a footpath you **must** use it.
- If there is no footpath, you **must** walk as near as possible you the right-hand side of the road (facing oncoming traffic).
- Do not walk more than two abreast. If the road is narrow or carries heavy traffic, you should walk in single file.
- You should always wear reflective clothing and carry a torch at night when walking in areas with no street.
- You should always carry a torch when walking at night-time.
- You should always be aware of other road users.



Take care near buses or trams:

Take extra care if crossing a road where there is a bus lane (especially a contra-flow bus lane), cycle lane or tram track. You should also be careful when getting on or off buses, when crossing the road at or near bus stops and be aware that trams are silent so you may not hear them.

Cyclists — Cycle Smart, Cycle Safe

Cycling has never been more popular in Ireland, **in recent years we have also witnessed an increase in visitors coming to Ireland for a cycling holiday.**

And why not? It's fun, fast and affordable. Cycling reduces pollution and eases traffic congestion. On top of all the great exercise cyclists get, they're also reducing their fuel bills. Cycling is very safe too, provided cyclists stick to a few common-sense rules when they're out on the roads.

Here are some handy tips to stay safe on the road while cycling:

- **Equipment Check:** Is the saddle the correct height? Are the tyres nice and firm, and the bell, lights and brakes all working properly? Wear a properly approved helmet and high visibility reflective clothing.
- **Rules of the Road:** There are fixed charges (€40) for cyclists who break certain rules of the road. These can be reviewed [here](#)
- **Sharing the Road:** Cyclists need to be aware and mindful of other road users. As well as having to obey the same rules, they also have the same rights. Be careful when passing parked cars, cycling in heavy traffic and maintaining a safe distance from larger vehicles. Be very careful when turning left as other vehicles may not see you in their blind spot.
- **Signalling:** Learn the proper signalling procedures for making turns and using roundabouts, as well as the cautionary aspects of dealing with other vehicles when signalling by visiting the Rules of the Road website [here](#)



Parking Your Vehicle

A system of parking fees, restrictions, fines and clamping is in place in towns and cities in Ireland. This is to stop illegal parking, which can block other motorists or businesses. Traffic wardens and An Garda Síochána are responsible for enforcing laws relating to illegal parking.

Parking fees vary in Ireland and can be set and adjusted by the local authority. When visiting a town or city check what system is in place and avoid penalties for not displaying an appropriate parking disc or ticket. You can reduce the risk to your vehicle by parking it in a well-lit multi-storey car park wherever possible.

Tourist Offices

Many towns and all cities have Tourist Information Offices and advice on route planning. Visit Fáilte Ireland [here](#)

Please visit the website of the appropriate rental car service provider to establish the exact requirements where drivers' licence/documentation is concerned, as these requirements may vary depending on the car rental company used.

General Emergencies

An Garda Síochána (Irish Police)
www.garda.ie

Emergency Services
 112 or 999

Traffic Watch
 LoCall: 1890 205 805
www.garda.ie

Useful Numbers

Road Safety Authority
 LoCall: 1890 506 080
 Call: 096 25000
 Info@rsa.ie
www.rsa.ie

Department of Transport
 LoCall: 1890 411 412 or 0761 001 601
 Call: 01 670 7444
 Info@transport.ie
www.transport.ie

Transport Infrastructure Ireland
 Call: 01 646 3600
 Info@till.ie
www.till.ie

Department of Justice and Equality
 Call: 01 602 8202
 Info@justice.ie
www.justice.ie

Department of Foreign Affairs
 80 St Stephen's Green, Dublin 2
 Call: 01 408 2000
www.dfa.ie
 (You may find contact details for your own country's Embassy or consular services through this department)

Embassies

French Embassy	01 699 0984	admin-francals.dublin-amba@diplomatie.gouv.fr	www.ambafrance-ie.org/ -English-
Italian Embassy	01 660 1774	ambasciata.dublino@esteri.it	www.ambdublino.esteri.it
Chinese Embassy	01 269 1707	chinaemb_ie@mfa.gov.cn	http://ie.china-embassy.org/eng
Russian Embassy	01 492 2048	Info@russianembassy.ie/duconsul@indigo.ie	www.Ireland.mid.ru
German Embassy	01 2776100	Info@dublin.diplo.de	www.dublin.diplo.de
Polish Embassy	01 283 0855	dublin@msz.gov.pl	www.dublin.msz.gov.pl
Spanish Embassy	01 269 1640	emb.dublin@maec.es	www.maec.es/emba/jadas/dublin
Dutch Embassy	01 269 3444	dub-Info@minbuza.nl	Ireland.nl/embassy.org

Bus Éireann
 Call: 01 836 6111
 Info@buselreann.ie
www.buselreann.ie

Met Éireann General Forecasting Division
 Call: 01 806 4255
www.met.ie

Automobile Association of Ireland Call:
 01 617 9999
 roadw@aaiireland.ie
www.aaiireland.ie

Irish Insurance Federation
 Call: 01 676 1820
 fed@iif.ie
www.iif.ie

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission
 Helpline LoCall: 1890 432 432
www.cccpc.ie

MAG Ireland (Irish Motorcyclists' Action Group) Call:
 01 602 0695
 office@magireland.org
www.magireland.org

European Transport Safety Council
 Information@etsec.eu
www.etsec.eu

Cycling Ireland
 Call: 01 855 1522
 Info@cyclingireland.ie
www.cyclingireland.ie

The Rules of the Road
www.rsa.ie

Fáilte Ireland
 Call: 1800 24 24 73
 customersupport@failteireland.ie
www.failteireland.ie

Dublin Port
 Call: 01 887 6000
 Info@dublinport.ie
www.dublinport.ie

Rosslare Port
www.rosslareeuroport.irishrail.ie

Irish Ferries
 Call: +353 1890 313 131
www.irishferries.com

Stena Line
 Call: +353 (0)53 916 1560
www.stenaline.ie

Celtic Link Ferries
 Call: +353 (0)53 917 8789
www.celticlinkferries.com

Dublin Airport
 Call: 01 814 1111
 Information.queries@daa.ie
www.dublinairport.com

Shannon Airport
 Call: 061 712000
 Information.shannon@shannonairport.ie
www.shannonairport.com

Knock International Airport
 Call: 094 936 8100
 Info@irelandwestairport.com
www.irelandwestairport.com
www.knockairport.com

Cork Airport
 Call: 021 431 31 31
 feedback@corkairport.com
www.corkairport.com

Údaras Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Páirc Ghnó Ghleann na Muaidhe, Cnoc
an tSabhaircín, Bóthar Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Béal an Átha, Co. Mhaigh Eo, F26 V6E4.

Moy Valley Business Park, Primrose Hill,
Dublin Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F26 V6E4.

(096) 25 000
info@rsa.ie
www.rsa.ie



[MyRoadSafety.ie](https://www.myroadsafety.ie)

Your online resource to easily
and safely manage all your
driver information, services,
tests, permits and licences.