



THE UNIVERSITY
OF QUEENSLAND
AUSTRALIA

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Safe rural travel guidelines



Transport

This guideline is intended only to raise awareness of the issues and highlight strategies which could help reduce the risk of a serious accident while travelling. It should not be considered the sole risk mitigation measure or the sole source of information relating to travel risk mitigation. It is not intended to replace any UQ policies and procedures related to travel, including requirements to conduct a risk assessment and submit a work off campus plan.

Managing your trip

Preparing for the trip;

We recommend the following actions before your drive to ensure you arrive safely:

- Make sure your vehicle is safe to drive and you have sufficient fuel or charge to get you to your next fuel or charging source – your vehicle must be **roadworthy and registered**.
- Check that you have current and appropriate **vehicle insurance** (preferably comprehensive insurance) and strongly recommend getting a roadside assistance package (these are included in some comprehensive insurance policies or stand-alone such as RACQ). If you need to change a tyre and you can't get professional Roadside Assistance, you must ensure the procedure is carried out according to the manual supplied with the vehicle and **ONLY** if it is safe to do so. Ensure you have a spare tyre and know how to change it if it is safe to do so.
- If a UQ vehicle is to be used, staff must ensure that vehicles are booked in advance to ensure availability. Properly maintained and roadworthy vehicles can also be booked through the GoGet system.
- **Plan your trip** and allow adequate travel time qld.gov.au/transport/safety/holiday-travel/planning and roadconditions.racq.com.au
- **Share the driving with another licensed and competent driver whenever feasible.**
- **Avoid driving at dawn or dusk**, as these times have an increased risk to safety - **try to modify work patterns to allow a later start and/or earlier departure when intending to travel to and from work to avoid driving at dawn and dusk.**
- **Print directions** as you may not have mobile phone coverage at all times on your trip (check your service provider coverage map).
- **Include rest stops** on long trips so you don't drive tired (tmr.qld.gov.au/Safety/Driver-guide/Driving-safely/Driving-tired.aspx).
- Check for **traffic updates** (call 131940) and changes to road conditions (qld.gov.au/transport/conditions/roadworks/road-closures/).
- Look at **weather forecasts** (BOM website) and beware of **flooded roads** (qld.gov.au/transport/safety/road-safety/wet-weather/).
- Pack spare water, warm clothing, and a first aid kit. Don't forget personal medications.
- Read and understand the FoM Risk Assessment #2928 - Driving in rural and remote areas of Australia on sealed roads uq.edu.au/ohs/ as appropriate to your journey.
- Ensure you arrange suitable communication i.e. mobile phone (be aware that some phone service providers have patchy coverage) and that you have a charging cable in the vehicle. Connect your phone to the vehicle audio via Bluetooth for handsfree operation.

- Check tyre pressures and oil, water and coolant levels in the engine.
- Get plenty of sleep before you leave and don't drive if you're unwell

When planning travel consider alternatives to driving e.g.:



During the drive;

- Drive within the limitations of both driver and vehicle and to road conditions; if wet, smoky or foggy, slow down or stop in a safe place until the situation resolves.
- Share the driving if you can, take regular breaks to refresh, drink and eat as needed. A 15 min break every two hours is recommended by Dept Transport & Main Roads. Use the free Driver Reviver stops when available.
- Eat well balanced meals, do not consume alcohol.
- Obey the road rules, observe speed limits and comply with safety advisory signage.
- Wear seat belts at all times and secure loads with restraints or cargo nets.
- Watch out for animals, slow moving vehicles (i.e. tractors or school buses) and vehicles entering the road from farms or side roads.
- Avoid undue risks such as driving across flooded creeks, through bush fires and road shoulders.
- Overtake only when necessary and safe to do so – try to only overtake in designated overtaking lanes, allow ample road space, do not overtake over solid lines and crests. Use particular caution with Road Trains, they are at least 36m meters long.
- Keep in touch with supervisors or family during the journey and notify them on arrival at destination or end of leg; let someone know if the itinerary changes.
- Stay with your vehicle in the event of a breakdown or incident.
- If following other cars (especially in wet conditions or on unsealed/dusty roads), remember to keep a safe distance.

Fatigue

Don't rely on short-term remedies to offset symptoms e.g. turning up the music, drinking coffee or energy drinks. The only cure or preventative measure for fatigue is sleep. Investigate overnight stays on location prior to an early start in the workplace or at the end of a long day if a significant return journey is required i.e. don't travel 3 hours to site, work for 8 hours and drive back for three hours. In addition to increasing risks to safety while driving tired, fatigue can carry over into the workplace and is a significant work accident risk factor.

Fatigue can combine with these factors to increase the risk of a serious accident

- Excessive speed for the road conditions
- Alcohol or drug use
- Driver inexperience
- Extreme weather conditions
- Unfamiliar vehicle,
- Unfamiliar driving conditions
- Monotony
- Poorly maintained roads, differing road surfaces and narrow or unsealed roads
- Animals and farm machinery on the roads

If you have any of these fatigue symptoms, do not drive

- Excessive yawning, feeling drowsy or falling asleep
- Short term memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Impaired decision-making and judgment
- Reduced hand-eye coordination
- Slow reflexes
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Blurred vision or impaired visual perception



Please watch out for kangaroos... We got into an accident in our first week with a kangaroo while going at 100 kph. The other medical student's car has been scrapped with no insurance because of irreparable damages. Were stuck in the middle of a remote highway with no tow or taxi services coming for us on a Saturday night.

Animals on the Road

Every year we hear the sad news that staff or students travelling has had an accident – luckily no one has been injured, but the damage can be very expensive. Kangaroos account for 90% of crashes involving animals.

While it's important to be extra vigilant during the winter months, in animal collision hotspots, and during dawn and dusk, drivers should always follow these safety tips when driving.

- Stay alert and expect the unexpected.
- Avoid driving at dawn and dusk, if possible.
- If you see one kangaroo, expect others to be nearby.
- Do not swerve. Slow down and brake.
- If you notice roadkill, slow down and pay extra attention. It's an indicator of wildlife in the area.
- As kangaroos move in groups, if you spot a kangaroo crossing the road it's a sign that there could be more following.
- If you're involved in a collision with an animal, move off the road if possible, put your hazard lights on, check for injuries and seek medical assistance. If it is safe to do so, check the welfare of the animal. If the animal is alive and injured, call the local wildlife rescue service.
- Watch out for other traffic which might not expect to see you on the road or roadside.
- Use your peripheral vision and be aware of your surroundings, especially when travelling through forest or grassland areas where animals are not clearly visible.



RRM Student – Semester 1, 2022



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