

# UK Highway Code Changes (29 January 2022)

## Briefing for Motorcycle Riders

This briefing analyses the major Highway Code changes introduced on 29 January 2022 and explains their practical implications for motorcycle riders in England, Scotland and Wales. The focus is on how the new rules affect hazard perception, road positioning, junction behaviour, overtaking decisions, filtering, and rider risk management.

### Executive Summary

The 2022 revisions shifted the Highway Code toward protecting vulnerable road users. The most significant change for riders is the new 'Hierarchy of Road Users', which places greater responsibility on those operating vehicles capable of causing greater harm. Motorcyclists remain vulnerable compared with cars and HGVs, but are expected to give greater consideration to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders.

### 1. Hierarchy of Road Users (Rules H1–H3)

The new hierarchy places pedestrians at the top, followed by cyclists and horse riders, with motorcyclists below these groups. The principle is that road users who can cause greater harm carry greater responsibility to reduce danger. Implications for riders: • Expect increased scrutiny of rider behaviour around vulnerable users. • Demonstrate anticipation and restraint around pedestrians, cyclists and horses. • The hierarchy does not create automatic legal liability but influences expectations of safe conduct.

### 2. Priority for Pedestrians at Junctions

One of the most significant operational changes. When turning into or out of a junction, riders should give way to pedestrians crossing or waiting to cross the road into which they are turning. Implications: • Reduce approach speed earlier. • Scan pavements as well as carriageways. • Be alert to following vehicles that may not anticipate a stop. • Extra care is required at urban T-junctions and side roads.

### 3. Zebra and Parallel Crossings

Motorcyclists must give way to pedestrians at zebra crossings and to pedestrians and cyclists at parallel crossings. Implications: • Earlier observation and braking. • Greater awareness of cyclists using the cycle element of parallel crossings. • Avoid filtering aggressively near crossings.

### 4. Cyclist Positioning and Priority

Cyclists are explicitly permitted to adopt the centre of a lane in certain situations and may ride two abreast where appropriate. Implications: • Riders should expect cyclists to occupy more visible road positions. • Do not assume cyclists will remain near the kerb. • Reassess overtaking opportunities and filtering decisions around junctions and roundabouts.

### 5. Overtaking Guidance

Updated guidance recommends at least 1.5 metres clearance when overtaking cyclists at speeds up to 30 mph and more space at higher speeds. Horse riders should generally be passed with at least 2 metres clearance and at under 10 mph. Implications: • Many previous overtakes may no longer be appropriate. • Use full-lane overtakes where required. • Be prepared to delay overtakes on narrow roads.

## 6. Crossing Double White Lines

Where conditions permit, drivers and riders may cross a solid white line to overtake a cyclist, horse rider or horse-drawn vehicle travelling at 10 mph or less. Implications: • Provides flexibility where otherwise trapped behind slow vulnerable users. • Visibility and safety requirements remain unchanged.

## 7. Roundabouts

The revised guidance strengthens protections for cyclists on roundabouts, particularly where cyclists remain in the lane while continuing ahead. Implications: • Expect cyclists to use more central road positions. • Avoid cutting across cyclists when exiting. • Increase mirror checks before changing line.

## 8. Dutch Reach and Dooring Risks

The Code promotes opening vehicle doors with the hand furthest from the door. This encourages a shoulder check before opening. Implications: • Positive change for riders, but do not assume compliance. • Continue maintaining a door-zone safety margin when filtering or passing parked vehicles.

## Filtering Considerations

The Code does not remove the legality of filtering. However, rider risk assessments should now place greater emphasis on pedestrians crossing side roads, cyclists occupying primary positions, and drivers stopping unexpectedly to comply with new priorities.

## Training Recommendations

1. Revisit urban junction approach techniques. 2. Increase observation of pavements and crossing points. 3. Practise low-speed overtaking decision making. 4. Review roundabout interactions with cyclists. 5. Update IAM, RoSPA or advanced riding briefing materials to reflect the 2022 rules.

## Conclusion

The 2022 Highway Code changes do not fundamentally alter motorcycle control techniques, but they do change priorities and expectations. The most important behavioural shift is anticipating the needs and legal priority of pedestrians and other vulnerable road users earlier than many riders historically have. Riders who adapt observation routines and hazard perception accordingly will be better positioned to ride safely and defensively under the revised Code.