

Clarification of new road rules

New road rules that came into effect in Queensland on January 1 were initiated to improve safety for road users and establish national compliance.

Superintendent Ian McIntosh, State Traffic Support Branch said the rules would complement current laws being enforced by QPS officers.

"The new changes were made to reflect amendments to the nationally agreed Australian Road Rules. In the coming months, every State and Territory will adopt the Australian Road Rules," he said.

"Announced in 1999, the Australian Road Rules were developed by the National Road Transport Commission in conjunction with State and Territory police, transport agencies, motoring bodies and other organisations.

"In August 2003, the National Transport Commission approved changes to improve road safety and create uniform traffic laws across Australia.

"The rules cover the basic road laws that drivers, motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians and other road users need to observe when using our roads," Superintendent McIntosh said.

Some of the new amendments include:

Hitch hiking

Hitch hiking from median strips, traffic islands, painted islands and the road shoulder has been banned. Hitch hiking from one of these areas attracts a fine of \$30, consistent with the existing fine for hitch hiking from a road.

Pedestrian crossings

A driver must not enter a children's crossing, pedestrian crossing or a crossing for pedestrians at traffic lights if the driver can not drive completely through the crossing because the crossing, or the road beyond the crossing, is blocked. For example, the crossing, or the road beyond the crossing, may be blocked by congested traffic, a disabled vehicle or a fallen load on the road.

Heavy/long vehicles

Drivers of trucks can now pass a 'No Trucks' sign if their destination lies beyond the sign and there is no other route by which the driver can reach their destination. A driver must not, however, drive past a 'No Trucks' sign that specifies a vehicle length if the driver's vehicle (including a combination vehicle) exceeds that length.

Vehicles over 7.5m in length (including any load or projection) that display a 'Do not overtake turning vehicle' sign can take up adjacent lane space when approaching and entering a roundabout, provided it is safe to do so.



Photo by Karen Crook, Media and Public Affairs Branch.

Hitch hiking from median strips, traffic islands, painted islands and the road shoulder has been banned.

Drivers of heavy or long vehicles are permitted to stop for more than one hour in a built-up area, provided they are actively engaged in dropping off or picking up goods for the whole period.

Wheeled recreational device

The use of wheeled recreational devices like scooters, skateboards and rollerblades is now prohibited on any road with a speed limit above 60km/h. This is in addition to any road with a dividing line or median strip and any one-way road with more than one marked lane that was already in legislation.

Overtaking to the left

A driver may now overtake to the left of a vehicle if the vehicle is stationary and can be safely overtaken to the left. For example, a driver wanting to turn left at a set of traffic lights may overtake to the left a line of traffic waiting to proceed straight through the intersection, provided it is safe to do so.

Parking restrictions

The amendments clarify where a parking sign allows a driver to park on a section of road or in a particular area for a period of time, a driver must move their vehicle from that section of road or area once that time has expired. It will not be sufficient for a driver to simply move the vehicle to another space within the same section of road or area.

Superintendent McIntosh said police had been making motorists aware of the changes and their responsibilities to abide by these new road safety rules.

To read the amendments go to www.legislation.qld.gov.au/LEGISLTN/SLS/2004/04SL300 and read the Transport Legislation Amendment Regulation (No.3) 2004, Subordinate Legislation 2004 No. 300 made under the *Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995*.