

## Mirrors

Often referred to as the driver's third eye, the driving mirrors are essential for safe, defensive driving. You should use them frequently to maintain awareness of what is behind and to the sides of your vehicle. It is important that you don't just look into your mirrors, but act safely and wisely on what you see in them.

The mirrors should always be used well before signalling and any change in speed or position, as part of the MSM routine. Use your mirrors in pairs, checking the centre mirror first as this gives you the true picture of what's behind. You should be checking your mirrors frequently, as frequently as the road and traffic conditions require. The more potential hazards there are in the road, the more frequent the mirrors should be checked. You need to be constantly aware of the position, speed and intentions of following traffic at all times. Don't look in the mirrors too long, more frequent quick glances is best. Looking too long could cause you to miss something happening in the road ahead.

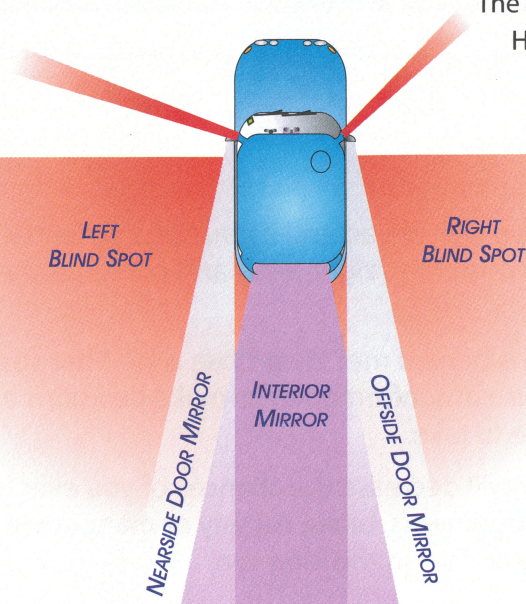
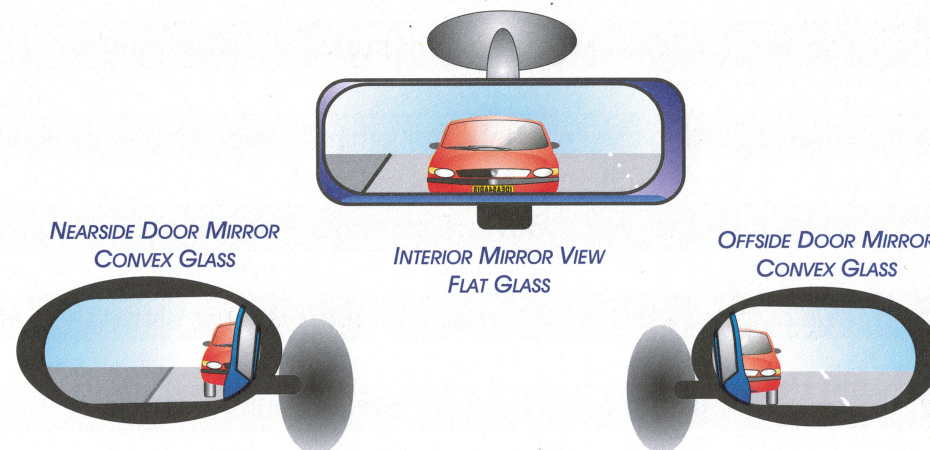
## Blind spots

Blind spots are the areas you cannot see when looking forward or using the mirrors. The main blind spots are those between what you can see as you look forward and what you can see in your nearside and offside door mirrors. These areas are generally called the left and right blind spots (*illustrated below left*). Some exterior mirrors, particularly offside mirrors, have a more curved outer edge to help eliminate the blind spot area. There are also auxiliary mirrors that you can either stick or clip on to the exterior mirrors.

The disadvantage of these is the distorted image they produce; cyclists and motorcyclists are not easily seen.

However, cars and larger vehicles can usually be picked out clearly. Blind spots are also created by the bodywork of the car, such as the front and side window and door pillars. It may be necessary to check around these, notably before moving off and emerging. You must always check your mirrors and your right blind spot just before moving off.

Do not attempt to look right round to check blind spots when on the move, especially when driving at high speeds. This is a potentially dangerous thing to do as in the time it takes you to look round the situation ahead could have changed. Frequent use of the mirrors help you maintain awareness of what's happening behind you. A sideways glance or 'shoulder check' is all you should need to check for passing traffic.



With compliments from

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