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See ‘Road markings’ to see diagrams of all lines. Rule 127 A broken white line. This marks the centre of the road. When this line lengthens and the gaps shorten, it means that there is a hazard ahead. Do not cross it unless you can see the road is clear and wish to overtake or turn off. Rule 128 Double white lines where the line nearest to you is broken. This means you may cross the lines to overtake if it is safe, provided you can complete the manoeuvre before reaching a solid white line on your side. White direction arrows on the road indicate that you need to get back onto your side of the road. Rule 129 Double white lines where the line nearest you is solid. This means you MUST NOT cross or straddle it unless it is safe and you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road. You may cross the line if necessary, provided the road is clear, to pass a stationary vehicle, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10 mph (16 km/h) or less. External links: Laws RTA 1988 sect 36 & TSRGD regs 10 & 26 Rule 130 Areas of white diagonal stripes or chevrons painted on the road. These are to separate traffic lanes or to protect traffic turning right. If the area is bordered by a broken white line, you should not enter the area unless it is necessary and you can see that it is safe to do so. If the area is marked with chevrons and bordered by solid white lines you MUST NOT enter it except in an emergency. External links: Laws MTE&WR regs 5, 9, 10 & 16, MTS(R) regs 4, 8, 9 & 14, RTA sect 36 & TSRGD 10(1) Rule 131 Lane dividers. These are short, broken white lines which are used on wide carriageways to divide them into lanes. You should keep between them. Rule 132 Reflective road studs may be used with white lines. White studs mark the lanes or the middle of the road. Red studs mark the left edge of the road. Amber studs mark the central reservation of a dual carriageway or motorway. Green studs mark the edge of the main carriageway at lay-bys and slip roads. Green/yellow studs indicate temporary adjustments to lane layouts, e.g. where road works are taking place. The line with two arrows and two dots in the middle is called a ‘segment.’ In geometry, a segment is a part of a line that is bounded by two distinct endpoints. The two dots in the middle represent these endpoints, while the arrows indicate that the segment extends infinitely in both directions beyond the dots. UK ROAD MARKINGS AND MEANINGS: What do the arrows, lines, and chevrons mean? As a rule, the UK Highway Code road markings delineate the center of two-way roads. The white or yellow lines mark the lanes and edges of carriageways. Highway Code lane markings also highlight areas of highways and streets which you should not cross in a vehicle. Broken White Lines Rule 127: Broken white line road markings show the center of the road. This kind of white line road markings run along the middle of the carriageway to delineate the center line. As a rule there is a hazard ahead if this line lengthens and the gaps shorten. This Highway Code road marking is sometimes called a hazard warning line. Drivers should not cross a broken white line unless they can see the road is clear. The main reason for motorists to cross over road white lines would be to overtake another vehicle or to turn off the road. Double White Lines On Road Rule 128: Double white lines on the road. If the line nearest to you gets broken it means you may cross the lines to overtake if it is safe. The UK Highway Code road markings regulation for solid white lines indicate you should complete the crossing maneuver before you reach a solid white line along the side of road and on your side of the road. What if you see white directional arrows on the road? They are indicating that you need to return onto your side of the carriageway. Rule 129: If there are double white lines and the line nearest to you is solid, it means you MUST NOT cross or straddle it. The exception is when you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road and it is safe to do so. You may also cross a double white line, if the road is clear, to pass a stationary vehicle. The same rule applies to overtake a pedal cycle, a horse, or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10 mph (16 km/h) or less. Chevrons Highway Code Rule 130 Rule 130: White diagonal stripes, or Highway Code chevrons, painted on the road separate traffic lanes. Highway Code chevrons on road surfaces also intend to protect traffic that may be turning right. If the area gets bordered by broken white line markings, you should not enter the area unless it is necessary and you can see that it is safe to do so. If the area gets marked with Highway Code chevrons and bordered by solid white lines they show you MUST NOT enter it except in an emergency. Lane Dividers Road Markings Meanings Rule 131: Lane dividers, also known as lane lines, are short, broken white lines. They are usually used on wide carriageways to divide them into lanes. All motorists should keep their vehicle between a short white lane divider road marking. Reflective Road Studs UK Rule 132: Reflective road studs may get used with white line markings. They are typically used to mark the lanes and edges of the carriageway. White studs mark the lanes or the middle of the road. Red studs mark the left edge of the road. Amber studs mark the central reservation of a dual carriageway or motorway. Green studs mark the edge of the main carriageway at lay-bys and slip roads. You might see green studs on motorway most often. Green/yellow studs show temporary adjustments to lane layouts. Highway Code Single Yellow Line A single yellow line is a road marking that is present on the side of the carriageway in the United Kingdom. It indicates that parking or waiting at that roadside is prohibited at certain times of day. The exact times vary by area and are indicated by signs at the roadside. Highway Code Double Yellow Lines You MUST NOT wait or park on yellow lines during the times of operation shown on nearby time plates (or zone entry signs if in a Controlled Parking Zone). Double yellow lines indicate a prohibition of waiting at any time even if there are no upright signs. Advice about the Highway Code: A guidance section answering many common questions about driving. Control of the Vehicle: Learn how to brake safely and avoid brakes skidding on wet icy roads. Highway Code for Children: Road safety guide to teach small children how to stay safe on the streets. National Speed Limits: Learn the maximum allowances for driving all vehicles in the United Kingdom. Road Rules and Lane Discipline: Check the UK Highway Code for driving on single and dual carriageways. Breaking Down on Public Roads: A list of rules and safe procedures for handling emergency incidents. Centre lines are white and appear broken in the middle of the road. They separate opposing flows of traffic and can vary in length and gap size between lines depending on speed limit. These are probably the most common marking you'll encounter when driving.Hazard warning lineHazard warning lines are similar in appearance to centre lines with one key difference, the painted sections are longer in length than the broken unpainted stretches.They only appear when a hazard isn't immediately obvious. Look out for them when approaching junctions or a central refuge. Double white linesDouble white lines can appear in a number of ways; where the line nearest to you is broken, where the line nearest to you is solid and, finally, where both lines are solid. Double white lines where the nearest line is brokenRule 128 of the Highway Code says you may cross the lines to overtake if it is safe and you can complete the manoeuvre before reaching a solid white line on your side.Double white lines where the nearest line is solidRule 129 of the Highway Code says you must not cross or straddle these lines unless it is safe and you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road.“You may cross the line if necessary, provided the road is clear, to pass a stationary vehicle, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10 mph (16 km/h) or less.”Double white lines where both are solidThese are used to prohibit drivers from travelling in an area of the road used by the opposing flow of traffic, generally where overtaking visibility is restricted.You must not stop on roads marked with double white lines.Areas of white diagonal stripesWhite diagonal stripes are used to separate lanes or to protect traffic turning right.According to Rule 130 of the Highway Code if the area is bordered by a broken white line you shouldn't enter unless it's completely necessary and it's safe to do so.If the area is marked by chevrons and bordered by solid white lines you MUST NOT enter it except in an emergency.Lane lineOtherwise known as lane dividers, these markings are white in colour and feature short, broken white lines which should drive within.You can expect to find them on wider roads where they're used to safely divide driving space. A line with a dot at one end and an arrow at the other end is called a ray in geometry. A ray has a starting point (the dot) and extends infinitely in one direction (towards the arrow). It is often denoted by naming the starting point and any other point on the ray, such as “ray AB” if A is the starting point and B is another point on the ray. Rays are commonly used in geometric constructions and proofs. Centre line on a single carriageway road. Lane line separating traffic travelling in the same direction (single or dual carriageway road). Hazard warning line (replaces a centre line or a lane line). An upright sign may indicate the nature of the hazard, such as a bend. The marking is used also on the approach to a junction. Diagonal white lines (hatched markings) bounded by broken lines may be used in the centre of the road to separate opposing flows of traffic. They are often provided at junctions to protect traffic turning right. They may also be used on the approach to a central traffic island or the start of a dual carriageway. Hatched markings with a single, broken boundary line may be used at the edge of the road or next to the central reservation of a dual carriageway: the diagonal lines always slope towards the direction of travel. You should not enter any hatched area bounded by a broken line unless it is safe to do so. Part of the carriageway where traffic passes in the same direction on either side of the chevron marking. Vehicles should not enter the area unless it is safe to do so. This marking is likely to be found in one-way streets with central islands and where an exit lane leaves at a junction. Part of the carriageway where traffic passes in the same direction on either side of the chevron marking. The continuous boundary line means that vehicles must not enter the area except in an emergency. This marking is used where slip roads leave dual carriageways and many dual carriageway roads. It is also used for segregated left-turn lanes at roundabouts. Reduction in the number of lanes, or area not available to traffic. Vehicles must not cross the continuous white line except in an emergency. Used on the right-hand side of a motorway, dual carriageway road or slip road. Arrow indicating the direction in which to pass hatched markings and double white lines, or the route that high vehicles should take under a low arch bridge (may be reversed). These are used to prevent overtaking where visibility is restricted, and to separate opposing traffic flows on steep hills with climbing lanes. Double continuous lines are also sometimes used on other single carriageway roads that have 2 lanes in at least one direction. Viewed in the direction of travel, if the line closest to you is continuous, you must not cross or straddle it (except to turn into or out of a side road or property, avoid a stationary vehicle blocking the lane, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road works vehicle moving at not more than 10 mph). Where the line closest to you is broken, you may cross the lines to overtake if it is safe to do so. Stopping is prohibited on any length of road that has double white lines, even if the line on that side of the road is broken. The exceptions are stopping to pick up or set down passengers, or to load or unload. In these circumstances, you should park off the main carriageway wherever possible. Some double continuous white lines have narrow areas of hatched lines within them or a wider area of hatching to the side. You must not cross a continuous white line to enter a hatched area. Overtaking lanes A single carriageway road might sometimes have 2 lanes in one direction to provide an overtaking lane and one lane in the other. The opposing traffic flows are separated by continuous double white lines. This arrangement then changes to provide the overtaking lane in the opposite direction. Upright signs indicate the number of lanes in each direction and the end of the overtaking lane. Road marking in the centre of the road at the end of an overtaking lane where 2 lanes reduce to one. You must not cross the continuous white line and enter the hatched area, except for the reasons mentioned for double white lines. Signs on primary routes have green backgrounds with white arrows. Signs on secondary routes have white backgrounds with black arrows. Overtaking lane continues for the distance shown, with single lane traffic in the opposite direction. This arrangement may then change to provide the overtaking lane in the opposite direction. End of overtaking lane head. Single lane traffic with 2 lanes in the opposite direction. Along the edge of the road Edge of carriageway, other than at junctions, exits from private drives and lay-bys. Used on the left-hand side of the road and alongside the central reservation of dual carriageway roads. Alternative edge of carriageway marking, with raised ribs to provide audible and tactile warnings when the line is being crossed. They are used on motorways and other roads with hard shoulders or hard marginal strips. Edge of main carriageway at a junction where a slip road or lane leaves or joins, at an exit from a private drive or at a lay-by. Also used to divide the main carriageway from a traffic lane that leaves the main carriageway at a junction ahead (lane drop). Edge of main carriageway at a junction or at an exit from a private drive. Used in conjunction with ‘give way’ markings on the side road. At junctions Junction with traffic signals: Where stationary traffic would be likely to block a junction, a yellow box may be marked on the road, covering all or part of the junction. You must not enter the box if your exit is not clear. If turning right at the junction, you may enter the box (behind other right-turning vehicles, if any) to wait for a gap in the oncoming traffic, but only if the right-turn exit is clear. Conventional roundabout: Mini roundabout: A mini-roundabout is normally found on a road with a speed limit of 30 mph or less. It should be treated the same as a conventional roundabout. You must give way to traffic from the right, and keep to the left of the white circle unless the size of your vehicle or the junction layout makes driving over it unavoidable. Typical mini-roundabout junction: Some conventional roundabouts may have a segregated left-turn lane where drivers do not give way to traffic on the roundabout. This may be separated from the roundabout by either a solid island or chevron markings. Where the chevrons are bounded by continuous lines, vehicles must not enter the area except in an emergency. You should therefore choose the correct lane well before the roundabout. A directional sign in advance of the junction may show the segregated lane. Traffic lanes at junctions Appropriate traffic lanes for different movements at junction ahead. A double-headed arrow is used where 2 different movements may be made from the same lane or where that lane divides into 2 or more lanes ahead (e.g. a lane with a combined ‘left’ and ‘ahead’ arrow may divide into a left-turn lane and an ahead lane). Compulsory traffic movements at a junction ahead. These may apply to a specific traffic lane or to all traffic approaching the junction. Direction to be taken by traffic turning within a junction. Appropriate traffic lanes for particular destinations. Worded markings Area of carriageway to be kept clear of stationary traffic, usually to allow the passage of vehicles into or out of a side road or access. The white bars may be omitted. Direction in which pedestrians should look before crossing the road (particularly in a one-way street or where there is a contraflow bus lane). Vehicles must not pass this marking. May be used with the upright ‘no entry’ sign. Associated with a hazard. There will normally be an upright warning sign. Road studs Coloured road studs help drivers at night, especially on wet roads, or in poor visibility. White studs mark traffic lanes or the centre of the road. The left-hand side of the carriageway is marked by red studs, and the edge of the central reservation of a motorway or dual carriageway road by amber studs. Green studs are used to mark lay-bys and the entrances to, and exits from, slip roads. Previous chapter: On street parking control signs and road markings Next chapter: Traffic calming Know your traffic signs: Home Give way to traffic on a major road - can also be used at a mini roundabout Give way to traffic from the right at a mini roundabout Give way to traffic from the right at a roundabout Stop line at signals or police control Stop line for pedestrians at a level crossing Stop line at a Stop sign A broken white line marks the centre of the road. Longer broken white lines in the centre of the road indicate a hazard ahead. Never cross a hazard warning line unless you are certain it is safe. A double solid white lines in the centre of the road. This means you MUST NOT cross or straddle it unless it is safe and you need to enter adjoining premises or a side road. You may cross the line if necessary, provided the road is clear, to pass a stationary vehicle, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10mph or less. If you're passing one of the road users listed above, you must give them sufficient room when you overtake. The Highway Code was updated in 2022 to list specific distances for passing certain road users:- Cyclists: 1.5m gap (more if passing them at faster than 30mph)- Horses: 2m gap (and under 10mph)Double solid white lines© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)You may only cross double solid white lines in very limited circumstances – and can receive points and a fine if your actions were unnecessary or dangerous. As above, you may only cross double white solid road markings if it's safe, you can see the road ahead is clear, and:- You need to turn into a property or side road, OR- You're overtaking a parked vehicle or a cyclist, horse or road maintenance vehicle that is travelling at 10mph or less.Where there is a safer section of road up ahead, not marked with solid double lines, you should wait to overtake these road users there instead.Parking LinesSingle yellow lines© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Single yellow line road markings mean that waiting and parking restrictions are in force at certain times – which will be specified on a road sign. The line applies to both the road and the pavement beyond it, so you can't try and get around the rules that way! Learn exactly what 'waiting' means, and how to tell when you won't get a ticket for pulling up on single yellows, in our guide to parking legally. Blue badge holders can usually park on certain yellow lines within restricted periods for up to three hours – unless there are double yellow kerb markers (see below).Double yellow lines© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)You're not allowed to park on double yellows at any time – except in rare exceptions indicated on road signs. Again, those with blue badges are currently exempt from this rule, and can park on them for three hours at a time.Kerb markings© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Single yellow lines on the kerb allow loading or unloading at times specified on road signs. Double yellow lines up the kerb mean you cannot ever stop to load or unload. However, you may stop to pick up or set down passengers, so long as you don't hang around.Red Lines© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Some places, such as areas in London, have 'red routes'. Parking restrictions are governed by single or double red lines instead of the usual yellow: single red lines are accompanied by signs telling you when waiting is allowed, double red lines prohibit parking at all times.Parking bay markings© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Parking areas, enclosed by broken white lines, are a common sight on residential roads. They usually have some form of parking restrictions: they may be reserved for permit holders only, you might have to buy a ticket to wait there, and there's often a limit on how long you can stay. These might be permanent rules or only enforced on certain days or at particular times. You need to read the accompanying road signs to work out if and when you can use the bays to park your car. Parking bays with red dashed lines are sometimes found on red routes, and are only available to people loading or unloading at particular times. Take a look at nearby signs to see when they may be used, and bear in mind that they have at 20 minute time limit tooNamed parking bay markings© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Some parking bays are reserved for particular vehicles, such as doctors or the police. The relevant occupants will be written on the ground, so you know not to pull up there.Other UK road markingsEdge line© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)A single white line running along the edge of the road shows you where the edge of the road lies. You should keep to the right of it; it's easy to land into trouble if you cross the line onto the verge, particularly when travelling at speed. Sometimes the white edge line is raised so you can hear and feel if your wheels drift onto it. This should help you maintain a safe road position.Give way triangle© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Just as the Give Way sign is an upside down triangle, an elongated version of the shape painted on the road indicates an upcoming junction. Slow down if you see this marking, because traffic on the adjoining road has priority.Pedestrian crossingsThere are a whole range of pedestrian crossings; you can find all the different types here. In terms of UK road markings, you need to be aware of three main things:- Stop lines: Lots of pedestrian crossings are controlled by traffic lights, so always be prepared to brake so you can come to a halt before the line.- Zebra crossings: These distinctive crossings are characterised by wide white lines interspersed with the usual tarmac, creating a black and white striped effect. Check both directions as you come up to a zebra crossing; stop before the lines if there are any pedestrians approaching or using it.- White zig zags: You'll find white zig zag lines painted either side of pedestrian crossings. You mustn't park in these areas, as your vehicle would obstruct both traffic and pedestrians' vision.Areas of diagonal stripes and chevronsIf you come across areas containing either diagonal stripes or chevrons (an arrowhead shape like this ^ ), they are there to separate traffic. There are slightly different rules depending on whether they are bordered by broken or solid white lines. In the case of broken lines, you may only straddle or cross them if it's necessary and safe to do so. It's against the law to cross into areas of diagonal lines or chevrons enclosed by solid white lines unless it's an emergency.Directions/Indication Lanes© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)As you approach certain junctions, such as roundabouts or motorway exits, you might see large white arrows, road names or major destinations painted on each lane. These are a helpful addition to direction signs and tell you which lane to get in depending on where you want to go.SlowIf you see the word 'Slow' painted on the road, it means just that: go slowly. You should be able to ascertain the speed limit from road signs or other factors such as lamp posts, but this warning serves as an indication that there are particular hazards at play. Don't just ignore the writing; adjust to an appropriate speed, given all the circumstances around you.Keep Clear© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Now here's a message that should be obvious, but often gets flouted by drivers who fail to look ahead or leave a big enough gap between themselves and the vehicle in front. You should avoid stopping on Keep Clear road markings, as you'd be in the way of vehicles trying to turn in or out of junctions.School keep clear© Crown copyright (Open Government Licence)Just like with other Keep Clear markings, you're not allowed to stop within these lines. And yes, that includes picking up or dropping off children at school.Bus LanesBus lanes tend to have the words Bus Lane painted on the ground at intervals along them. Some have a different coloured road surface, and they may be separated from all-traffic lanes with a broken or solid white line. Some bus lanes are reserved for authorised vehicles (usually buses, taxis and cyclists) at all times. Others have key operating hours in force: times at which other drivers aren't allowed to use them, but other times at which they are. To tell the difference, you need to get used to reading road signs as well as markings.– Outside of operating hours, any vehicle can travel along the bus lane so long as it's safe to do so – Road signs without any times displayed on them mean the bus lane is in operation 24 hours a day. In these cases you may only cross the line if the bus lane line is broken and you need to turn left.– Otherwise, you should only cross into a bus lane if you need to avoid an obstruction or accident, or to move out of the way of an emergency vehicle. Pull out of the bus lane again as soon as you can.You can stop in bus lanes—but only if no other parking restrictions prohibit it.Cycle lanes often have a pedal bike symbol painted on them, and will be separated from other lanes by a broken or solid white line. You mustn't park in a cycle lane unless there are signs allowing you to do so. Where the cycle lane line is broken, you should not cross it unless it's unavoidable. If that's the case, remember to check both your mirrors and your blind spots for cyclists beforehand. You must not cross a solid white line into a cycle lane. If you're turning and the manoeuvre requires you to cross a cycle lane, give way to anyone biking along it. In other words, treat it as you would any other lane of traffic.Bus stopsBus stops are bordered by yellow broken lines, and have the words 'Bus Stop' painted within them. You must not park within them, as they're reserved for buses only.Yellow box junctionsPhoto © Albert Bridge (cc-by-sa/2.0)Yellow box junctions are yellow boxes with criss-crossed yellow lines. They confuse a lot of drivers, so make sure you're clear on the rules so that you can adapt your driving when you see one coming up.Turning left or going straight onlyIf you're going straight on or turning left, you are not allowed to stop on the yellow hatchings. If you did, you'd be in the path of oncoming traffic — which can not only cause gridlock, but is also a pretty dangerous and scary scenario to be in. To prevent this happening, you may only enter the yellow box if your exit path out the other side of the box is clear. Sometimes this will be obvious, but often, during periods of heavy traffic, it can be difficult to judge. Just check your mirrors, brake and hang back behind the road markings until you're sure there's sufficient space for you beyond the road markings and behind the vehicle in front.Turning rightThe only time you're allowed to stop in the box is if you're turning right. However, you still need to check that your exit route (the path to the right) is clear. Once it is, drive into position on the yellow hatchings, and wait until there's a safe gap in oncoming traffic in which to make your turn.Still confused? We've broken it all down in our simple guide to box junction rules.Chevrons© Robin Webster (Creative Commons CC BY-SA 2.0)You might come across areas of dual carriageways or motorways with chevrons painted at intervals along the road. These are to help you judge your speed relative to other vehicles, and will usually be accompanied by a sign telling you to keep two chevrons apart.Speed bump markingsSpeed bumps may be a different colour and material, or might have white arrows painted on them to make them particularly obvious to drivers. Back