

Date October 2011

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## Changes to the give-way rules in 2012

At 5am on Sunday 25 March 2012, the give-way rules are changing. This has been made possible by the signing of the Road User Rule Amendment 2011.

Changing the give way rules for turning vehicles is part of the Government's *Safer Journeys* strategy. *Safer Journeys* introduces changes that make the most difference to reducing the likelihood of people dying or being seriously injured on our roads.

The give-way rule changes will help reduce confusion on our roads by removing some of the demands the current rules place on drivers' decision-making at intersections, and could reduce relevant intersection crashes by seven per cent.

The two give-way rules being changed are:

- the left turn v. right turn



Vehicle turning left has to give way.

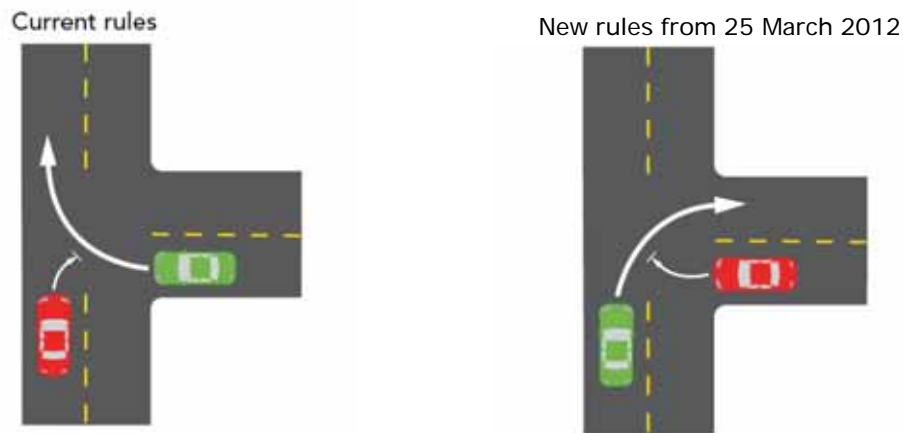
New rules from 25 March 2012



Vehicle turning right has to give way.

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- uncontrolled T-intersections



Vehicle turning right from continuing road has to give way.

Vehicle turning right from terminating road has to give way

### Communicating the changes

Planning is underway for an intensive public information campaign, based on learnings from Australia when Victoria changed its give-way rule in 1993.

The campaign will be run in the month leading up to the date of the actual change on 25 March 2012, with national advertising starting ten days before the change. This late February start date is necessary to avoid public confusion and minimise the risk of people starting to use the new rules too early.

The NZTA is developing the public information campaign material and work is well underway. The core communications for each of the give-way rule changes will be tested on the public to ensure that the correct information is conveyed and understood.

To ensure clarity and consistency of message across the country and avoid public confusion, the NZTA is very keen for the campaign material it develops to be used by all organisations involved in road safety. To help ensure this happens, all campaign material will be readily available online for Councils (and other key stakeholders) to use.

We anticipate this resource material will be ready in early February 2012 with an embargo until late February. It will include digital versions of the following, which can be downloaded for use: images of the new rules (similar to Road Code format), technical wording, posters, leaflets and translated leaflets.

In addition, the NZTA website will include a video and a quiz so the public can test themselves on their knowledge. The national advertising campaign is expected to include TV, radio, print, online and the NZTA will also be doing a leaflet drop to all households.

We are conscious that the resources developed mustn't compromise road safety. So for example, a mobile phone app won't be developed due to the possibility of it being a distraction when people are driving.

We're letting you know now that source material will be available from the NZTA so that your team can plan any complementary regional communications (such as local media articles) in advance if necessary. We will be in touch again closer to the time once this material is finalised.

The web page - [www.giveway.govt.nz](http://www.giveway.govt.nz) - will continue to be updated with information and resources for the public as we move towards implementation.

## **Engineering reviews**

The NZTA is currently working through what these changes will mean for the state highway network. From our experience to date, the following outlines some factors that local road controlling authorities (RCAs) may wish to consider in advance of the rule changes taking effect. An update to this information sheet will be provided in late November.

We suggest RCAs identify locations where the changes will have implications for road markings, signal timings or intersection layout. Intersections that currently cause difficulties, or which may cause issues when the give-way rules change, need to be identified in advance.

Plans will need to be in place to observe activity at any potentially problematic intersections so any issue can be identified quickly and remedial action taken as soon as possible where necessary.

It is important to note that the change to the give-way rule will not affect existing signs or road markings at intersections. Signs and markings provide important safety benefits for road users by highlighting intersections, particularly at night and during poor weather.

### Dense urban networks

In dense urban networks, it is likely that the rule change could require changes to traffic signal timings, possible changes in phasing (dedicated right turn phases), or changes in queue length.

Most dense urban networks run some form of traffic model. Changing the give-way rule in these models will help identify intersections that require monitoring following the change. It should also help identify potential changes that could be implemented if necessary.

The models should be run for the peak period:

1. run the current year and existing rule
2. switch to the new rule and run
3. identify those intersections where volumes will change by more than 15 percent (equivalent to five years growth at three percent) and identify any increases in queue lengths (15% is a ballpark suggestion but local context will need to be factored in)
4. re-optimize the traffic signals (most models will allow this so it will not be a manual exercise) and run step 3 above again.

The output from this process is likely to be:

- a list of intersections that are worth keeping an eye on following the change over
- a list of potential signal timing changes that may be implemented should an issue develop.

Rural networks and individual intersections

The left-turn vs right-turn and t-intersection give-way rules have the potential to increase queue lengths for right turn vehicles. Any such increase could extend beyond any right-turn bays and could block through lanes or result in insufficient sight distance to the end of a longer queue.

In these situations we suggest RCAs start compiling a list of potentially problematic intersections using local knowledge, and aerial mapping or similar tools. Consideration could be given to the approximate traffic volumes using these intersections and maybe observe these in the peak periods to subjectively assess whether further work should be done. If the consequences of changes in queuing are likely to result in a safety issue, more detailed modelling should be done.

**For more information, please contact your usual NZTA representative.**