| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 24-2292  Responded to: 04 October 2024 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## Talking on a North Coast 500 group on Facebook. The subject of overtaking in passing places came up and some locals were complaining that "even when they stand on their horns for miles and flash their lights" the tourists are not stopping to let them past in the passing places. To be honest, I can understand that if the tourist is travelling at a reasonable legal speed. It sounds like some of the aggressive and dangerous driving I witness up there recently and assumed was tourist traffic. The subject then turned to their "justification" for such driving. They claimed that many folk were Mountain Rescue, or Coastguard, or Medical... and they were required to use their own cars (?) on the north coast, and had no lights to show. So they behaved as described and it was dangerous to obstruct them... This seemed odd to me, as I was under the impression that any critical emergency services worker would have identification on their car and a magnetic blue/green light if they were entitled to it.  Am I wrong?  Do we have a fleet of overworked emergency services staff on the north coast all using their own cars? I was firmly made to feel the fool for expecting the rules of safe driving to apply, they made out they were entitled to barge past any vehicle. Could you please clarify the official position for the use of personal cars by the emergency services and when they are, or are not issued with identification and lights.

I can advise you that Police Scotland does not hold the above requested information. In terms of Section 17 of the Act, this letter represents a formal notice that information is not held.

To explain, Police Scotland have not been made aware of any specific complaints regarding this subject matter. We cannot advise on other emergency services and their use of personal cars for work purposes.

To be of assistance, we can confirm that all road users are governed by road traffic legislation and the rules of safe driving do apply to all.  Not all emergency service vehicles have reflective markings or wording displayed on the exterior to identify them.

The fitting of blue (and green) lights is governed by Regulations 11 and 16 of the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989 and for klaxons/sirens, Regulation 37 of the Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986.

An 'emergency vehicle' is defined by the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989 as, "a motor vehicle of any of the following description;

A vehicle used for police or fire brigade purposes;

A vehicle used for ambulance purposes or for the purpose of providing a response to an emergency at the request of an NHS ambulance service;

An ambulance, being a vehicle (other than an invalid carriage) which is constructed or adapted for the purposes of conveying sick, injured or disabled persons and which is used for such purposes.”

The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 provide exemption from prosecution for emergency service vehicles being used for fire, ambulance or police purposes under certain circumstances;

Speeding – provided a driver has been trained and by complying with the limit would hinder the driver at that time.  The driver must not drive beyond the limit of their training.

Red light – provided a driver has been trained and by complying with the red light would hinder the driver at that time.

Kep left/right arrows – a driver must not proceed beyond the sign in a manner or at a time as to be likely to endanger any person.

Any action by a driver must be justified, proportionate and necessary.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.