

Travel safety

Key hints for a safe and enjoyable visit to Queensland

Driving in Australia

If you wish to drive in Australia, you must hold a valid international driving permit accompanied by the driver licence issued in the country you live in.



Keep left

Australians drive on the left side of two-way roads. Ask passengers to remind you of this every time you set off and when you are turning at an intersection. When walking across the street always remember to look right, then left and then right again.



Seatbelts and child restraints

Seatbelts must always be worn by the driver and all passengers. Children under age 7 must be in a child restraint appropriate for the child's size and weight.



Take a break and arrive safely.

It is common to travel long distances in Australia, so plan your journey to include several rest breaks and ensure you have enough petrol for your journey. Rest areas are located every 80-100 kilometres on main highways and roads for people to pull over and rest when tired.



Motorcycle and bicycle safety

If you are riding a motorcycle, moped, motor scooter or bicycle, you are required to wear a helmet at all times. If you are riding on a road, you must obey all road signs and traffic signals, including speed limits. Always pay careful attention to road conditions and allow plenty of room between you and other vehicles. Use your indicator if you are changing lanes or overtaking. Ride with headlights on and wear protective clothing.



Speed Limits

Speed limits are strictly enforced in Australia. The speed limit is the maximum speed permitted on that road and you must not drive above the speed limit at any time. Some roads do not have visible speed limit signs, but speed limits still apply. You should be especially careful in residential areas and in school zones.



No mobile phones

You are not permitted to use a handheld mobile phone when driving. This includes making or receiving calls, texting, playing games or web browsing.



Obey the roadsigns

Familiarise yourself with the road signs in Australia and make sure you obey them.



Road markings

Where the centre line marking on the road is a single broken line, vehicles may cross the line to overtake when it is safe to do so. If the centre marking has two lines you must not overtake if the line closer to your vehicle is unbroken. Where arrows are painted on the road, you must only drive in the direction they indicate.



Alcohol and drugs

Driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol is extremely dangerous and Australia has very serious penalties if you are caught doing this. In Australia, you are not permitted to drive a car if your blood alcohol level is 0.05 per cent or higher. If you hold a probationary or provisional driver's licence, your blood alcohol level must be zero at all times. Driving after taking drugs that affect your ability to drive is illegal and penalties are severe.

Be prepared for unlikely events



Driving in rural and remote areas

Driving in rural and remote areas requires special driving skills and awareness of different road conditions. Make sure your vehicle is in good working order and that it has been serviced recently. Always carry a spare tyre, tools and extra water. If you are travelling to remote areas off major highways, be aware that there are long distances between towns and facilities, so it's important that you plan your trip before setting off. Also, inform family or friends of your intended route and expected arrival time. Make sure you have plenty of fuel as well as food and drinking water. You may also consider hiring emergency communications equipment like a satellite phone or an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPRIB) device.



Road conditions

Road conditions can vary from a sealed road surface to gravel and unsealed roads. Many unsealed roads require a four wheel drive (4WD) for safe travel. Drive at a safe speed for the road conditions especially on unsealed roads in case of dangerous hazards such as holes, soft road edges and changing road surfaces. If you do drive off the side of a road, don't overcorrect but slow down and return to the road when the vehicle is travelling at a safe speed. Obey road closure signs.



Changing road conditions due to floods and bushfires

Australia can be a land of extreme weather conditions such as floods, cyclones and bushfires. Always plan your trip in advance and check the local weather conditions in the area you are travelling to. Do not attempt to cross flooded roads as flood waters often have strong currents which can sweep your vehicle away. You can contact the local State Emergency Service (SES) or call 000 if you are in an emergency situation. Go to racq.com.au and bom.gov.au/qld for road and weather conditions.



Watch out for wildlife and livestock

Watch out for wildlife on the road, such as kangaroos, emus, wombats and koalas, particularly at dawn and dusk. Livestock such as cattle may also graze on the side of an unfenced road. Travel at a safe speed so that if an animal crosses in front of you, you can further reduce your speed to avoid it. Do not attempt to swerve your car violently or you can roll off the road.



Articulated trucks

Road trains or articulated trucks can be as long as the length of 10 cars and take up to 2.5 kilometres to overtake if you're travelling at 100 kilometres per hour. Only overtake if necessary! But if you do, allow plenty of room because road trains often sway from side to side. Be prepared for the windrush when passing as it can pull you towards the road train.



If your vehicle breaks down

If your vehicle breaks down outside of an urban area, do not leave your vehicle as it will provide you with shade and protection from weather conditions. Call for roadside assistance and wait for help to come to you.



Look out for visitor information
queenslandholidays.com.au/vics





Beaches and waterways

Australia has some of the most beautiful beaches and waterways in the world but it's important that you take care when swimming. You should also know your limitations when considering beach or water activities, like diving, snorkeling and swimming.



Slip, slop, slap

The Australian sun is very strong so when outdoors drink plenty of water, cover up with a shirt, SPF30+ sunscreen and a hat, and when in the water wear a sun shirt and sunscreen.



Beware of stingers and other marine animals

Avoid contact with any marine creatures you may see on the beach. They may look harmless but some can sting or bite. Parts of northern Australia are home to marine stingers so check warning signs on beaches before entering the water. Crocodiles can also be found in northern waterways, rivers, freshwater lagoons and some beaches, so always read and obey signs.



Beware of diving and jumping

Never jump or dive into shallow water, rock pools, creeks, rivers or lakes as there may be hazards under the water such as logs or bricks

Enjoying nature

Be prepared: if you intend hiking or walking in our bushland make sure you wear sunscreen, a hat, insect repellent, comfortable clothing and sturdy footwear and carry plenty of water and food. Plan your hike and always tell someone of your intended route and what time you expect to return. Don't forget to also let them know when you return safely. You should never go bushwalking or hiking alone. Always read maps and signs carefully and stay on the walking tracks and behind safety barriers. Check the local weather forecast and be prepared for unexpected changes in weather. If you are not an experienced hiker or bushwalker, you may like to consider a guided bushwalk with an experienced guide.



Swim between the flags

It is strongly recommended that you swim at a patrolled beach with lifesavers who can assist you if you get into trouble. Always swim between the red and yellow flags. Many surf beaches in Australia have strong currents called rips. These powerful currents can drag you along and can be dangerous even for experienced swimmers. If you are caught in a rip, do not panic, stay calm and don't try to swim against it. Raise one hand to alert the lifesaver and float with the current.



Read the signs

It is important to read and obey the warning signs on beaches, beach access points and waterways. If you are unsure of beach conditions, you should check with a lifeguard.

000 is the number for emergency services in Australia.

They can connect you to Police, Ambulance or the Fire Brigade. You should only contact 000 in an emergency.