

# Safety advice for drivers using the Dartford tunnels

This leaflet provides advice to drivers on how to safely drive through the Dartford tunnels. It also explains what to do if you experience a problem while driving through the tunnels or what to do in the rare event of an incident in the tunnels.

## What to do before entering the tunnel:



- Check your **fuel level**.



- Turn on your **radio**.



- Use **dipped headlights**.



- Take off** your sunglasses.



- Observe and **obey signals**. Never drive in a lane closed by a red **X**.



- Height restrictions:** west (left) tunnel **4.8 metres** (15ft 9in) and east (right) tunnel **5.0 metres** (16ft 6in).

## What to do inside the tunnel:



- Keep a safe distance** from the vehicle in front. Vehicles should maintain a minimum 2 second gap and HGVs a 4 second gap.



- Do not overtake**.



- Do not change lane in the tunnel**.



- Do not turn or reverse**.



- Do not stop**, except in an emergency.



- Observe the speed limits: maximum **50mph** and minimum **10mph**.



### Dangerous Goods Category C

All dangerous goods vehicles must follow the 'hollow diamond' symbol and report to the vehicle escort area.



A number of goods falling within the Category C classification will only be permitted to use the tunnels between 22.30hrs and 05.00hrs.

## What to do in traffic congestion:



- Keep your distance**, even if you are moving slowly or have stopped. Maintain a minimum **5.0 metres** gap (an average car length) on stopping. Obey the "KEEP CLEAR" areas.



- Switch off the engine**, if stopped for more than one minute.



- Listen to messages** on the **radio** or over the **public address system** and **follow the instructions** given by the tunnel operator.

## What to do in the event of a breakdown or accident:



- Switch **on** your **hazard warning lights**.



- Switch **off** your **engine**.



- Call for help** from a telephone at the **emergency points located every 50 metres** along the tunnel.



- If necessary and possible, **give help to injured people**.

## What to do if a vehicle is on fire:



- If possible **drive out of the tunnel**.



- If that is not possible, stop, switch off the engine and **leave the vehicle immediately**.



- Call for help** from a telephone at the **emergency points located every 50 metres** along the tunnel.



- If safe to do so put out the fire with the fire extinguishers. If not safe, evacuate the tunnel **immediately**.

## Emergency points

These are located every 50 metres along the tunnel and are marked by illuminated signs.

Emergency points are for use in the event of an accident or emergency and are equipped with:

- Emergency telephones
- Fire extinguishers
- Break glass alarms



If there is a fire in the tunnel, raise the alarm and call for assistance from one of the telephones. **If safe to do so put out the fire with the fire extinguishers. If not safe, leave your vehicle unlocked and evacuate the tunnel.**

## Evacuation process

### Public address system

Speakers are located throughout the tunnels. In the event of an incident, listen to any announcements and follow the instructions given. If you are told to leave your vehicle, do so **immediately**.



### Escape lighting

This is installed on both walls of the tunnel. In the event of an evacuation flashing arrows will guide you away from the incident to the tunnel portals.



### Distance to portal signs

The distance to the entrance and exit portals is indicated on signs every 25 metres on both walls of the tunnels.

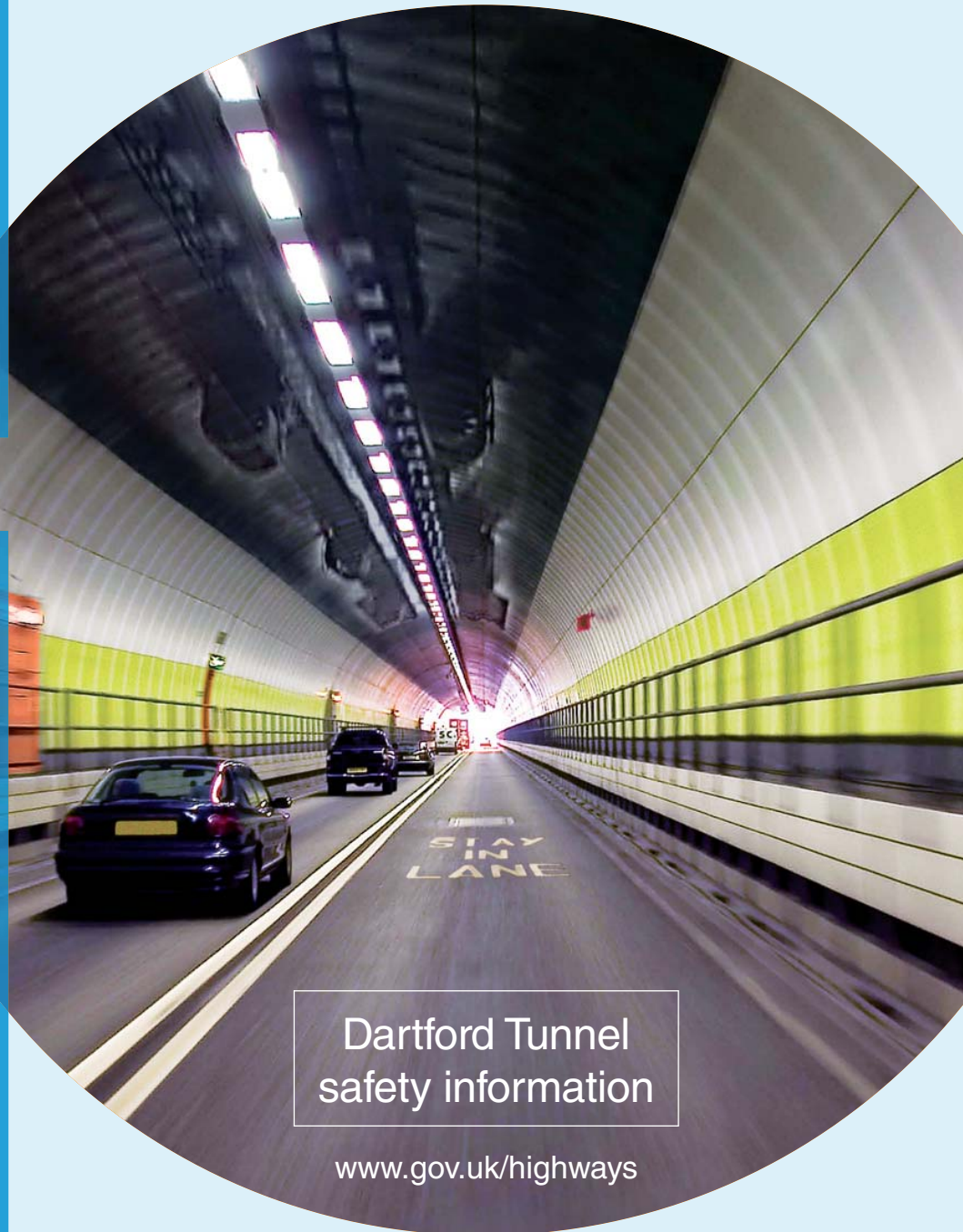


### Emergency exits

Where it is not possible to escape by the roadway, emergency exits can be accessed from the raised walkway at the side of the tunnel.



These exits lead to passages and steps connecting to the adjacent tunnel.



Dartford Tunnel  
safety information

[www.gov.uk/highways](http://www.gov.uk/highways)

## Tunnel lighting

Lighting is provided and remains on in the event of an emergency.



## Ventilation systems

The tunnels have ventilation systems to keep the air flowing through the tunnel. If there is a fire, the system is used to control the smoke in the tunnel.



## Traffic surveillance

The tunnels are monitored by CCTV cameras 24 hours a day by the tunnel operator.



## Fire suppression system

In the event of a fire, a system will deploy water mist over the fire and the adjacent areas.



## Traffic radio

Turn on your radio before entering the tunnels. In the event of an incident, announcements can be broadcast on your radio by the tunnel operator. Follow any instructions which are given.



**Smoke and fire can kill.  
Save your life, not your vehicle.**