

fact sheet | breakdown safety



Breaking down can be frustrating enough without having to worry about cars speeding past, possibly causing another incident. If you find yourself in a breakdown situation, it's important to remember to stay calm and follow RAA's simple advice to keep everyone involved safe.

First sign of a break down

- Often before an impending mechanical failure you will be given a warning sign. If this occurs, try to stop somewhere that doesn't impede traffic flow and provides some safety. Well lit side streets and car parks are often safer than a main road.
- Visibility is one of the key factors to remaining safe, by ensuring motorists see you and take care as they pass.
- Switch the hazard lights on and lift the bonnet to alert motorists to your breakdown situation.
- Remain alert and attentive to the traffic around you.

Calling RAA

If you're an RAA Road Service Member and confronted by an unexpected breakdown, the assistance of a qualified patrol or contractor is only a phone call away. In case of an incident, RAA Road Service Members can call 13 11 11 from anywhere in the state, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and Road Service will be available.

RAA's telephone consultant will need to take certain details to understand the circumstances, including your membership details and location. If you don't know where you are, take note of particular landmarks and street names so that the closest service provider can be sent to your aid.

Waiting for assistance

While waiting for help to arrive, it's important to consider whether it is safe enough to sit inside your vehicle and wait – particularly on busy main roads. It may be safer to wait at a nearby location where you can keep an eye out for your assistance.

If it's dark and you are feeling vulnerable, waiting at a nearby service station or shopping complex may be more desirable.

Remember that you can always call the police if you feel your safety is being threatened.

However if you do decide to leave the vehicle, make sure you stay nearby and that the car remains in sight. If there is a roadside barrier you can stand behind, please do so to improve your safety. Be sure to stay away from the traffic flow.

If you're travelling with passengers, particularly children, it's also imperative to keep them away from the roadway at all times. Children are harder for passing motorists to see and typically have less safety awareness than adults.

When RAA arrives

On arrival, the RAA patrol/contractor will assess the situation and determine whether the location is safe and will take steps to increase the breakdown site's visibility.



When RAA arrives *(continued)*

This may include using the service vehicle's amber flashing lights, strobe lights and laying out traffic cones.

Make sure you continue to remain alert to what's happening around you, keep your passengers at a safe distance from the vehicle and avoid walking on the roadway near passing traffic.

Driving past a breakdown

RAA patrols and contractors – like many other roadworkers – are constantly confronted by risks as a result of the nature of their work environment. So when passing a breakdown site, it's important for motorists to adapt their driving to the conditions and pass with caution.

Remember, the affected motorist didn't choose to break down in that spot to deliberately inconvenience you and the next breakdown could be yours, so show the same respect and consideration that you would like.

Many of the dangerous incidents that RAA patrols have experienced are caused from passing motorists being inattentive or negligent in adapting their driving to suit the conditions.

With one lane temporarily obstructed, it's common to see two drivers jockeying for position, with the driver in the restricted lane wanting to get over while the driver beside them speeds up to close the gap and not let them in. In a breakdown situation, be aware that people may be alongside, behind, in-front, underneath or inside the disabled or service vehicle, so pass with care and allow a wide berth.

All roadside workers have the right to operate in a safe environment – and arrive home safely to their families at the end of the day. We all can do something to make our roads less hazardous for everyone by being attentive and using a bit more caution when behind the wheel.

Tips when passing a roadside worker:

- Drive with caution and adjust your speed to the conditions.
- Make sure you safely provide a wide berth.
- Do not leave moving out of a restricted lane until the last minute.
- Show some courtesy to someone wanting to move out and around an obstruction.