

superior driving techniques



driving on
country roads

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Driving conditions on country roads are quite different for those accustomed to city driving.

Australia's rural and outback roads are often unsealed. Higher speed limits and the fact these roads are not always lit or signposted, can be dangerous to the unprepared driver.

Lumley Insurance has developed this brochure to assist you in planning your trip as well as to provide you with the information you need to have a safe driving experience.

Planning and preparation

Vehicle safety check

Before embarking on a country or outback journey, a full service of your vehicle should be undertaken.

The service should include a check of the following to ensure they are mechanically sound and in good working condition:

- tyres and tyre pressure (including the spare tyre)
- brakes
- oil level
- water level
- windscreen wipers and washers.

The service should take place at least two days before departure. That way, if repairs are needed, they can be completed before you leave.

What to pack

The following supplies should be taken on all country and outback trips:

- fuel reserves
- water
- food
- first aid kit
- compass
- fire extinguisher
- tyre gauge
- tow roaps
- local maps
- CB radio (or similar)
- jack
- oil
- tool kit
- jumper leads.

Planning ahead

Before leaving, lodge your trip details with a responsible relative or friend. Obtain advice on road closures in and around the area you plan to drive and seek advice from tourist centres on distances between towns. That way, you can make allowances for the amount of fuel and water you will need to carry.

While driving on country roads

Driver fatigue

The long distances between country towns and the vast stretches of road in Australia's outback can lead to driver fatigue. To avoid this, you should stop and rest, for at least 15 minutes, every two hours and never drive at the time you would normally sleep.

Animals

In rural and country areas, it is common for animals to wander onto the road. If you see an animal, slow down and prepare to stop. Many collisions are caused when swerving to avoid animals so drive with caution, especially at dawn and dusk.

Other vehicles

Road trains often travel in outback areas of Australia and can be up to 55 metres long and 2.5 metres wide. If a road train is oncoming, slow down, pull over and let it pass. From time to time, you may also encounter farming vehicles. Be aware that they are often much wider, longer and slower than they appear.

Unsealed roads

Many country roads are unsealed. If driving on an unsealed road, slow down and be aware of hazards such as sand, loose gravel, potholes and dust. A reliable map should advise the location of unsealed roads.

Break down

If you break down on a country or outback road, the most important thing is to keep calm, remain with your vehicle and wait for assistance. Never stray from your vehicle as the weather can change with little warning.

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