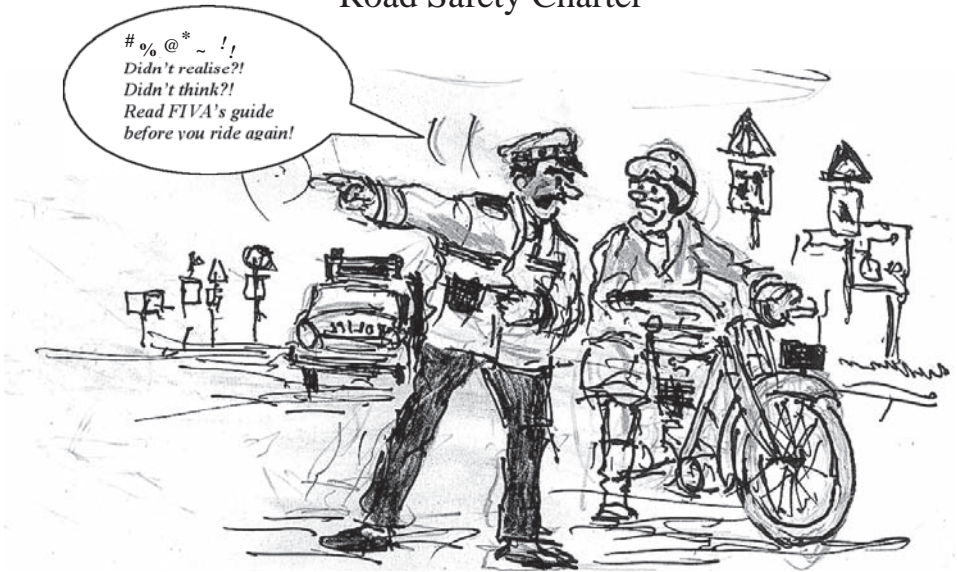




# GUIDE for USERS of HISTORIC VEHICLES

FIVA's contribution to the European Commission's  
Road Safety Charter

# % @ \* ~ !  
Didn't realise?!  
Didn't think?!  
Read FIVA's guide  
before you ride again!



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## USERS' GUIDE

### Foreword

The Fédération Internationale des Véhicules Anciens (FIVA – [www.fiva.org](http://www.fiva.org)) is an international body representing the worldwide historic vehicle movement\* through national Federations. FIVA has a special position in Europe where it has close links with legislators to ensure that measures taken in the interests of society at large do not impinge unfairly on the all important freedom to use old vehicles on the roads.

Traffic conditions throughout Europe have changed substantially in the last quarter century and today's historic vehicle drivers have to compensate accordingly – the older the vehicle, the greater the compensation necessary. At the same time, old vehicles are frequently the centre of attention wherever they travel: this gives drivers of such vehicles an opportunity to set an example of courteous, considerate and safe driving.

In 2005, FIVA became a signatory to the European Commission's Road Safety Charter (RSC). The RSC is a part of the European Commission's programme to reduce the number of road deaths by 50% by 2010. Most signatories to the RSC are adopting measures that will make a direct contribution towards either a reduction in the number of accidents occurring or in their severity – or both. Both are difficult for FIVA to achieve because accidents involving historic vehicles are rare. Instead, FIVA's contribution is to do all it can to maintain the existing high levels of road safety achieved by owners of old vehicles. More information on the Road Safety Charter can be found at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/roadsafety/charter\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/transport/roadsafety/charter_en.htm)

This guide seeks to achieve that purpose both by encouraging the continuation of safe and sensible driving habits amongst existing drivers and by highlighting the techniques that those new to the use of historic vehicles should consider.

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*The freedom to use old vehicles on the road is the most valuable asset that the historic vehicle movement has. FIVA is dedicated to upholding that freedom. That task would be infinitely more difficult if the road safety record of historic vehicles was not as good as it is – FIVA trusts that all historic vehicle enthusiasts will recognise the importance of keeping it that way.*

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\* "historic vehicle movement" is a collective term encompassing interest in road vehicles from the start of mechanised transport 125 years or more years ago up to 1980.



## Overview & contents

To drive an historic vehicle safely and considerately, one needs to:-

- Ensure the vehicle is properly maintained; (*section 1*) 4
- Know the vehicle and appreciate its limitations; (*section 2*) 5
- See, be seen and make one's intentions clear; (*section 3*) 6
- Drive with thought for, and understanding of, other road users; (*section 4*) 8
- Understand that events on the road can cause problems for other road users and behave accordingly. (*section 5*) 11





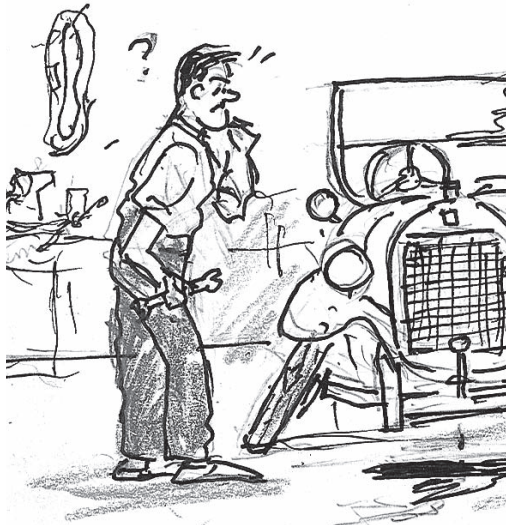
## 1. Vehicle Maintenance

Twenty five years ago, servicing was required at far more frequent intervals than is necessary with today's vehicles, and fifty years ago the need for servicing was even more frequent.

There have always been two considerations for routine maintenance – elapsed time and distance travelled.

Owners of historic vehicles, especially those that are used infrequently, must undertake regular servicing even if the distance travelled since the last service is insignificant.

FIVA therefore recommends that:-



- All historic vehicles that are used should be carefully inspected at least once a year.

This is especially important in countries where vehicle testing is not compulsory.

The inspection should include:

- structural integrity;
- wheels (particularly important with spoked wheels) and tyres;
- wheel bearings;
- king pins;
- steering mechanism;
- braking system;
- spring and shock absorber mountings;
- lights;
- a check for any components that may have become loosened.

If any faults are found, they should be fixed before the vehicle is next used.



- Vehicles that have not been used for more than a year should be checked particularly carefully before use.
- Special attention should be given to the condition and operation of the braking system, especially if hydraulically operated.
- Brake fluid should be drained and replaced at least once every three years and more frequently if the storage conditions are damp.
- Fluid levels and operation of lights (where fitted) should be checked prior to each journey.
- Tyre condition and pressures should be checked prior to each journey.



- Because tyres do not last indefinitely, even in storage, pneumatic tyres should be replaced if there are signs that the walls are damaged or that they have become inflexible. Tyres should be replaced, whether they are worn or not, after a number of years in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations or other appropriate guidelines.





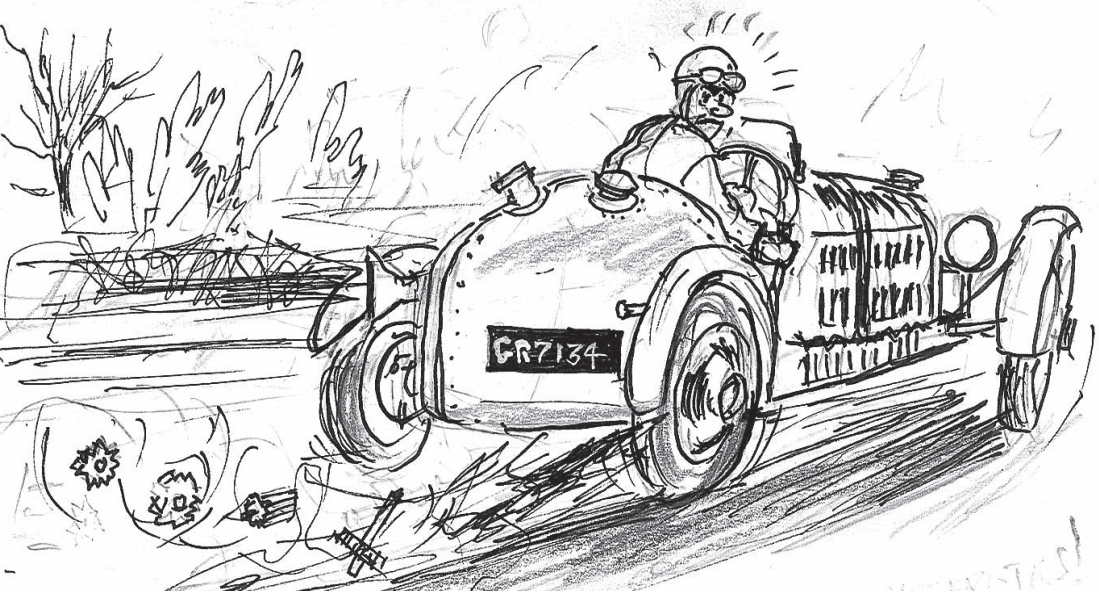
## 2. Vehicle Knowledge & Understanding

To drive any vehicle safely, the driver needs to know all the controls and have a full understanding of the vehicle's driving characteristics. It is especially important for drivers of historic vehicles to know their particular vehicle's limitations and to drive within them.

Drivers used to modern vehicles who occasionally drive older vehicles need to take full account of their character – many historic vehicles are able to travel at similar speeds to modern traffic, but lack the same levels of handling, adhesion and braking.

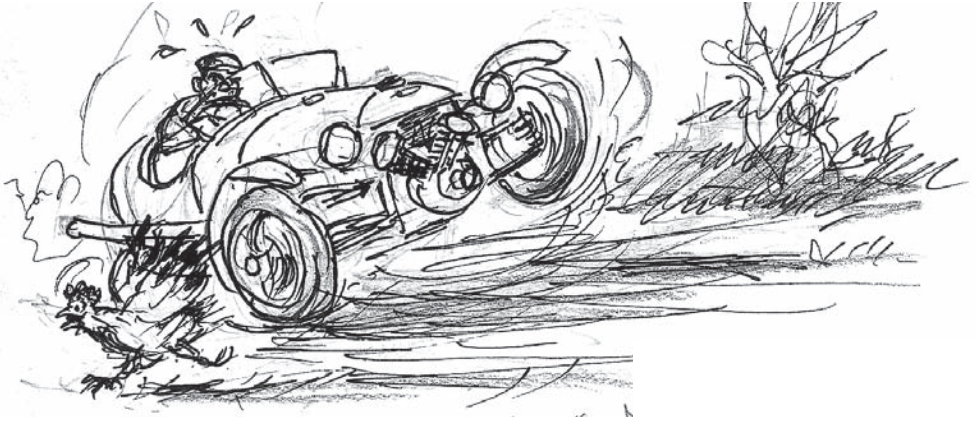
FIVA therefore recommends that drivers take time to familiarise themselves with:-

- location and feel of controls;
- gear-change characteristics;

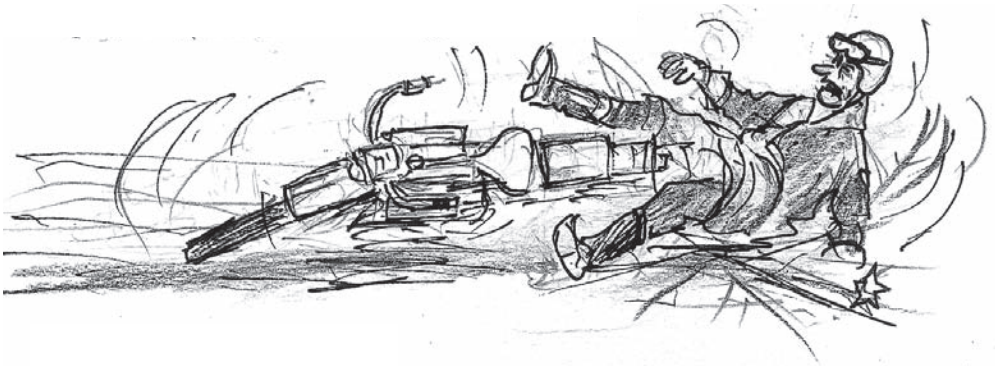




- steering response;



- braking performance;
- tyre grip;



- handling characteristics;
- lighting performance and effectiveness of indication system (if any).



### 3. Visibility

Seeing, being seen and making intentions clear to other road users are all essential aspects of road safety that apply to all road users. Drivers need to be aware that other road users will probably be unaware of the characteristics of older vehicles and will therefore expect modern standards of illumination and indication. FIVA therefore recommends that:-

- **Drivers should ensure that they have clear lines of vision ahead, to the sides and to the rear.**

- Drivers should have a clear view of the road as well as be able to reach all controls comfortably;
- All windows must be maintained in good condition;
- Vehicles should be fitted with external mirrors. Many older vehicles were not originally fitted with external mirrors. Reproduction period style mirrors are readily available and can often be fitted in such a way as to be readily removable for those occasions when authenticity is particularly important.



- **Drivers should ensure they can be seen:**

- Motor cycle riders should wear fluorescent sashes or jackets.
- Drivers of particularly slow vehicles should fit removable reflective devices in prominent positions near the outer edges of their vehicles.
- Vehicles without electric lamps should not be driven after dark, or in conditions of poor visibility unless absolutely necessary - such as to reach a place where it is safe to stop when conditions change during a journey.
- Owners who are likely to use old vehicles after dark or in poor conditions must assess of the quality of their lights and (if necessary) take action to modify their vehicles to bring their lights up to near modern standards. Important points to consider include:
  - Tail lamps: should be visible in clear conditions from at least 100 metres and (unless a motor cycle) positioned at least one on each side within 200mm of the edge of the vehicle. If the rear lamps are not a pair, it is easy to mistake the vehicle for a motor cycle. If the rear lamps are too close together, such as either side of a number plate, they give following traffic the impression that the vehicle is further away than it really is. Drivers can use a firmly fixed, but readily de-mounted, “trailer board” to overcome these deficiencies.



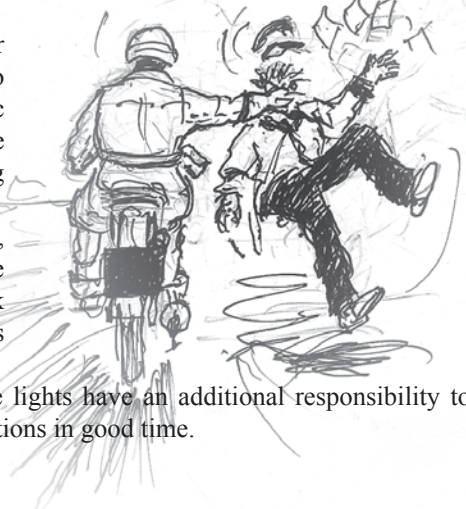


- Front marker lamps: The very small “side lights” popular on many cars from the 1930s to the 1950s are inadequate for today’s roads and are likely to be un-noticed against the background of other, brighter, lights. Additionally, oncoming traffic will have no sense of the width of the vehicle if the headlamps are not positioned close to the vehicle’s sides. Therefore, owners of vehicles that have these small sidelights and inboard headlamps should consider installing brighter more visible marker lamps.
- Single-dipping lamps: owners of vehicles with single dipping systems wishing to drive in conditions of poor visibility should ensure that the system is modified so that a pair of lights is illuminated on both main and dipped beam.
- Extremely slow vehicles (such as steam engines) should consider fitting a flashing amber beacon in a prominent position at the back to alert following traffic to the presence of a potential obstruction.

### **Drivers should make intentions clear**

Modern vehicle drivers may not notice hand signals and semaphore indicators, moreover hand signals are virtually useless at night. As a result, drivers of older vehicles that are not fitted with flashing bulb indicators or brake lights close to the sides of the vehicle need to be aware that other traffic will not immediately notice other methods of indication and they thus need to give advance warning of their intentions. FIVA therefore recommends that:-

- If necessary, drivers fit flashing indicators and at least one brake light. In some jurisdictions it is permitted to adapt the front marker lights and rear lights to double up as indicators - otherwise, it is necessary to fit additional lamps. This recommendation applies also to those vehicles that are only fitted with semaphore indicators.
- drivers need to allow extra time for manual indication if a vehicle has no flashing bulb indicators or electric brake lights and a warning should be fitted at the rear of the vehicle stating that signalling will be by hand only.
- Hand signals should be clear, positive and unequivocal. The use of fluorescent strips on the back of driving gloves or gauntlets is recommended.
- Drivers of vehicles that lack brake lights have an additional responsibility to ensure that they indicate their intentions in good time.

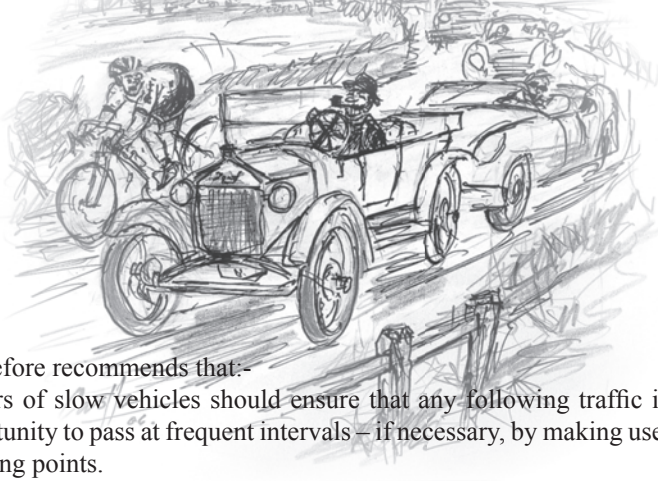




#### 4. Consideration and understanding

All road users need to be considerate to, and understanding of, other road users. This is especially important for those doing something unexpected or out of the ordinary – such as driving a historic vehicle.

On today's busy roads, the continuity of on-coming traffic often makes it difficult to overtake slower moving vehicles. Taking action to prevent other drivers having to overtake is one of the biggest contributions to road safety that any driver can make.



FIVA therefore recommends that:-

- Drivers of slow vehicles should ensure that any following traffic is given the opportunity to pass at frequent intervals – if necessary, by making use of suitable stopping points.
- Travelling in convoy with other historic vehicles, or with tender vehicles, should, in general, be avoided: groups following the same route should stagger their departure times to avoid such a convoy.
- If a convoy does develop, or is unavoidable, drivers should ensure they leave sufficient space between themselves and the vehicle in front to allow passing traffic to overtake one vehicle at a time. At moderate road speeds, this should be at least 70 metres.
- Drivers of older and slower historic vehicles should plan journeys to avoid commuter rush hour traffic near towns and cities and other busy roads, thus making their journeys less hazardous and more enjoyable.
- If travelling with companions, or a support team, meeting/stopping points should be agreed in advance and each vehicle crew should have route details to avoid the need for keeping other vehicles in sight.



Drivers of exceptionally slow vehicles (ESV), such as steam engines, traction engines, early commercial vehicles, agricultural machinery and road rollers, need to take additional precautions to ensure that they cause minimum disruption to traffic.

The handling of ESVs on public roads requires experience and a good understanding of the vehicle and of laws specific to their use. ESV drivers should where ever possible:

- avoid town centres, long fast roads, single lane roads, steep hills and difficult junctions
- not drive after dark
- make turning intentions clear to other road users.

In addition to the points noted above, steam-powered ESV drivers should where ever possible:

- have a crew of two or more to assist with maintaining the engine.
- avoid creating a hazard when stopping at the roadside to take water, change gear etc.
- recognise the danger of sparks to people and property and avoid the emission of dark smoke where it could present a problem, e.g. near habitation.



- avoid damage to the road surface i.e. when iron straked wheels are used or in hot weather.
- chock-up against the gradient when stationary.
- Only use whistles in an emergency.



## 5. Participation in Events

Events on public highways require additional consideration. Event organisers have a responsibility to ensure that disruption to other traffic is kept to a minimum and should therefore avoid the use of trunk routes wherever possible. Where a trunk route has to be used, especially by slow moving traffic, organisers should consider the use of temporary warning signs (providing local regulations allow this).

FIVA therefore recommends that organisers should:-

- Plan their events to cause minimum disruption to other road users.
- Provide warnings to other road users in situations where slow moving traffic may be encountered on a trunk route.
- Not penalise participants for having up-graded lighting systems or high visibility markers on their vehicles during road sections of events.

And FIVA therefore recommends that drivers should:-

- Know where they are going without having to follow a vehicle in front.
- Not allow competitive spirit to overcome their duty to drive with care and consideration for other road users.
- Always adhere to traffic signs, signals and rules unless instructed otherwise by a uniformed police officer; and
- ALWAYS Remember they are ambassadors for the historic vehicle movement.



SAFE JOURNEY – HAPPY MOTORING!

*FIVA is indebted to John Castle for providing the light hearted illustrations*

