

The Island Right-Of-Way

A paid advertisement brought to you by The Islander Automobile Association (IAA)

Come be a part of a great Island tradition—a tradition as inherently “P.E. Island” as the patronage we hate to love . . . openly. Here is your opportunity to become a true Island driver, becoming what we affectionately call an Island Road Warrior.

Of course, you probably have never heard of us before. You may have been side-swiped on occasion by our bolder members. We have attempted to keep our fine organization of a low profile for a variety of reasons, the least of which leaves us vulnerable to legal misunderstanding, heavy-handed insurance collectors and, more recently, the vigilante slander campaign of a certain Thomas Lloyd. In spite of anonymity, our numbers are great, our practitioners devoted to Their Island Right-Of-Way. Our objective is the promotion and preservation of a distinctive driving style, one which is an overlooked yet vital component of The Island Way of Life. We refuse to allow a system designed by parties From Away to restrict our rightful heritage and dictate how we are to conduct ourselves upon our own highways. And you, the driver of this uninspected vehicle, can continue to build upon your current driving prowess.

But what is it that defines the classic Island driver? What is it that makes us any more distinct than, for example, the anarchist scooters of Milan? For your further education into this culture, we have listed a few trademark manoeuvres which have set horns blaring, again and again.

One famous technique has been nicknamed “gawk and veer.” While attempting a left-hand turn at an intersection, it is important not to feel pressured. You will make the turn when you are good and ready. When a gap in the traffic appears, keep a watchful eye on that gap so that you may inspect every variable for the sake of quality control. Remember, you are not obliged to take just any opportunity simply because it is there. When your ideal gap does present itself, wait until it is just about to close before making your ultimate move. The less time you have to shoot out and in, the better. After the initial sharp burst of acceleration, feel free to slow right down again at your leisure. Do not worry about collision. The drivers of oncoming vehicles will certainly take notice of you and will jump on their brakes if absolutely necessary. After time, you won't even need to look at the oncoming traffic at all: you may simply enter the flow without looking and without fear, at your own speed and in your own time. That is your *Island Right-Of-Way*. Note: For right hand turns, it is good to know that just because you can make a right on a red light does not mean that you have to.

There is much confusion as to the proper mode of dealing with three or four-way stops. According to “foreign” manuals, there is a particular procedure for determining the alleged right-of-way. We at the IAA promote a more assertive methodology: If any of the parties hesitate for even a moment, and even if they seem to be edging out tentatively, why not rush through and seize that Island right-of-way before being forced to wait any longer? We warn that this may create a touch of hostility. However, if you refrain from making eye-contact or non-verbal communication, this will instill enough general confusion so that you will not need to notice road rage of others.

When it comes time to exit a stretch of highway – be it your own driveway, the street upon which the Bingo Hall is located, or the Tim Horton's – there are many creative variations on how you might choose to signal your intent to others. One common method involves suddenly reducing speed and, upon discretion, the creation of your own turning lane. Because you have been generous enough to slow down for your exit, the blinker is, as ever, a redundant formality hardly worth bothering with. If you are feeling generous, use the signal just at the point of making the turn. This should be ample warning. Of course, if you are in hurry and not to be bothered, you are not even required to slow down. A swift and decisive turn while travelling at 80 kph (or more) does require some skill, but be assured that the law is “behind” you in more ways than one: if an unobservant tailgater should hit you from behind, they are automatically liable. With a good insurance settlement and whiplash treatment, you will be back on the streets in no time.

Upon your driving excursions, you may have noticed the peculiar signage posted along your route which seem to imply a “speed limit.” We like to think of them as “guidelines.” The IAA, in fact, is currently looking into Germany's Autobahn model, in which there is no maximum speed, so long as you are in control. Do not worry about posted speed limits unless you observe a police vehicle en route.

We have merely scratched the surface of what it takes to be an Island driver. We thereby invite you to contact your local branch as soon as possible to receive further literature and guidance into this life choice. We would particularly like to direct you to some of most popular publications:

The Motorized Farmer — Cultivating an Island Tradition
Slippy When Wet — The Four Seasons of PEI Highway Navigation
Pothole Dodging — Survival of the Swiftest
The Mystery of Merging

Thank-you for your wavering attention