



شركة بيزلاين التجاريه المحدوده ذ.م.م

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DRIVING IN QATAR

Qatar driving can be intimidating, frustrating and even dangerous. Experienced drivers, however have adapted and found - knowing what to expect can be half the battle. You won't be able to change the system or the drivers – so it is better to accept reality and save yourself the anguish.

Accept and adapt to the local driving conditions

DO NOT:

- lose your temper
- use bad language
- use hand gestures
- demonstrate aggressive behavior
- be put off by the flashing of headlights or the honking of horns
- listen to driver gossip (get out on the road and try it first)



DO BE PATIENT!

There is an order to driving on the roads in Qatar, be patient observe the system and you will come to understand it.

Defensive / Aggressive Driving

A contradiction in terms, but the safest way to arrive at your destination.

Be aware of your surroundings at all times, expect the unexpected and be prepared for it. Assume that any vehicle around you will make an incorrect action (just because the vehicle in the front is indicating right, this doesn't mean that he's going to turn right!) Anticipate the worst of actions by the vehicles around you.

When choosing a vehicle some people prefer the security of a large size - and others the agility of a smaller vehicle. Choose what you are most comfortable driving.

Maintain an awareness of vehicles to your rear and those passing (on the left or right) by keeping a close eye on all of your mirrors. This is referred to as situational awareness.



The Flashing of Headlights

If you are driving in the left lane (well any lane) and the vehicle behind you is approaching quickly with flashing headlights - the driver is in a hurry and wishes you out of his path. If it is safe to do so – signal and move over. Do not touch your brake pedal flashing your brake lights - telling the driver "back off buddy you're too close." The driver behind will interpret this as very aggressive behavior.

Flashing headlights are a gesture to give way in some countries. Beware – not usually the case in Qatar. Locally this translates to – "you'd better wait – I'm coming through".

Honking the Horn

The honking of car horns usually means I'm here, but as you will find there can be an enthusiastic volley when the lights turn to green, or if the vehicle behind thinks there was a space for you to join the traffic on the roundabout or that you were taking too long to move. Don't be intimidated by the honking. Take your time and join the traffic when you're ready.

Lane Protocol

People tend to drive in the left lane, as vehicles approaching from the right tend not to stop when joining the main road, so:

- On a three lane road most people will drive in the middle or left lane, leaving the right lane to the water trucks, pickups, and entering vehicles.
- On a two lane road most people will drive in the left lane
- On a single lane road: **BE CAREFUL!!**

Roundabout Protocol

Usually when approaching a roundabout from a two lane carriageway the right lane is meant for turning right and the left lane for continuing straight ahead, turning left or turning back - unless otherwise stated.

On a three lane carriageway the right lane is for turning right, the middle lane is for going straight ahead and the left lane is for turning left or turning back unless otherwise stated.

Many roundabouts are now being fitted with a separate slip road for turning right.





EXAMPLE:

Ideally if you approach the roundabout from the middle lane and intend to go straight ahead you should drive into the roundabout position yourself in the centre - as if there is another vehicle on your left and right sides. Follow the round shape of the roundabout. As you approach your exit you should indicate and turn off, almost as if you're making a right turn.

Some people follow this lane discipline, but I have to say that they may be the minority. So just because someone is in the middle lane do not assume they are going straight ahead, they may be turning left or believe it or not they may even wish to turn right,. Approaching the roundabout, it seems many people position themselves in the shortest – or fastest moving queue regardless of which way they might be turning in the roundabout



I once heard someone call a roundabout over here a straight-on-about, this is generally because some people don't indicate or follow lane discipline



Now going through the maneuver as in example above will probably be more like this: approach the roundabout from the middle lane intending to go straight ahead, when you see a gap in the traffic, pull away as quick as possible to get ahead of the traffic on your left, then cut straight through the roundabout (making it a straight-on-about) as soon as you see your exit aim straight for it checking your right mirror, because remember the vehicle on your right should have turned right, but maybe he's trying to turn left. Vehicles in the roundabout have the right of way. Most drivers comply.

Caution

If someone is driving erratic, pulling out in front of you, suddenly stopping, cutting you off, and obviously having no consideration for others, take one or two deep breaths, get out of the way, and let them go. Then smile to yourself, because it is not worth a duel or the trouble.

Be mindful of trucks carrying any load and in particular when they are going around a roundabout or overtaking you.

Avoid driving behind:

Taxi's: they are likely to stop anywhere without indicating to pick up or drop a fair



Trucks in general and especially **Water Trucks:** They are often very slow and unpredictable. You also have very limited forward vision when behind a truck.

Police Checks and Penalties

The Traffic Police from time to time will carry out random checks on:

- Driving licenses
- Vehicle registration documents
- The wearing of seat belts

For not wearing your belt the fine is QR100

There are now speed limits on all roads, and the police have mobile radar cameras and unmarked cars fitted with video cameras.

Speeding fines vary from QR300 to QR500.

Be aware that the police can and do impound your vehicle if your speed is excessive.



Many traffic signals have a static camera, which will take a picture with flash of anyone jumping a red light.
The fine is QR1200

You can be subjected to a traffic penalty without your knowledge. Frequently the first you will learn of the penalty will be upon annual vehicle re-registration, when in a car accident, or trying to leave the country.

Rules, regulations and procedures are subject to changes - sometimes frequent changes. The above advice is current at this time.

Remember: don't be put off by what you have read here or by what other people might say, because after you've been here for a short time you will see that there is an order to the way people drive

ACCIDENT GUIDELINES

Should you be involved in an accident, strict procedures will apply, however - if you handle yourself well and follow this advice - it need not be such a harrowing experience.

1. DO NOT MOVE THE VEHICLES - no matter where the accident occurs, whether on your property or on a main road causing major congestion. The police need to see the position of all vehicles to assess responsibility. They will likely allow you to move your vehicle once an assessment has been completed.



DO NOT MOVE YOUR VEHICLE UNTIL THE POLICE TELL YOU TO

- 2.** If you have a colleague or friend who speaks Arabic - try to get them to come to the accident scene. Whilst many of the police do speak English, some may not be fluent.
- 3.** Contact police on 4890699, 4890670 or 999, provide them with the location of the accident including names of landmarks near to you i.e. large shops, buildings etc.
- 4.** If there are injuries call 999 and ask for an ambulance or contact Hamad Hospital on 4392222. If you are injured and are able, it is advisable to arrange for someone else to come and stay with your vehicle.
- 5.** At the accident scene you will be asked to provide your license, vehicle registration and insurance documents (it is advisable to have photocopies of these documents available in your vehicle). The police will listen to the explanations of all involved and complete their preliminary roadside report. They will advise all involved when to attend the Traffic Department (normally the following day, although it can be immediate) to receive the documentation required for repair-work and the insurance companies. It is illegal for any garage in Qatar to carry out any accident or body work repairs on your vehicle without the authorized paperwork from Police and or insurance company.
- 6.** Ensure you get contact details from the policeman making the road side report - his name, which police station he is from, details of his shift schedule over the next few days. Try your best to retrieve his personal GSM phone number, (THIS WILL SAVE YOU A LOT OF FRUSTRATION, WASTED TIME AND RUNNING AROUND)
- 7.** It is advisable that your company PRO or well informed Arabic speaking colleague assist you at the police station.

8. DO NOT SIGN ANYTHING unless you fully understand what it is, **DO NOT** accept the blame if you think it is not your fault.



9. Do not lose your temper
Do not use bad language
Do not use aggressive behavior
Do be patient
DO SMILE AND BE RESPECT FULL TO THE POLICE
(it works wonders)

In all my dealings with the Police force here in Qatar I have only found them to be polite and very helpful

DRIVER LICENSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. International Driver's license is Valid for up to 6 months with an official visit visa, starting from the Date of entry to Qatar when accompanied with most first world country's valid driver's license.
2. Most first world home countries' driver's licenses are good for the duration of a tourist visa.
3. Any Other Driver's License and for all people with a permanent visa, the driver's license is only valid for 7 Days, starting from the Date of entry to Qatar. A temporary driver's license will need to be obtained before the end of 7 days.
4. A temporary Qatari license can be obtained after a vision exam and a fee of QR. 150.
5. If in doubt whether your driver's license will be accepted, check with the Qatar Embassy.

PLEASE NOTE THAT INSURANCE COMPANIES WILL NOT COVER ANY DAMAGE TO THE VEHICLE DUE TO DRIVING OFF ROAD.

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