



# Unexpected on road emergencies – are you prepared?

## No matter how many precautions you take, some emergencies are unavoidable.

Remaining calm and understanding how to deal with these situations will ensure you stay safe. Here are a few tips to help you handle unexpected emergencies.

### Engine failure

Although rare, an engine can cut out suddenly for a variety of reasons. If this happens, put your car into neutral and brake gently.

Keep in mind that braking and steering will require much more effort without the help of the engine. As your car slows, pull off to a safe place on the side of the road, stop the vehicle and switch the ignition off.

Once you've stopped, call **RAA Road Service** on **13 11 11**.

To reduce the likelihood of engine failure, make sure your vehicle is serviced regularly and any unusual noises are assessed by a qualified mechanic.

### Jammed accelerator

This isn't a common problem but it can be very dangerous. Quickly put your car into neutral, apply the brakes, and steer off to the side of the road.

Don't turn off your ignition until you've left the road and stopped because this may cause the steering to lock.

Once your car is stationary, switch the ignition off as soon as possible to avoid engine damage.

Contact **RAA** on **13 11 11** and have your vehicle checked to ensure it's safe to drive.

To reduce the likelihood of a jammed accelerator, make sure the driver's footwell is clear of objects and that floor mats are properly fitted and in good condition.

### Animals

When driving in the country, it's not uncommon to encounter native animals and livestock. Although hitting an animal is an unpleasant experience, swerving or braking heavily to avoid a collision can lead to loss of control and result in a more severe crash. It's best to gradually and safely reduce your speed to avoid a collision.

If you do hit and injure an animal, you'll need to take the appropriate steps to deal with its pain and suffering. Injured animals may become stressed or aggressive, so it's best to seek expert advice. Contact the **RSPCA** on **1300 477 722**, **Fauna Rescue** on **8289 0896** or the nearest police station.

If the animal has been killed and it is safe to do so, remove it from the road to reduce the danger to other motorists, and contact the **Traffic Management Centre** on **1800 018 313** or the nearest police station. They'll arrange for the animal to be collected.

Animals are more active at dusk and dawn. If you can't avoid driving during these times, reduce your speed and remain alert. Take extra care after rain because animals like kangaroos and emus will be more active looking for food and water, and will come closer to the road to drink water pooled in drains and along the roadside.

### Tyre blowouts

This can be one of the most alarming experiences you can encounter while driving. The best advice is not to panic. When a tyre blows, your car may veer to one side of the road. Keep a firm grip on the steering wheel because it could turn violently in your hands, and gently ease off the accelerator.

Don't jam on your brakes as this could cause the vehicle to dig in on the side that's had the blowout.

In an extreme case this might cause the vehicle to roll over.

In both automatic and manual vehicles, use the gears to help slow your car as you move to the side of the road. Once the car has slowed considerably, gently apply the brakes.

Call **RAA Road Service** on **13 11 11** to help with safely changing the tyre.

Remember to have the flat tyre repaired or replaced as soon as possible to ensure you have a usable spare tyre. Failure to do this could result in the vehicle being issued with a defect notice.



### **Medical emergency**

In a medical emergency, pull over to a safe place on the side of the road, turn on your hazard lights and call **000** for emergency assistance. If time is critical, call an ambulance rather than speeding through traffic or breaking road laws, as this could result in a serious crash. Emergency vehicles and their drivers are properly equipped to deal with these situations.

If the driver loses consciousness behind the wheel, it's important to stay calm. If the car's still moving, put it in neutral – this will stop the vehicle from speeding up if the driver's foot is on the accelerator

Don't switch the engine off as this will deactivate the power steering and brakes. Instead, turn on the hazard lights and use the steering wheel to guide the vehicle towards the side of the road and let it roll to a stop.

It may be difficult to reach the footbrake if you need to slow the car down, so gently apply the handbrake to gradually slow the vehicle. Pulling sharply on the handbrake could cause the car to veer out of control. Vehicles with electric/automatic handbrakes will begin to slow once the brake is activated.

### **Dust storm**

Dust storms can be scary and, in extreme cases, visibility may be reduced to only a few metres, making driving very dangerous.

If you encounter a dust storm, pull over to a safe place on the side of the road and switch on your hazard warning lights. Avoid using fog lights or high beam headlights as light reflecting from dust particles can dazzle you or other drivers, further reducing visibility.

In hot weather, keep your vehicle running and ensure the air conditioning is set to recirculation mode to avoid pulling hot dusty air from outside.

The safest option is to wait out the dust storm. They can last from just a few minutes, to several hours in extreme cases.

### **Shattered windscreen**

Other vehicles may flick up stones and rocks that can shatter your windscreen, particularly if you're driving on an unsealed road. If this happens, stop the car in a safe place and watch out for any sharp pieces of glass that may have come loose. Modern laminated or tempered safety glass is designed to stay in place or break into blunt pieces to reduce the chance of injury from cuts.

In South Australia, if you drive with a shattered or excessively cracked windscreen you can be issued with a defect notice.

It's best to contact **RAA Road Service** on **13 11 11** for immediate assistance, and you may need a tow to a windscreen repairer.



### **We're here to help**

Call our Road Safety team on **8202 4570** or email [roadsafety@raa.com.au](mailto:roadsafety@raa.com.au)  
[raa.com.au/roadsafety](http://raa.com.au/roadsafety)