

Advice for driving on expressway

1 Departure

Everyone should wear a seatbelt.
And don't forget the people sitting in back.

The fatality rate of people not wearing seat belts is 9.2 times higher than those wearing seatbelts on expressways. A seatbelt is a life net protecting you and your family. Everyone, whether sitting in the driver's seat, next to the driver or in the back seats, should always wear a seatbelt.

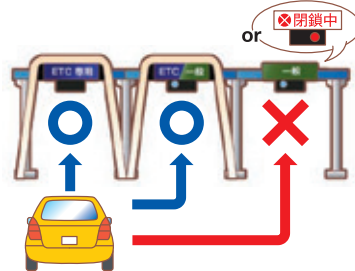


What is ETC ?

ETC (Electronic Toll Collection System) is a system that allows drivers to pay tolls without stopping their cars. To use this ETC system, inserting an ETC card into the onboard ETC unit installed in the car. When you drive through an ETC gate, wireless communication takes place between the unit and an antenna installed at the gate.

- Drivers must enter the lane marked as "ETC専用 (ETC Only)" or "ETC一般 (ETC/Cash)" when using the ETC. "ETC専用 (ETC Only)" or "ETC一般 (ETC/Cash)" is indicated at the top of the gate.
- If you fail to insert an ETC card, then "STOP" sign appears and the gate does not open.
- If you see a red light at an ETC entrance gate, use a staffed gate to receive a ticket. And when you exit, use a staffed gate again and hand your ETC card over to the toll collector with the ticket given at the entrance.
- If you see a red light at the ETC exit gate, use a staffed gate and hand your ETC card over to the toll collector.

Check which lanes allow ETC!



Precautions for driving with ETC

• Is your ETC card inserted properly?

If your ETC card is not properly inserted into the onboard unit, the gate will not open. Ensure that it is properly in place before going through an ETC gate.

• Do not exceed 20 km/h when entering the lane!

You may need to stop suddenly in cases such as an abrupt stop by the vehicle in front or if the toll gate bar does not open due to entering the wrong lane or improperly inserting your ETC card in an ETC lane.

• Maintain a safe distance between vehicles!

The vehicle ahead of you in an ETC lane may stop suddenly.

• Do not put your car in reverse!

There is a danger that the vehicle behind you may fail to stop, or you may hit a toll booth personnel member. Even in an ETC lane, do not attempt to put your car in reverse to leave the lane. Wait for a staff member in your car.

• Do not drive through the gate when the signal is red!

2 Entering tollgates

1 Check your lane.



Slow down to 20 km/h or slower.



ETC専用 ETC lanes are for ETC cars, and **一般** drivers using cash or credit cards should use the general lanes. There are blue and yellow (or white) road signs in front of the ETC lanes. **ETC一般** There are also mixed lanes that can be used by both ETC cars and general cars. Check the lane type before entering.

2 Pass through the tollgate.

Paying by ETC

Slow down to 20 km/h or slower and pass through slowly.



Paying by cash or credit card

Stop and take a ticket from the ticket machine. Pay the toll at the exit.



Other ways of passing through tollgates for cash/credit cards users

Sapporo-Nishi IC to Sapporo-Minami IC Flat Rate Section

Pay the toll at the entrance gate.

Otaru IC to Sapporo-Nishi IC

Sapporo-Nishi IC and Otaru IC are free to enter. (There are no tollgates.) Receive an entrance ticket at the Asari, Zenibako, and Teine tollgates, and pay when you exit with the ticket. Note that when you enter the Asari tollgate, you will be asked in which direction you are going to (towards Otaru or Sapporo) at the gate. Towards Otaru, pay the toll there. Towards Sapporo, receive a ticket and pay when you exit with the ticket.

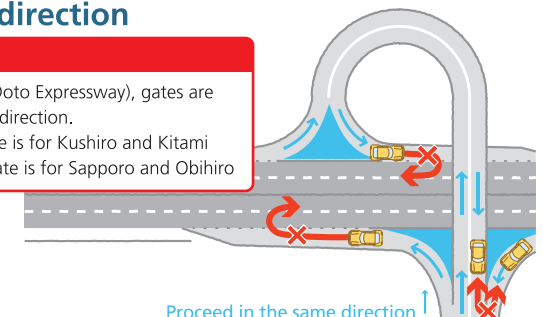
3 Never drive in the wrong direction

There have been cases of drivers entering the expressway, get confused about their direction, find themselves driving in the opposite direction they wanted to, and then turning around and driving. If you find yourself driving in the opposite direction you want to, do not turn around. Instead, get off at the next interchange, and tell the toll collector.

Attention

At Ikeda IC (Doto Expressway), gates are separated by direction.

- The left gate is for Kushiro and Kitami
- The right gate is for Sapporo and Obihiro



Proceed in the same direction ↑

3 Merging with the main lane

1 Check the traffic flow on the main lane



When you have entered the acceleration lane, watch the flow of traffic in the main lane, make sure there is a sufficient distance between your car and the car in front of you, then give a turn signal.

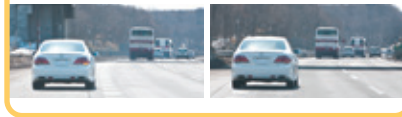


Decide what you want to do without hesitating, speed up sufficiently and join the flow of traffic!

Advice

What is the acceleration lane?

It's a lane for accelerating to the speed of the cars on the main lane when merging to the main lane from an interchange, etc.



2 Determine which car you will follow, then accelerate sufficiently.

An acceleration lane runs parallel to the main lane, and from it you agilely decide the position where you will enter the flow of traffic using your direct sight and mirrors. Drivers should decide which car they want to get behind, rather than which car they want to get in front of, and accelerate sufficiently. Sudden acceleration can lead to skidding and accidents, so please be careful.

3 Check the positions of the cars driving on the main lane and gently join the flow of traffic.



When joining the flow of traffic, check your right rear direction using mirrors and your direct sight (there are blind spots when using mirrors) and gently enter following your target car while adjusting your speed to match it.

Advice

If you fail to join the flow of traffic and stop

In case you stop at the end of acceleration lane. Missing a chance to merge, do not panic. Turn on your turn signal and wait for the right moment to enter the main lane.



4 Driving on the expressway



Drive at a safe speed and keep your eyes on the road!

1 Keep your eyes on the road!



Hokkaido has beautiful scenery, and it is easy to take your eyes off the road without knowing. At a speed of 100 km per hour, a car advances 28 meters per second. Taking your eyes off the road causes rear-end collisions.

2 Drive at a safe speed.



The law states that on expressways, the left lane is the driving lane and the right lane is the passing lane. Return to the driving lane after passing. Also, remember that speeding can cause accidents. Pay attention to speed limit signs and drive at a safe speed suitable for road conditions.

3 Maintain a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you!

If you keep an enough distance, a driver's field of visions grows and it becomes possible to avoid such dangers as rear-end collisions. To get information about what is in front of you as soon as possible, try to put enough distance between your car and others while driving.

4 Watch out for animals!

Accidents caused by animals such as deer and foxes are not unusual. Drive at a safe speed while paying close attention to what is in front of you. Particularly at night, it takes time to notice animals, so be careful. If you see an animal on the expressway, report it using an emergency telephone or the Road Emergency Hotline (#9910).



Winter advice

Drive at a safer speed and keep plenty of distance between vehicles.

1 Watch out for sudden weather changes



In the winter, even when the sky is clear a snowstorm can suddenly appear. Be alert to changes in the weather.

2 Turn on your headlights in a snowstorm or blizzard



At times, visibility can be suddenly reduced by a snowstorm or blizzard. Keep your headlights on at all times to make your car stand out.



3 Maintain more distance between cars than in summer

On snowy winter roads, a driver needs three times more stopping distance than in the summer.

4 "Sudden" is taboo

Sudden braking and sudden steering cause slipping and can lead to serious accidents. "Sudden" is an absolute taboo.

5 Tunnels



Offensive lane changes and passing cause accidents.

1 Watch out for the black hole effect and sensibility changes.

Because of the contrast with the brightness outside a tunnel, the car in front of you can seem to be absorbed by shadows when it enters a tunnel and become hard to see. Also, inside a tunnel it can suddenly become difficult to judge whether a car in front of you is moving or stopping. Do not try to change lanes or pass offensively, and maintain a safe driving speed.



2 Turn on your headlights in a tunnel.

Simply turning on your headlights inside a tunnel helps cars behind you avoid rear-end collisions. Also, keeping sufficient distance between cars helps prevent accidents.



6 Service areas (SA) and Parking areas (PA)

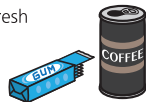


Whenever you feel tired or sleepy, take a rest.

Service areas and parking areas are facilities for resting along an expressway. All service areas and parking areas have restrooms. Some also have restaurants, shops and gas stations. Check the "Guide to Service Symbols" on pages 3 and 4.

1 If you feel sleepy, don't push it. Take a rest.

Driving for a long period of time tends to be monotonous and to lose concentration. When you get tired or sleepy, be sure not to push it and take a rest at a service area or parking area to refresh yourself.

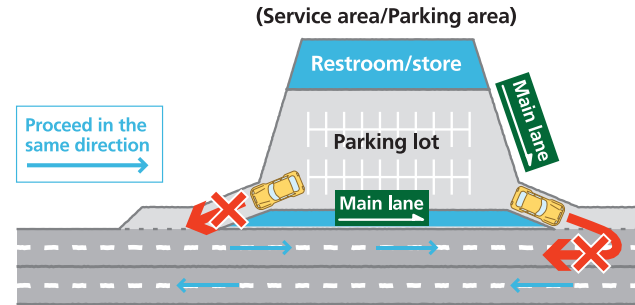


2 Park properly in a parking space

When a standard car parks in a parking space for a large vehicle or a large vehicle in a space for a standard car, it can cause trouble for users who arrive later. Be sure to park in a parking space that matches the size of your car. (A security guard may guide you to a space.) Also, drive slowly in a service area or parking area. Pedestrians should watch for cars while walking.



3 Never drive in the wrong direction



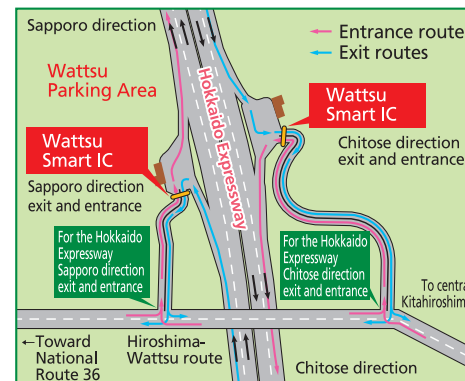
Drivers sometimes get confused about direction or drive the wrong way after resting. Carefully check signs and direction boards before setting out.



Wattsu Smart IC ETC-only full stop type, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.



Getting there



Usage precautions

- The smart interchange accepts ETC cars only. (Cars without an onboard ETC unit cannot enter, even if you have an ETC card.)
- Because data transmission happens when a car is stopped, if a car does not come to a complete stop, the gate will not open. Be sure to make a complete stop in front of the bar.
- The interchange cannot be used from ordinary roads for the parking area only (or for U-turns).
- Drive slowly because there are pedestrians in the parking area.
- Following another car is not allowed. (Only one car can pass through each time the bar is raised.)

Aug. 8, 2015 Hokkaido Expressway Sunagawa Service Area planned for use as a smart interchange as well (ETC-only full stop type, 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.)

7 From the expressway to exit tollgates



Check your exit with exit signs

1 Check your exit interchange



Exits are announced 2 km, 1km, and 500m in advance, by sign. Check the signs and prepare to exit driving in the left driving lane.

2 Pass through the tollgate.

Paying by ETC

Slow down to 20 km per hour or slower and enter the lane, then pass through slowly.



Paying by cash or credit card

Hand over your pass at the exit tollgate. Pay your toll by cash or credit card.



Other ways of passing through tollgates

Sapporo-Nishi IC to Sapporo-Minami IC Flat Rate Section

You are free to exit. (There are no tollgates.) Where traffic merges with public roads, cars must come to a full stop (except for in Sapporo-Minami IC). Also, you cannot exit from the Flat Rate Section onto public roads in Sapporo-Nishi IC and the Sapporo IC.

If you entered at Otaru IC or Sapporo-Nishi IC

Hand over your entrance ticket at the exit tollgate. Note that if you entered at Otaru IC or the Sapporo-Nishi IC (Free Interchange), you don't get an entrance ticket, the toll collector will ask you which interchange you entered. Please tell him which interchange you used. Pay by cash or credit card, depending on the entrance interchange.

8 Driving manners and in case of emergency



Make your drive comfortable

1 Do not cut off other vehicles

Cars that are cut off can cause accidents by steering abruptly or putting on their emergency brakes.



2 Use cell phones and navigation systems only at service areas and parking areas.

It is illegal to use a cell phone while driving. Using a cell phone can cause you to focus on operating it and to lose attention to the road in front of you, leading to accidents. It is also illegal to park on the shoulder of the road and use a cell phone or operate a navigation system. Use service areas and parking areas.



3 When changing lanes, always use your turn signal.

Changing lanes without thinking causes accidents, and when you change lanes, use your rearview mirror and direct sight to check safety, then turn on your turn signal before changing lanes. After you have finished changing lanes, quickly turn off your turn signal.



4 If an accident occurs

Turn on your hazard flashers to signal cars approaching from behind you. After you stop your car, light an emergency flare canisters and triangular stop signs. Accidents involving stopped cars are increasing, so both drivers and passengers should pay attention to cars that are passing by while getting out and take refuge in a safe place such as outside the guardrail.



Use an emergency telephone, cell phone or PHS to report accidents or breakdowns using the Road Emergency Hotline (#9910). Traffic control center operators are on standby 24 hours a day.

When using a rental car

- ① When there is a change in your usage period or times, let your rental car company know in advance.
- ② Return your car to the correct location.
- ③ Contact your rental car company if you should happen to be in an accident or have a traffic violation.
- ④ Keep the inside of your rental car clean.
- ⑤ Be careful not to park on private property or in monthly rental parking lots.
- ⑥ Don't drink and drive
- ⑦ Contact your rental car company if you have with any questions.

