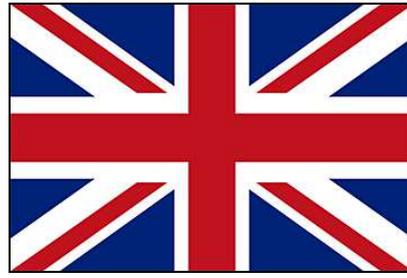




www.italy-ontheroad.it



ROUNDAABOUT



Rotonda

Rondeau

Rotatoria

General information and advice.

I'm a Roundabout or Rondeau, female or masculine, according to the article: I'm as you want me... ☺

Many people have been asking a lot of questions about me lately, about my story (where I come from) and about my motivations. I excite a lot of curiosity.

Do you wish to know how I am? Why I was created? What my intentions are?

My many aspects? And...how best to use me to improve traffic flow and make it more fluid and smooth flowing (on an optic and phonic level), to reduce waiting time (which gets so much on your nerves and makes you vent your anger against someone else.

I introduce myself:

I'm a traffic island, of circular shape, with an elevated area in the middle, which is not accessible to vehicles, situated at the intersection of a multiple of roads.

I'm level with the ground, that is, without a flyover.

There are many reasons why I was built: first of all I allow for a higher level of safety compared to traffic lights (fewer car accidents and fewer victims because of inferior speed levels); driving is smoother and more moderate.

I am more efficient than traffic lights: I reduce waiting time, I am less noisy, I create less acoustic and atmospheric pollution, I consume less petrol, and have less maintenance

costs. Moreover I offer a wider choice of directions in itinerary in as much as in my intersection you can smoothly do a U-turn (change direction); even for lorries and buses. It also appears that with respect to me, fewer road signs are needed than for traffic lights. The fact of allowing for easier insertion and giving prominence to the passage from a minor road to one with more traffic (door effect) is also important. I improve the physical aspect of a place because I may be adorned with plants, flowers, fountains and works of art, but only on the condition that road users don't get distracted: as for every installation near the road.

It is not advisable to build me where the necessary space is lacking, where there is reduced capacity for vehicular flow, when visibility is lacking (because of the risk of car accidents) and when traffic is intense on only one side of the road, or when there is a flux of traffic that one would want to give priority to in the traffic flow (example: public transport, green wave, and so on).

The choice of my size depends on various factors: first of all on the space available but also on the characteristics of the roads which are connected to me and on their traffic intensity.

If you take the wrong driving direction, because you are thinking of your partner or because you are distracted or absent-minded, you won't have difficulty as you would in a traditional intersection with traffic lights: all you need do is continue going round me and after one round, you would have changed your running direction (made a U-Turn); all this with in conditions of absolute safety, without hampering traffic and without danger.

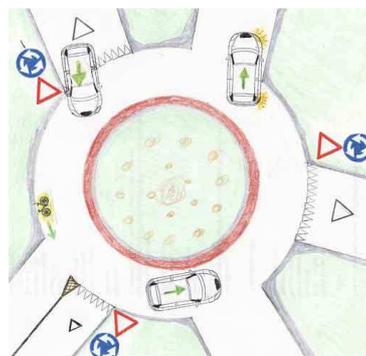
There are roundabouts of various sizes, depending on the traffic flows they have to bear and whether or not they are situated in an urban area. You can't tear down a condominium or a block of flats to make me bigger.

There are 3 main types of Roundabouts: large ones (common outside built-up areas), compact/small and mini roundabouts.

Large Roundabouts are used especially outside built-up areas: it has 2 or more lanes and must have a diameter larger than 32 metres.

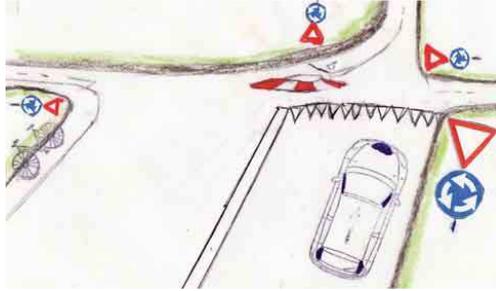


Compact/small Roundabouts have a diameter from 32 to 24 metres; it only has one lane, but may sometimes have two; this type of roundabout seems to be safer than the others from a statistical point of view. In fact, less car accidents have been recorded on this type of roundabout than others. It allows reverse order also of articulated lorries (length up to m.18,75).

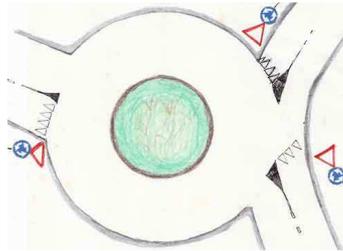
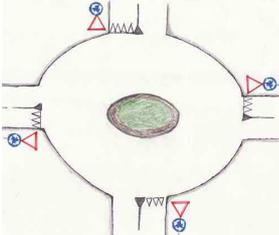


Mini Roundabout,

Has an outside diameter inferior to 24 metres (generally even as small as 13 m.); its central island can be partially or completely overcome to allow lorries and trailers to pass.

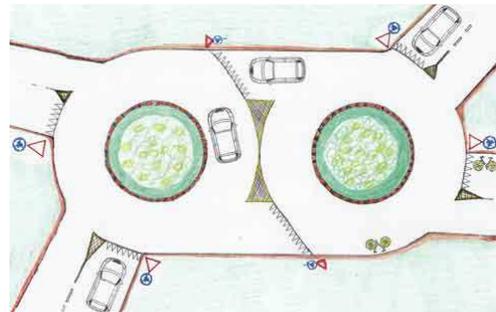


At times I can have an oval length form. (or I can also be oval-shaped)



Or I can be a Roundabout with an exit that is perpendicular to the entry.

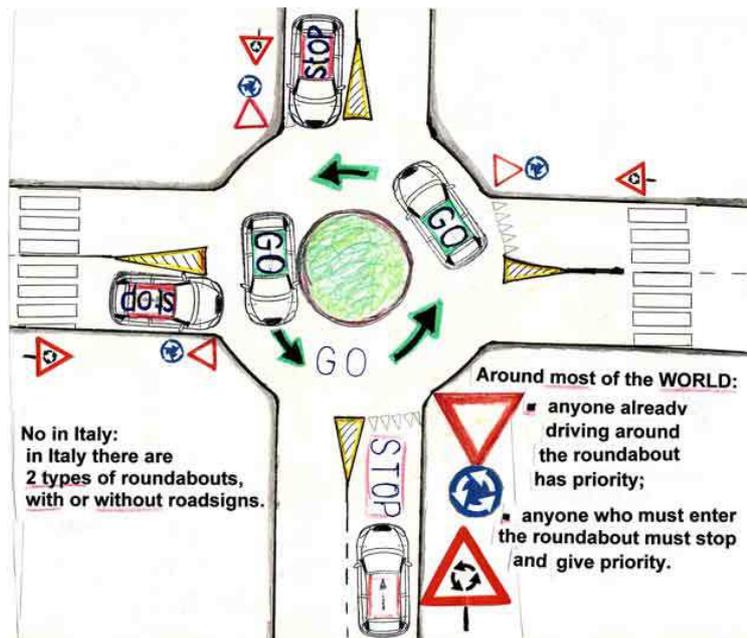
Sometimes I can have two circular islands, forming an eight shape. This is considered a double roundabout and it is used when the space available doesn't allow for the construction of a large Roundabout. *Don't drive all over me as if I were chicane, and never try to emulate Schumacher. Instead, drive slowly to avoid a fine...or provoking a car accident.* ☺



Remember that I'm **always one-way** so you must drive in (slowly) from the right and circulate **anticlockwise**.

Remember that it is the opposite in countries where you drive on the left hand side (such as England): there you enter and circulate on the left.

First of all, note that in most parts of the world circulation in a roundabout is governed by the rule that **RIGHT OF WAY MUST BE GIVEN TO THOSE ALREADY DRIVING WITHIN THE ROUNDABOUT**, so anyone who enters the roundabout must give priority to who is already driving inside.



In Italy, however, there are 2 ways to circulate in a roundabout: it depends on whether or not there are any vertical or horizontal signs on the road.

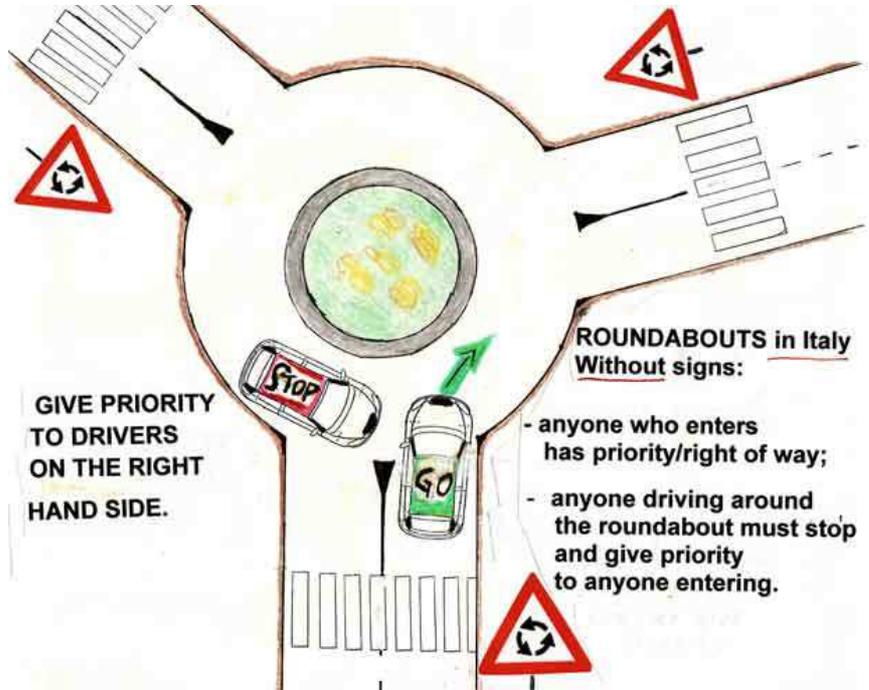
In Italy there are 2 (TWO) types Roundabout: **with** or **without** road signs.

Roundabouts without road signs:



They are few and being used less and less in sometimes; it's preceded by a danger road sign. In this case one must give priority to who is coming from the right applies:

- Those who enter the roundabout has the right of way;
- Those who are driving in the Roundabout must stop **and give priority to the drivers on the right**, that is, to **anyone entering** the roundabout.



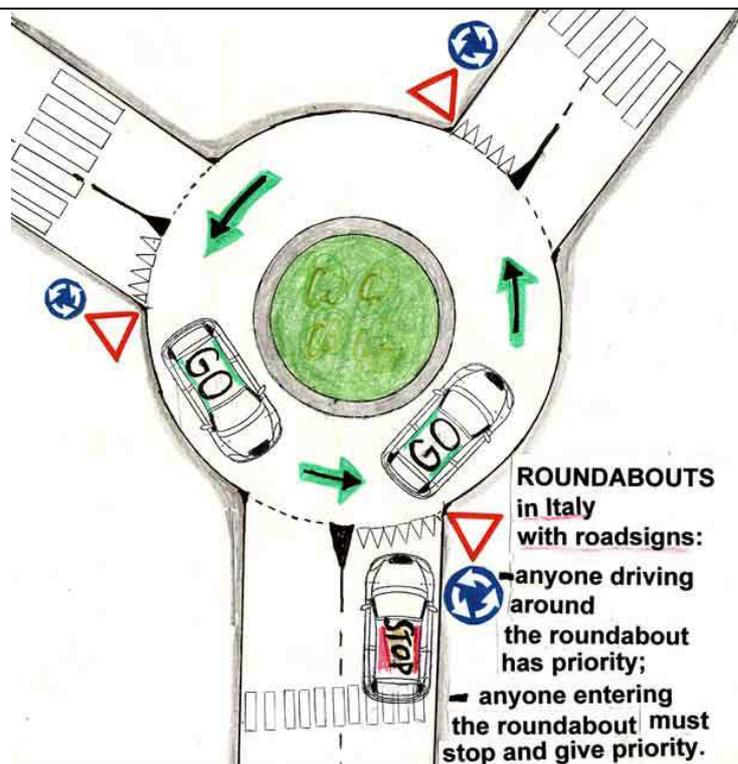
At times there are no road signs, not even of danger.

Roundabouts with road signs:
give priority and obligatory intersection in a rotary sense



New Roundabouts have road signs and the majority.

- Anyone entering the Roundabout must stop and GIVE priority to drivers who are already driving in the roundabout.
- Anyone driving in the Roundabout have the right of way.



My age? Ask Rondeau, you never ask a Roundabout her age.... ☺

A modern roundabout was realized in New York (USA) in 1904. It seems to me that in this period the architect E. Hénard was finishing the ROND-POINT of Etoile in Paris and making the inside one-way. Remember that after some rare examples of roundabout, the practise became generalized and extended to other places in the '60s. At this time the British used circular island techniques to solve problem of dense traffic and the security issues tied to it. At this point we were in the height of the economic boom.

I think Great Britain had generalized the rule regarding priority to vehicles that are already in the roundabout in 1966, while France did so only in 1983. Since then on a roundabout, the obligation to give non conventional priority (to the left rather than to the right, that means, the person already inside the ring has priority over the person that is to enter, that is that is positioned on his right), spread quickly all over Western Europe.

Italy has not conformed yet: it has only installed road signs in Roundabouts, vertical and/or horizontal, for who is inside. But be careful and remember to check if there are road signs or not.

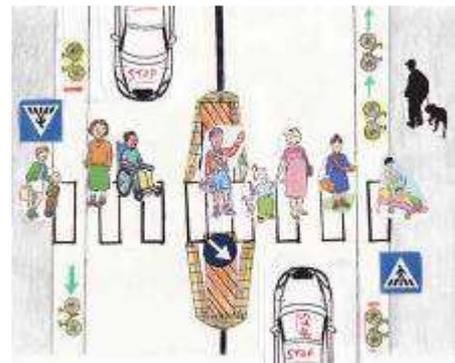
From now onwards I will speak only about Roundabouts with road signs horizontal and/or vertical to give priority with intersection to way-round, the most common ones.

When you enter a Roundabout you must always moderate your speed (this is also valid for cyclists), you must be cautious, and must look around you, to observe the other road users and clearly show (using the INDICATOR) your intentions and keep them.



If there are pedestrians on the cross walk you always give priority to pedestrians.

Traffic island are meant to prevent passing among, this is most important for pedestrian's safety.

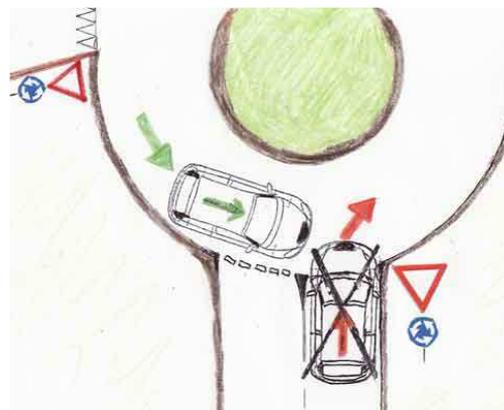


Don't forget: never drive in the opposite direction of traffic, not even in a roundabout!

Remember that having the right of way does not mean that you can do what you wish: you must always be cautious, keep the safety distance and be calm: the unexpected can always happen.

You enter on the right and give priority to who is driving on the left (meaning to those who are already inside the Roundabout).

This is a common type of accident in the roundabout.



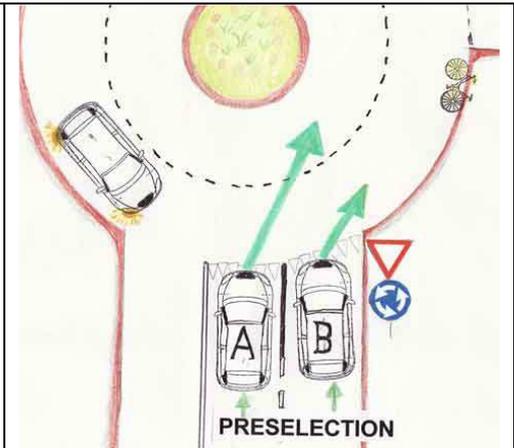
Attention to cyclists because are little visible and give always priority to pedestrians. When you enter in Roundabout, besides to give priority to vehicles that already driving around inside.

If Roundabout has the same number of lanes as the access road, I advise you to stay in the same lane position in which you find yourself before entering.

(example: if you're on the right you keep to the right, if you're in the centre, stay in the centre)

I advise you NOT to change lanes when entering the Roundabout. Changing lanes when there is traffic is difficult and dangerous.

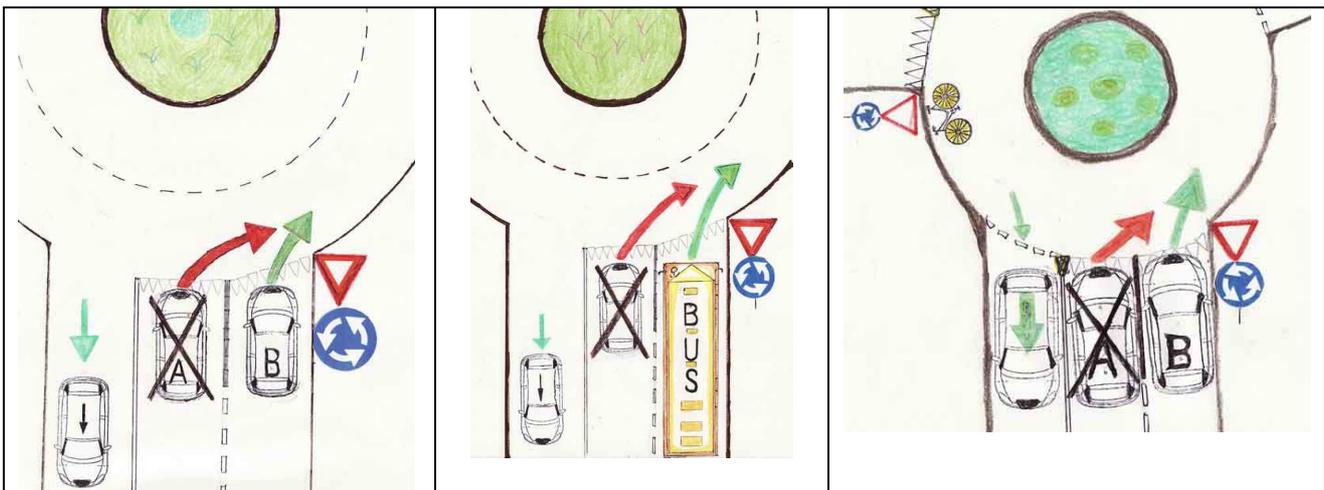
A must drive in centre, otherwise **B** has priority.



If there are 2 parallel lanes of entry and 2 lanes in Roundabout, I advise **A** to drive in the central lane and **B** in right lane; this way you can enter together. **A** cannot enter in **B**'s lane.

If the entry way has two lanes, the one on the left allows you to go inside the ring move forwards; (always give priority), while the one on the right allows you to stay to the right in order to exit shortly thereafter.

Don't cut across the road.

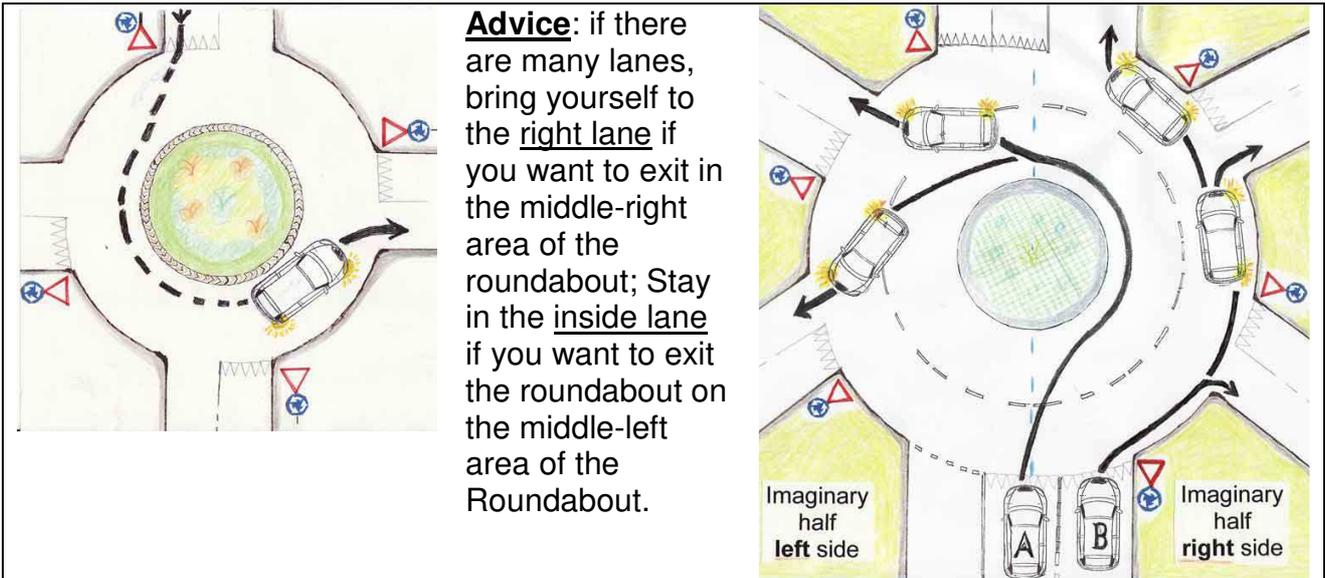


Remember that if there is a reduction in the number of lanes when entering the Roundabout, you must give priority to those coming from the right. In this case, B enters first.

The same holds true for a Roundabout with 2 lanes when the street that proceeds it has three lanes.

Because we are on 2 parallel lanes and the priority on the right rule is in order. The lanes are marked out by white horizontal lines, which may be erased or virtual (what matters is that there is enough room for two lanes)

When there are two or more lanes, I advise that you choose the one that is the farthest outward, meaning the largest ring to the right, if you must leave the roundabout right away. If you plan on being in the Roundabout for quite a bit of time, use the smallest inner ring instead.

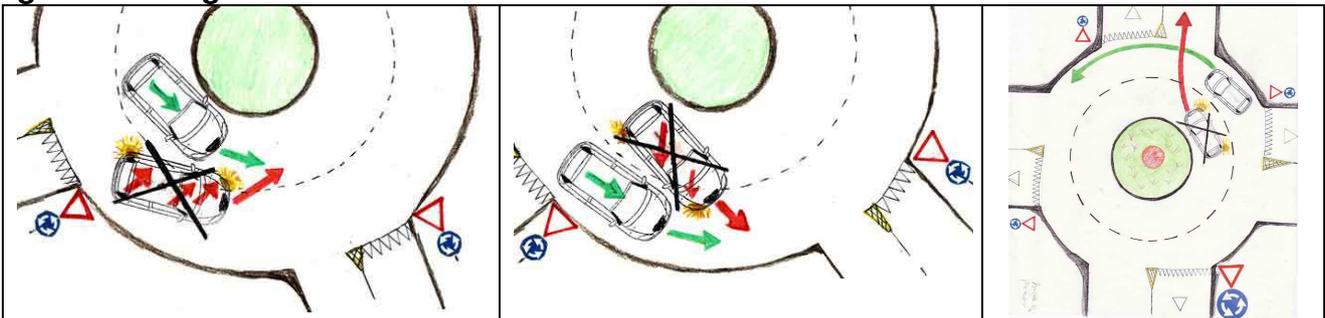


If you are unsure or don't know where to turn, it is not forbidden to continue driving on the right inside the roundabout, but traffic will flow less smoothly.

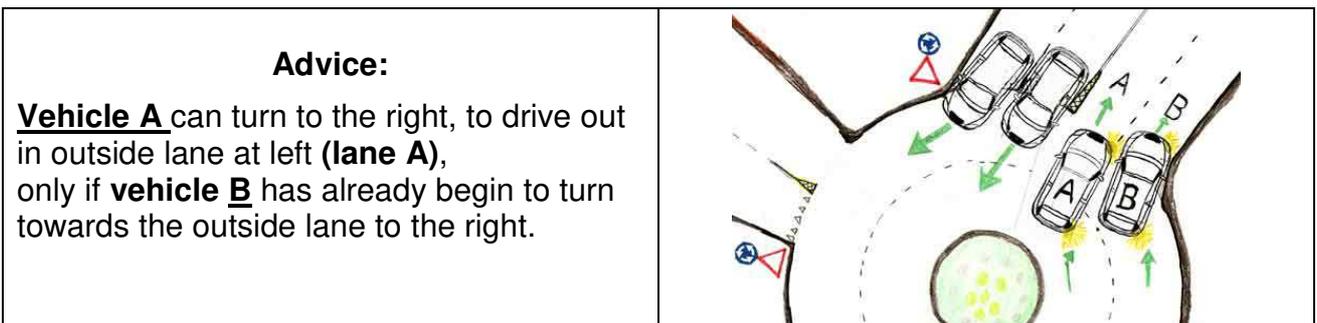
Keep in mind that you can go around me as many times as you like ☺

Remember that you cannot stop in the Roundabout and that zig-zag manoeuvres are forbidden. Also, it is very dangerous to pass on the right.

Use your signal, when you choose a direction, keep it and if you can't switch lanes go around again.



This is a common accident.



When a vehicle changes lanes to exit it mustn't get in the way of the traffic coming from the right. It must give the right of way and if it cannot switch lanes it should go around again. **In Roundabouts with many lanes every change of lane MUST BE INDICATED (signal). Don't cut anyone off.**

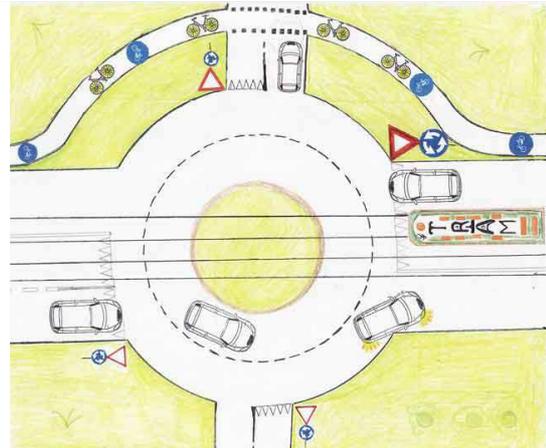
A word of advice, before switching lanes make sure the lane you wish to enter is free for long enough before and after you merge; use your side and rear-view mirror.

Before you switch lanes, it is best to look to the side you wish to move to.

(A blind spot is an area you are unable to see with your side mirrors). If you cannot change lanes, go round again.

Remember that in a big town you can meet Roundabouts with the presence of public transport (trams, buses etc.): be more cautious and don't underestimate the situation.

Attention when you travel after dark, insufficient lighting reduces safety: exert the utmost caution when travelling with limited visibility (also with fog and at sunset).



When you exit a Roundabout you MUST always indicate your direction with your signal lights.

If you are leaving the Roundabout immediately after you enter it, you can put your signal light on right away.



Look out for pedestrians and cyclists: they always have the right of way. I advise you make eye contact with car driver to be sure you've been seen. If there is no cross walk, I advise to cross the lane about on the roundabout's access road and to stay at least 5 m from the beginning of the Roundabout, so that the driver in exit can stop in time.

If there is a protected area halfway through the road, cross one lane at a time so the cars in passing can see you and stop.

Please avoid any circumstances that may provoke harm. It is better to prevent any possible problems. If there are no protected areas for pedestrians between lanes, be careful and exert caution.

The increase in the number of roundabouts tends to make cities less favourable to those who do not use cars to get around. I hope more roundabouts are built to facilitate pedestrian access as well.

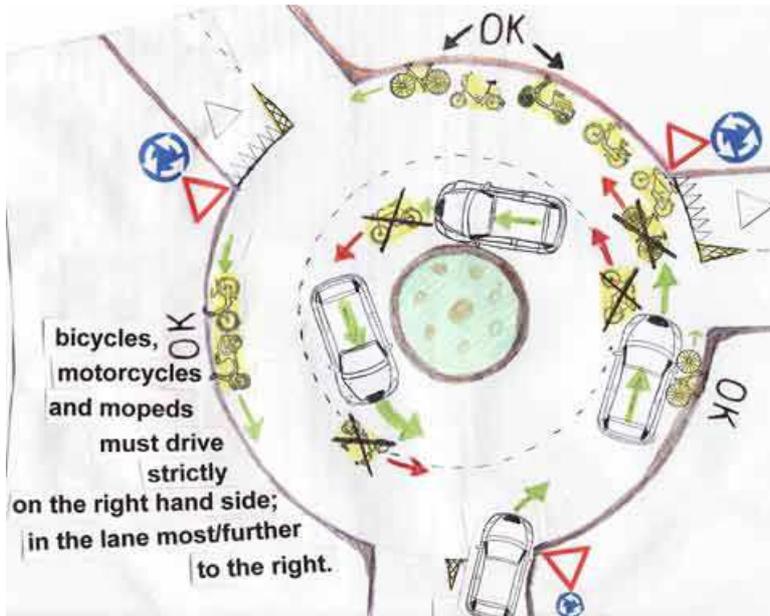
Cyclists

must ride on the cycling tracks or crossings, when these are available.



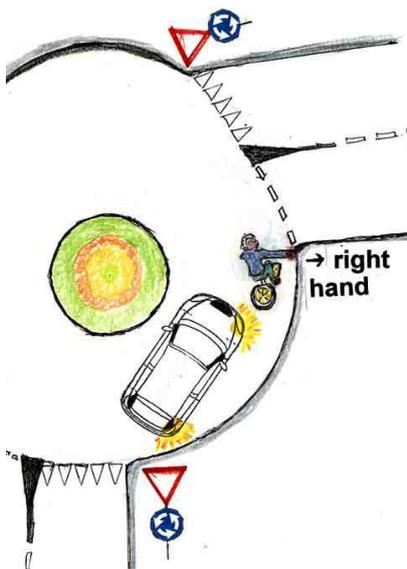
I advise cyclists to wear reflector jackets and to turn their lights on at sunset.

Often cyclists are knocked down because they are NOT visible enough.



If there are no cycling tracks, cyclists and motorcycle drivers must circulate in the far right lane (if there is more than one lane).

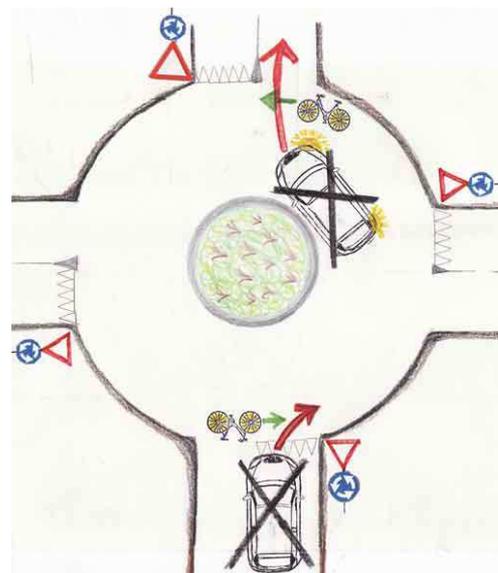
They must also maintain reduced speed and watch out for oil residue, sand or debris.

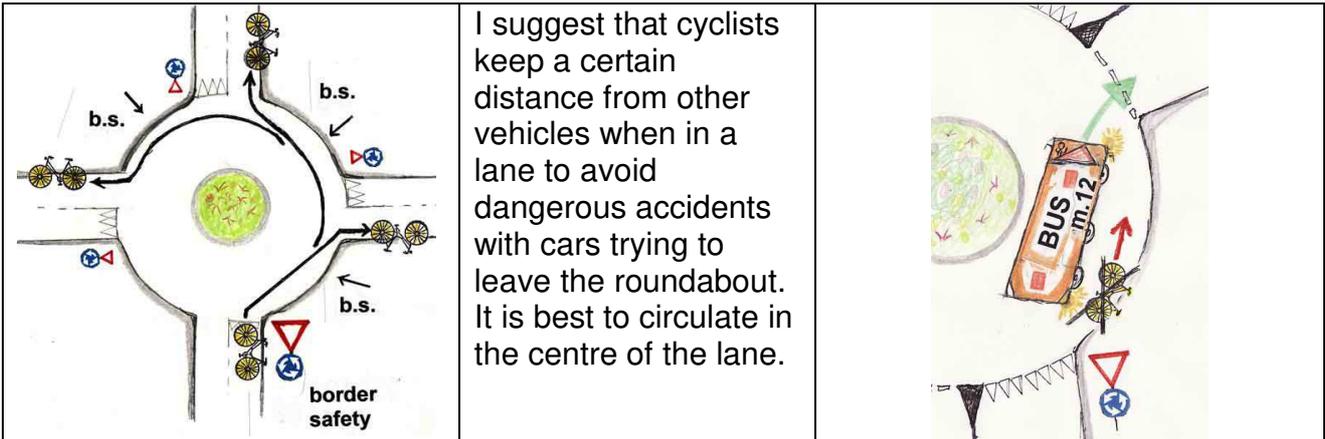


Cyclists must signal with their right hand when exiting.

Cyclists are often the victims of drivers' bad behaviour.

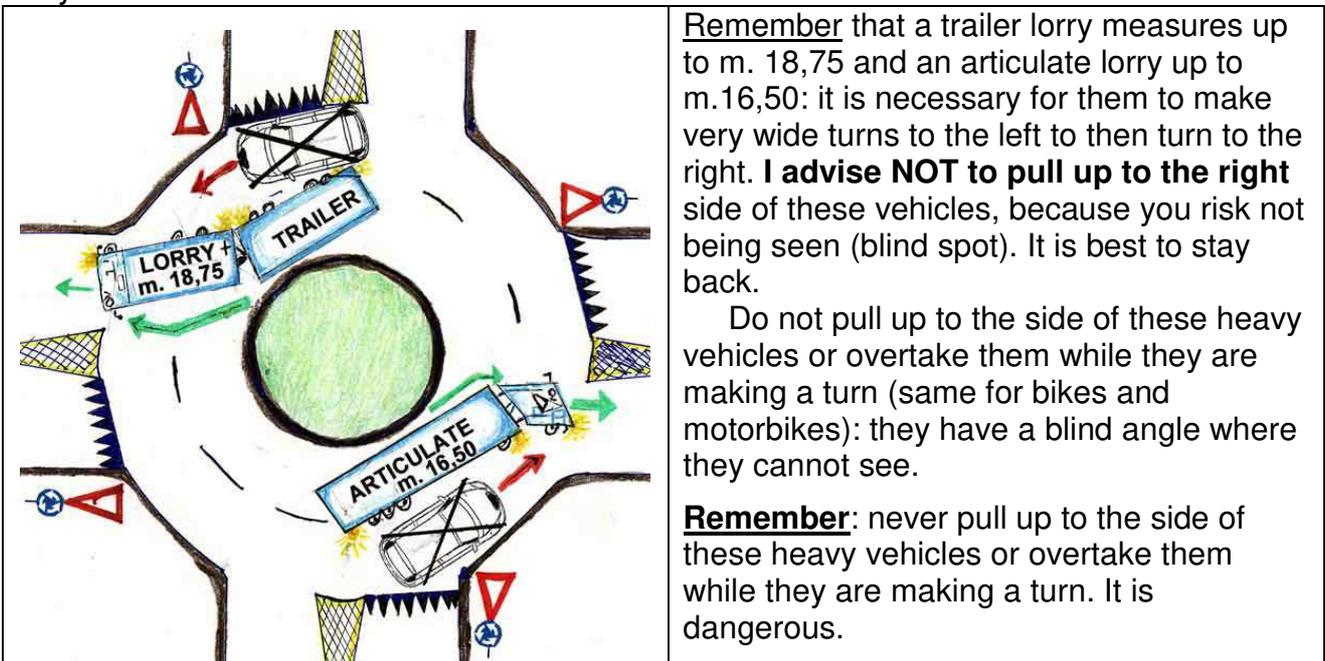
Bikes should not pass on the right or get too close to buses and trucks because they risk not being seen (blind spot) when these try to manoeuvre to the right and can possibly get into an accident.





I suggest that cyclists keep a certain distance from other vehicles when in a lane to avoid dangerous accidents with cars trying to leave the roundabout. It is best to circulate in the centre of the lane.

With this kind of **safety barrier** the cyclist will be more visible; but you should always pay attention to the traffic. One last thing: unfortunately, I've seen many accidents involving bicycles and motor vehicles.



Remember that a trailer lorry measures up to m. 18,75 and an articulate lorry up to m. 16,50: it is necessary for them to make very wide turns to the left to then turn to the right. **I advise NOT to pull up to the right** side of these vehicles, because you risk not being seen (blind spot). It is best to stay back.

Do not pull up to the side of these heavy vehicles or overtake them while they are making a turn (same for bikes and motorbikes): they have a blind angle where they cannot see.

Remember: never pull up to the side of these heavy vehicles or overtake them while they are making a turn. It is dangerous.

I think I've told you everything about me. If you have any doubts or if I have forgotten something, just ask and you will receive an answer. I hope I haven't bored you and I hope I have taught you something and reassured you about driving. Now that we have gotten to know each other it would be nice if you said "Oh, what a beautiful roundabout" when you see me.

For every road user, always remember: moderate your speed, be prudent, calm, indicate your intentions (signal) and keep them.

Have a good trip

Thanks to:
Dr. Esohe Aghatise

Updated: 25 October 2007

Reproduction accepted with indication of source.

