

France and Monaco (Western Europe)



Touring Tips

This information should be read in conjunction with our [general advice for motoring in Europe](#).

Drinking and driving: If the level of alcohol in the bloodstream is 0.05 per cent or more (0.02% for bus/coach drivers), severe penalties include fine, imprisonment and / or confiscation of the driving licence and / or vehicle.

Saliva drug tests will be used to detect drivers under the influence of drugs – severe penalties as above.

Driving licence: Minimum age at which a UK licence holder may drive a temporarily imported car 18, motorcycle (up to 80cc) 16, motorcycle (over 80cc) 18.

Fines: On-the-spot fines or 'deposits' are severe. An official receipt should be issued. Vehicles parking contrary to regulations may be towed away and impounded.

Fuel: Unleaded petrol (95 & 98 octane), diesel (Gazole) and LPG available. No leaded petrol (lead replacement petrol 'Super carburant' available or lead substitute additive). Petrol in a can is permitted but forbidden by ferry operators.

SP95-E10 (Sans Plomb 95 Octane, Ethanol 10% = Lead Free 95 Octane containing 10% of Ethanol) is now being sold throughout France. This fuel is not suitable for use in all cars and you should check compatibility with your vehicle manufacturer before using it. If in doubt use the standard SP95 or SP98 Octane unleaded fuel which continues to be available alongside the new fuel.

Credit cards accepted at most filling stations; check with your card issuer for usage in France & Monaco before travel. There are many automatic petrol pumps operated by credit / debit card however, cards issued in the UK are not always accepted by these pumps.

Lights: Dipped headlights must be used in poor daytime visibility. It is highly recommended by the French Government that 4+-wheeled vehicles use dipped headlights day and night (already compulsory for motorcycles).

Motorcycles: Use of dipped headlights during the day compulsory. The wearing of crash helmets is compulsory for both driver and passenger of any two-wheel motorised vehicle. ([See also compulsory equipment](#))

Motor Insurance: Third-party compulsory.

Passengers/Children in cars: Children under the age of 10 are not allowed to travel on the front seats of vehicles without using a special child restraint, unless there is no rear seat in the vehicle, or the rear seat is already occupied with children under 10, or there are no seat belts.

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Under French law, children up to the age of 10 must travel in an approved child seat or restraint, adapted to their age and size. European regulations classify child restraints in five different groups according to the child's weight.

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| Group 0 < 10 kg | Rear-facing child seat, placed either at the front passenger seat or at the back seat (if placed at the front, the airbag must be switched off). Babies can also travel in a carry cot (this can be placed at the rear seat only). |
| Group 0+ < 13 kg | Child restraints in this category are slightly bigger versions of those in Group 0. They must be installed under the same conditions as those in Group 0. |
| Group 1 9 - 18 kg | Child seat with a harness or a protection tray. |
| Group 2 15 - 25 kg | Booster seat or cushion with an adult seatbelt. |
| Group 3 22 - 36 kg | Booster seat or cushion with an adult seatbelt. |

Taxis are exempt but in other vehicles, a fine is levied if a child is not restrained.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure all passengers under 18 are appropriately restrained.

Seat belts: Compulsory for front/rear seat occupants to wear seat belts, if fitted.

Speed limits: Speed limits are fixed according to the place, the vehicle and the weather. Standard legal limits which may be varied by signs, for private vehicles without trailers. In built-up areas 31 mph (50 km/h), outside built-up areas 55 mph (90 km/h), but 68 mph (110 km/h) on urban motorways and dual carriageways separated by a central reservation and 80 mph (130 km/h) on motorways.

Lower speed limits of 49 mph (80 km/h) outside built-up areas, 62 mph (100 km/h) on dual carriageways and 68 mph (110 km/h) on motorways apply in wet weather and to visiting motorists who have held a driving licence for less than two years. Additionally, speed limits are reduced on stretches of motorways in built up areas. Minimum speed limit on motorways 49mph (80km/h).

Note: Holders of EU driving licences exceeding the speed limit by more than 40 km/h will have their licences confiscated on the spot by the police.

Compulsory equipment in France and Monaco:

- **Warning triangle** - excludes motorcycles
- **Snow chains** - must be fitted to vehicles using snow-covered roads in compliance with the relevant road sign. Maximum speed limit 31 mph (50km/h)
- **Reflective jackets (EN471)** - one reflective jacket which must be kept within the passenger compartment of the vehicle and must be put on before exiting the vehicle in an emergency/breakdown situation. (Motorcyclists see below)

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New regulation – Breathalysers – effective 1st July 2012, sanctioned 1st Nov 2012

As of the 1st July 2012 it will be compulsory for drivers of all motor vehicles including motorcyclists, excluding mopeds to carry a breathalyser in their vehicle while travelling in France. This will not be enforced until the 1st November 2012, where persons failing to produce a breathalyser will receive a fine on the spot of €11.

The breathalyser has to be certified by the French authorities, showing an 'NF' number.

The official text states that one unused certified breathalyser must be produced. We recommend that two single-use breathalysers are carried, so if one is used or damaged you will still have a replacement to produce.

New regulation – motorcycles – effective from 1st January 2013

All drivers and passengers of a motorcycle over 125cc or a motor tricycle over 15 KW/h must wear reflective clothing when riding their vehicles. In the event of an emergency stop, the reflective clothing still needs to be worn.

The 'reflective clothing' must have a minimum reflective surface of 150 sq. cm (approx 23 sq. in.) in total either in one piece or in several pieces, and must be worn in the upper part of the body (between the neck and the waist). A fine will be imposed for non compliance.

Other rules/requirements in France and Monaco:

It is recommended that visitors equip their vehicle with a set of replacement bulbs.

Snow tyres marked M&S are recommended on roads covered with ice or snow. The minimum tread depth is 3.5mm.

In built-up areas give way to traffic coming from the right "priorité a droite".

At signed roundabouts bearing the words "Vous n'avez pas la priorité" or "Cédez le passage" traffic on the roundabout has priority; where no such sign exists traffic entering the roundabout has priority.

Overtaking stationary trams is prohibited when passengers are boarding / alighting.

Parking discs for 'blue zone' parking areas can be obtained from police stations, tourist offices and some shops.

When overtaking a bicycle, drivers must leave a distance of at least 1 m in built-up areas and 1.50 m outside built-up areas between their vehicle and the bicycle.

In built up areas the use of the horn is prohibited except in cases of immediate danger.

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Apparatus with a screen which can distract a driver (such as television, video, DVD equipment) should be positioned in places where the driver is unable to see them. It is prohibited to touch or program the device unless parked in a safe place.

It is absolutely prohibited to carry, transport or use radar detectors. Failure to comply with this regulation involves a fine of up to 1500 Euros and the vehicle and/or device may be confiscated.

As part of the changes to French motoring law, road signs indicating the location of fixed speed cameras are being removed and additional fixed speed cameras added. A GPS based navigation system (Sat Nav) which has maps indicating the location of fixed speed cameras must have the 'fixed speed camera Poi (Points of Interest)' function deactivated, ideally they should be removed. [Read more here](#)

Toll Payments

Sanef France has extended the Liber-t automated French tolls payment service to UK motorists through Sanef Tolling. Sanef Tollings telepage tags enable UK motorists to use the automatic telepage/tag lanes, which have previously been reserved for French residents. Further information can be found at <http://www.saneftolling.co.uk/>

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