Driving in traffic

Practice: How to drive in the traffic

When you are driving in the city, you may end up in heavy traffic. In this lesson, we will give some tips on the things new drivers need to work on to master driving in busy city traffic.
When you are doing a lesson in heavy traffic, you will need to plan the route beforehand rather than making it up as you go along.

(…. And then we turn into Featherstone Street…)

As well as being a good habit to get into, planning your route beforehand means the driver can concentrate on dealing with the traffic and selecting the correct lanes.

(… and I will be keeping my eyes open as well)

Diving in heavy traffic requires a lot of concentration; there are a lot of things to watch out for. You need to be calm and patient. When the traffic is moving slowly and you will to be considerate of other road users. Remember that you will get where you are going in the end.

…a situation:… um oh, so does a little scooter when down on the inside, and one the outside…)
(… looking over your shoulder, checking your mirrors,)
When driving in heavy traffic you need to be constantly aware of the traffic around you is doing – to sides and behind as well as ahead of you.

Keep checking your mirrors, including your inside mirrors, and your blind spot in case people on bicycles or motorcycles comes through on your right or between lanes.

(… and a motor cyclist came between two cars… so did you even see him before he appeared?)

You need to try to predict what other drivers are going to do to give you time to react. Up ahead we can you have got a side street and there is somebody waiting to come out.

In heavy traffic, other drivers will sometimes take smaller gaps, giving you less time to react; or they may make sudden lane changes or turns without signalling correctly.

(… by looking at the other driver you can see that he was really keen to get into the flow of traffic and so it is better that you take defensive action and slow down…)

You can give yourself more time to respond to respond by looking for clues about what other drivers might do. Look at the speed and position of their vehicles. If you can see them, look at the other drivers themselves to see where they looking and to check if they have seen you. Keeping at least a 2-second following distance or 4 seconds in wet weather is vital in heavy traffic.

Nose-to-tail crashes can happen when drivers don't notice quickly enough that the car in front of them as slowed down or stopped. If someone is following too close behind you, increase your following distance to at least 4 seconds. This will allow time for you and the driver behind you to stop safely.

(So you still got that car travelling pretty close…)

Another useful tip for heavy traffic is, when you stop in a queue of traffic, stop in a position where you can see the tyres of the vehicles in front of you. This gives you a safety buffer in case the person behind you does not slow down in time.

Traffic lights are a big part of city driving. Red means stop. Yellow means stop – if you can do so safely.

Even when a traffic light ahead is green, it may turn yellow before you get to it. Adjust your speed and be ready to stop if you need to as you come up to the intersection. As you approach an intersection or pedestrian crossing, make sure that there is enough room for your vehicle on the other side. If there is not enough room, you will have to stop and wait until there is before you enter the intersection even if the traffic light is green.

When turning left at traffic lights, you are allowed to wait in the intersection as long as there are no other cars already waiting in the intersection to turn left and you are not in the way of oncoming traffic. When it is safe, you can complete the turn even the light has turned yellow or red by the time to go.

So those are our tips for driving in heavy traffic. Even you do not live near a major town or city, it is important for learners to get practice in traffic once they have learnt the necessary skills.