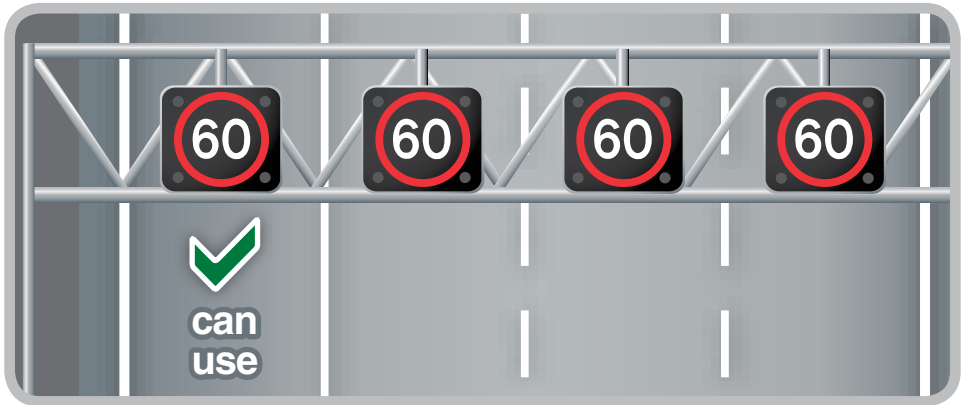


When to use a hard shoulder

Smart motorways



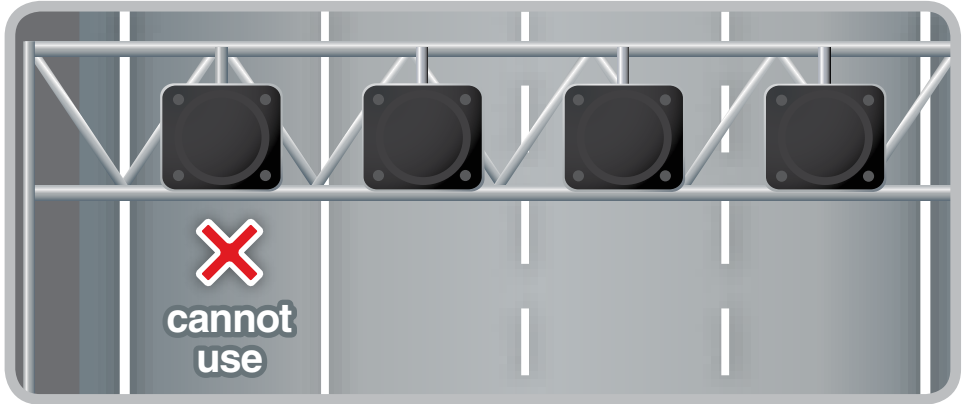
You should only use the hard shoulder as an extra lane when the hard shoulder is clearly signed as open to use



You **can** use the hard shoulder and in this example there is a **60mph** speed limit

- The hard shoulder has a solid white line and is only opened when it is safe to use and clear of obstruction, but drivers need to be aware of breakdowns and stationary vehicles.
- Follow the signs and speed limits; they are there for your safety and the safety of other road users.
- The hard shoulder is opened to provide extra road space at peak times and is an additional motorway lane when active.
- Automatic systems set mandatory speed limits depending on the volume of traffic to avoid stop/start conditions. Speed limits are mandatory and will be enforced by the police.
- If you have a breakdown there are emergency refuge areas (lay-bys), at regular intervals. If you can not reach a refuge area you should attempt to leave the motorway. For more detailed advice and guidance see www.highways.gov.uk/smartmotorways

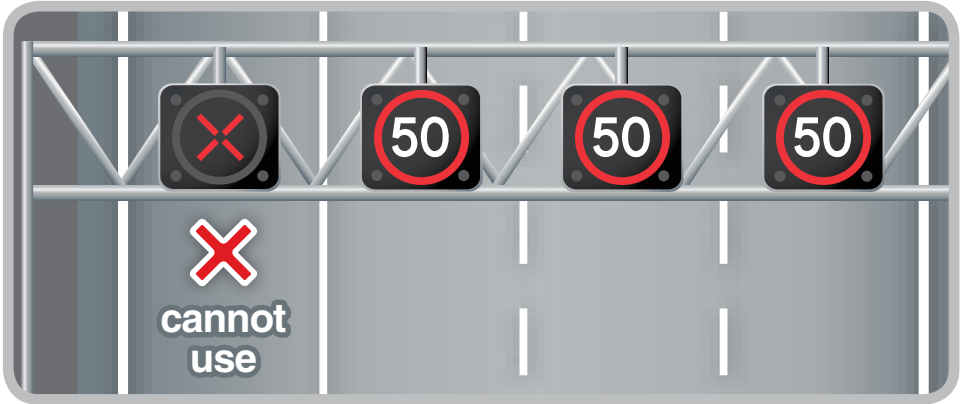
If there is no signal active over the hard shoulder then this means it is not open to traffic



You **cannot** use the hard shoulder and in this example there is a **national** speed limit

- Driving on the hard shoulder when it is not available for use is illegal and unsafe. Highways England only opens the hard shoulder when it is safe to do so.
- You may not be aware but, using the hard shoulder when it is not open to traffic means you are taking a risk and could cause a collision.
- You should only use the hard shoulder if you have an emergency breakdown and are unable to drive off the motorway at the next junction.

A red **X** above the hard shoulder means that it should not be used



You **cannot** use the hard shoulder and in this example there is a **50mph** speed limit

Be aware of the red **X** sign

A red **X** closes a lane of the motorway.

When this signal is above a motorway lane you must not use this lane.

You not only risk prosecution if you continue to drive on a closed motorway lane, but endanger yourself and others.

Highways England will close the hard shoulder to protect vulnerable broken-down vehicles, the emergency services and road workers.



You can find out all about smart motorways, how they work and what to do if you breakdown on our web site

www.highways.gov.uk/smartmotorways