



Priorité à Droite

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This “universal law” of the road was introduced first by Robespierre, then by the famously left-handed Napoleon, but in any case by the French. It was indeed Napoleon who was responsible for imposing the right-hand drive system on all the countries he successfully invaded (so, of course, not including Britain!) and this propagation was then further continued by Hitler, starting in his native Austria, which, until the Anschluss of 1938, had been divided since the Napoleonic conquests into two states: one left-hand driving and one right-hand driving.



This sign is unique to France, introduced in 1946. At the next junction, which is not necessarily a crossroads, priority is to the right (priorité à droite). The sign applies only to the upcoming junction, which will usually be within the next 100 to 150m. At this type of junction there are no road markings and an approaching vehicle must give way to a vehicle on its right. So you must give way to traffic entering ‘your’ road from a minor road on the right. The “priority to the right” rule on the roads of France

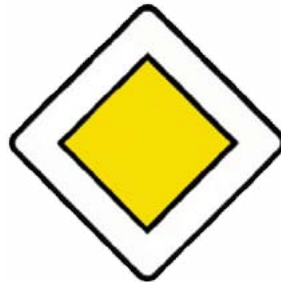
is complicated and misunderstood by many English residents and holiday makers. Every day in France, there are accidents relating to “refusing the priority to the right” *refus de priorité*. If you refuse a priority, you’ll be the person responsible for the accident. This can also result in a fine of 135 €, 90€ if you pay within 3-15 days and rising to 375€ for late payment and the loss of 4 points (the same fines apply for not stopping completely at a Stop Sign). Like it or not, the rule does make drivers slow down at junctions. A simple tip to remember, when you are driving and unsure, slow down, look right, if there is a vehicle coming towards you GIVE WAY!

Other situations where you would apply the priority to the right:

At any form of junction with traffic lights that are not functioning and unless otherwise indicated, you would give way to traffic from the right.

THERE IS NO Priority a Droite on Autoroutes.

So what are the signs with regards to priorité à droite?



On major N roads (national routes) and some D roads (department) The Yellow diamond with a white border will be seen on main roads at the exit from a town, indicating that from here onwards the main road traffic has priority.



This sign with the yellow diamond with a diagonal black line through it will be displayed indicates that you do not have right of way. This sign will often be seen as you enter into a town. From here on, *priorité à droite* applies at all junctions.



This sign indicates the priority only on the next intersection. This is a one-time priority. The use of white posts with a red band. This is only used in rural situations and indicates firstly that there is a turning to your right and that that road does not have the Priority a Droite. At roundabouts *Vous n’avez pas la priorité* is a timely reminder that you do not have priority to enter a roundabout, and must give way to traffic on the roundabout (as in the UK).