

Top 10 Reasons For Failing Your Practical Car Driving Test

1.	Junctions Observation
2.	Left Reverse – Control
3.	Steering
4.	Mirror Changing direction
5.	Reverse Parking – Control
6.	Gears
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8.	Left Reverse – Observation
9.	Move Away Under Control
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Please note that any information shown on this site is subject to alteration and is subject to review on a periodic basis. The top 10 takes into consideration serious and dangerous faults. All information shown on this site is accurate at the time of publication.

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Driving Test Information

Your Driving Test Explained

Eyesight test

At the start of the test the examiner asked you to read a vehicle registration number. If you required glasses or contact lenses, you must wear them whenever you drive. If you had problems with the eyesight test you will need to consult an optician.

Highway Code (Categories F/G/H)

If you didn't need to take a separate Theory Test, for example, to obtain a licence for a tractor or other specialist vehicle, you will have been asked questions on the Highway Code and other related motoring matters. You will have also been asked to identify some traffic signs. If you had difficulty with these questions make sure that you study properly by reading as wide a range of publications as you can find to increase your understanding. If you already took a theory test you will not have been asked Highway Code questions but you should still have a thorough knowledge of it.

Safety Questions

You should be able to show or tell the examiner how to carry out basic safety checks on your vehicle or motorcycle before starting to drive/ride. This may include checks on fluids, lights, audible warning device, tyres, brakes, steering, (chain and emergency stop switch motorcycle only).

Ancillary controls

You should understand the function of all controls and switches, especially those that have a bearing on road safety.

These include:

- indicators,
- lights,
- windscreen wipers,
- demisters,
- heaters

You should be able to find these controls and operate them correctly when necessary, without looking down.

Precautions

Make certain the doors are shut properly. Make sure you always adjust the:

- seat,
- head restraint,
- mirrors,
- seat belt.

It is important that you are comfortable and can reach all the controls. Before you start the engine ensure the handbrake is on and the gear lever or selector is in neutral or park. If you need to restart your engine quickly, for example after a stall, you must make sure that you keep the vehicle under control.

Control

This section covers the use of the accelerator, clutch, gears, footbrake, handbrake steering, and for motorcyclists balance:

- Always try and use the vehicle controls as smoothly as possible. This means less wear and tear on your vehicle and a smoother ride for your passengers. Make proper use of the accelerator and clutch to make a smooth start;
- always depress the clutch just before you stop. Select the correct gear to match the road and traffic conditions. Change gear in good time but not too soon before a hazard;
- do not allow the vehicle to coast, by running on in neutral or putting the clutch pedal down. There should be no need to look down at the gear lever when changing gear;
- use the footbrake smoothly and progressively. Brake in plenty of time for any hazard. Make full use of the handbrake whenever it would help you to prevent the car rolling backwards or forwards if you have stopped;
- avoid harsh steering, or steering too early or too late as it may cause you to hit the kerb or swing out towards another road user;
- if you are riding a motorcycle slowly, maintain a straight line and do not allow the machine to wobble towards other vehicles.

Moving away

The examiner will have asked you to move off safely and under control on the level, from behind a parked vehicle and if practicable on a hill. Remember always to use your mirrors, and signal if necessary. Just before moving away, check that it is safe by looking round for traffic and pedestrians in your blind spots. Move off in a controlled way making balanced use of accelerator, clutch and brakes, and steer safely. Make sure you are in the correct gear. Do not allow the vehicle to roll back.

Emergency stop

If you have to brake in an emergency remember to brake evenly and progressively and try to avoid locking the wheels. Remember that in wet weather it can take twice as long to stop safely. If you are riding a motorcycle you must make correct use of the front and rear brakes to make sure that you stop the machine as quickly as possible.

Reverse to the left or right

Whenever you are reversing a vehicle you must take good, effective, all-round observation and show consideration to other road users. You will need to control your speed. Steer a course reasonably close to the kerb. Remember that your vehicle will swing out as you turn the corner. Avoid hitting or mounting the kerb, or steering too wide.

Turn in the road / Motorcycle 'U' turn

Whenever you are turning your vehicle you must take good, effective, all-round observation and show consideration to other road users. Control your vehicle smoothly. Do not let the vehicle mount the pavement. Try not to touch the kerbs as this could damage your vehicle and endanger other road users and pedestrians.

Reverse parking

Whilst parking your vehicle you must take good, effective, all-round observation and show consideration to other road users. Control your vehicle smoothly making proper use of the clutch, accelerator, brakes and steering. Remember, as you steer your vehicle into the parking space, the front of the car will swing out. Keep a special look out for cyclists and pedestrians who may pass close to the front of your vehicle.

Use of mirrors/rear observation

You should use your mirrors often, including exterior mirrors where necessary, and always be aware of what may be in your blind spots. Just looking is not enough. You must know what is happening all around you and act sensibly and safely on what you see. You must always check carefully before:

- signalling;
- changing direction;
- changing speed.

Use the Mirror Signal Manoeuvre (MSM) routine. Do not signal or act without first using the mirrors. Rear observation for motorcyclists is a combination of mirror checks and looking to the rear (Lifesaver glance).

Give appropriate signals

You must signal clearly to let others know what you intend to do:

- only using signals shown in the Highway Code;
- if it would help other road users, including pedestrians;
- in plenty of time.

Other road users need to see and understand what you intend to do so that they can react safely. Your signals, or lack of signals, must not mislead others. Always ensure that the signal has been cancelled after the manoeuvre has been completed. Do not beckon to pedestrians to cross the road; you could put them in danger from other vehicles.

Response to signs and signals

You should understand and be able to react to all traffic signs and road markings. You must act correctly at traffic lights, and check that the road is clear before proceeding when the green light shows. Obey signals given by police officers, traffic wardens and school crossing patrols. Look out for signals given by other road users, including people in charge of animals, and be ready to act accordingly.

Use of speed

You should make safe, reasonable progress along the road bearing in mind the road, traffic and weather conditions and the road signs and speed limits. Make sure you can stop safely, well within the distance you can see to be clear. Do not speed. Remember that as a new driver you will lose your licence if during the first 2 years after passing your test you get six or more penalty points, and you will have to retake both your theory and practical test.

Following behind at a safe distance

Always keep a safe distance between yourself and other vehicles. Remember, on wet or slippery roads it takes much longer to stop. When you stop in traffic queues leave sufficient space to pull out if the vehicle in front has problems.

Maintain progress

In order to pass your test you must show that you can drive at a realistic speed appropriate to the road and traffic conditions. You should be able to choose the correct speed for type of road, type and density of traffic, weather and visibility. You should approach all hazards at a safe speed, without being over cautious or interfering with the progress of other traffic. Always be ready to move away from

junctions as soon as it is safe and correct to do so. Driving excessively slowly can create dangers for yourself and other drivers.

Junctions (including roundabouts)

You should be able to judge the correct speed of approach so that you can enter a junction safely and stop if necessary. Position your vehicle correctly. Use the correct lane. If you are turning right, keep as near to the centre of the road as is safe. Avoid cutting the corner when turning right. If turning left, keep over to the left and do not swing out. Watch out for cyclists and motorcyclists coming up on your left and pedestrians who are crossing. You must take effective observation before moving into a junction and make sure it is safe before proceeding.

Judgement when overtaking, meeting oncoming traffic, turning across traffic

Only overtake when it is safe to do so. Allow enough room when you are overtaking another vehicle. Cyclists and motorcyclists need at least as much space as other vehicles. They can wobble or swerve suddenly. Do not cut in too quickly after overtaking. Take care when the width of the road is restricted or when the road narrows. If there is an obstruction on your side or not enough room for two vehicles to pass safely, be prepared to wait and let the approaching vehicles through. When you turn right across the path of an approaching vehicle, make sure you can do so safely. Other vehicles should not have to stop, slow down or swerve to allow you to complete your turn.

Positioning

You should position the vehicle correctly, normally, well to the left. Keep clear of parked vehicles and position correctly for the direction that you intend to take. Where lanes are marked, keep to the middle of the lane and avoid straddling the lane markings. Do not change lanes unnecessarily.

Clearance to stationary vehicles and obstructions

Allow plenty of room to pass stationary vehicles and be prepared to slow down or stop. A door may open, a child may run out or a vehicle may pull out without warning. Keep a safe distance from builder's skips or other large obstructions, as you may not be able to see pedestrians or workers close to the obstruction.

Pedestrian crossings

You should be able to recognise the different types of pedestrian crossing and show courtesy and consideration towards pedestrians. At all crossings you should slow down and stop if there is anyone on the crossing. At zebra crossings you should slow down and be prepared to stop if there is anyone waiting to cross. Give way to

any pedestrian on a pelican crossing when the amber lights are flashing. You should give way to cyclists and pedestrians on a toucan crossing.

Position for normal stops

Choose a safe, legal and convenient place to stop, close to the edge of the road, where you will not cause an obstruction and create a hazard. You should know how and where to stop without causing danger to other road users.

Awareness and planning

You must be aware of other road users at all times. You should always think and plan ahead so that you can:

- judge what other road users are going to do;
- predict how their actions will affect you;
- react in good time.

Take particular care to consider the actions of the more vulnerable groups of road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. Anticipate road and traffic conditions, and act in good time, rather than reacting to them at the last moment.