

Brighteye Driving School



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Observation

At the beginning of your test the testing office will put a mirror to the inside of your windscreen. The testing officer will use this mirror to check your observation skills.

There are three important parts of observation that are vital for passing a driving test, they are:

Searching-you must know how to search correctly

Mirror use- You must know when to use your mirrors.

Head Searching- You must know when to head search

Searching

Searching is using your eyes to scan the road in a way to enable you to anticipate potential hazard situations. It is important to remember the testing officer will use their mirror to check your eye movement throughout the test.

Before passing through any intersection, you must check both sides before proceeding through.

If the intersection is controlled by lights you are still required to check both directions before proceeding through the intersection.

Before passing any side roads to the left or right, you must check them.

Drivers often forget to search intersections when they have been asked to change lanes, this is because they become focused on looking for a gap in traffic. Remember when instructed to change lanes keep searching the intersections as well as looking for a gap in traffic.

If you are turning right or waiting to turn right at traffic lights or crossroads look right and straight ahead but remember to look to the left before you proceed with the turn.

Scan left and right when passing through:

Shopping areas, Pedestrian crossing, railway crossing.

Before turning left check the right and centre of the intersection before you make the turn.

Search as you approach parked cars, look for little children, hidden by a car who may run out in front of you.

And finally, when practising your observation skills, scan the road at least 12 seconds ahead.

The further you scan ahead the more time you will have to plan the correct course of action.

Remember

It is important that you look from side to side, scanning for possible hazards.

Search in this manner throughout your driving test, especially in the above areas as this will reassure the testing officer that you know how to search correctly.

Mirror use

There is a very important aspect of mirror use that you must be aware of. **You must use your mirrors.**

To check the traffic behind you before and after turning. This is required every time when making a left or right turn.

Using mirrors before turning enables you to observe traffic about to overtake you. It also improves reaction time.

Remember:

Use your mirrors before and after turning. That is what the testing officer is looking for.

Also use your mirrors before and after leaving the kerb

Before and after changing lanes.

Before and after merging.

Check mirrors before a lateral movement within a lane marked or unmarked of at least a car width.

Check mirrors every 5 to 10 seconds when driving straight

Check your mirrors before braking

Check your mirrors before returning to the kerb.

Head Searching

Head searching is physically looking over your shoulder to check the blind spots. These are the areas not covered by your mirrors. Your forward vision, rear vision, outside mirrors cover almost everything, but when it comes to safety almost is not good enough. A head search will take the rest into account.

You must head search in the direction you intend moving towards.

If you intend moving to the left, you must look over your left shoulder before moving across.

If you intend moving towards the right, you must look over your right shoulder before moving across.

You must head search over your shoulder before leaving the kerb:

indicate, check mirrors, until you find a suitable gap, head search, move off when safe, check mirrors again after leaving the kerb.

You must head search over your shoulder before changing lanes:

indicate, check mirrors, until you find a suitable gap, head search, change lanes when safe, check mirrors again after changing lanes.

You must head search for cyclists before turning across cycle lanes, especially if you are moving slowly in your lane or waiting at lights.

Also head search for cyclists before opening the doors of your vehicle.

You must head search over the shoulder before merging with other traffic.

Be aware merging lanes are in a variety of situations, for example:

After exiting an intersection when travelling straight or turning at intersections.

After exiting around a bout

Merging lanes are also located when exiting from a centre island.

At the end of passing lanes.

Or when entering a motorway.

Finally, when appropriate you must head search before returning to the kerb. For example, when you suspect traffic may exit alongside you or after moving slowly in your lane.

As a rule, to remember

Head check

Merging this includes at double roundabout

Entering the flush median for a right turn

Crossing a cycle lane for a left turn

Leaving and returning to the kerb

Reversing for your parallel park

Giving way

The T intersection

Give way before turning right from a road that ends at a **T intersection**, weather controlled by a give way, a stop signs or uncontrolled.

Give way to all continuing through traffic from the left or right.

As well as those who are turning right into your road.

This rule also applies when exiting public car parks such as, Service Stations, Supermarkets, Airports Hospitals

Before turning right off the continuing road give way to traffic in the oncoming position traveling straight, ... or turning left.

If two lanes are present both right and left turning traffic can proceed at the same time and must turn into their nearest lane.

The cross-road intersection controlled by give way or stop signs.

Before travelling straight at a crossroad intersection leaving a give way or stop sign, give way to all traffic ...approaching from the right and left who are travelling straight, ... or turning right, and those approaching from the left turning left.

Turning right at a cross road intersection

Before turning right at a crossroad intersection which has the same control on either side, you must give way to all traffic:

...Approaching from the right and left who are travelling straight.

...Or turning right

...Also, traffic in the oncoming position travelling straight.

...Or turning left.

The uncontrolled crossroad intersection

This also applies to: Service Stations, Supermarkets, Airports, and Hospitals.

Before proceeding straight ahead at an uncontrolled crossroad intersection give way to all traffic continuing straight from the right.

Turning left at an uncontrolled cross intersection give way to all traffic continuing straight through from the right.

Turning right at an uncontrolled cross Road Intersection give way to:

...all traffic continuing straight through from the right and left

...those approaching from the right who intend turning right,

...and traffic in the oncoming position travelling straight,

...or turning left.

Failing to give way

Failing to give way is when you impede traffic flow. **This means you are forcing traffic to slow down or alter course to avoid you.**

It also means stopping traffic that has the right of way from being able to proceed

The two main causes for failing to give way: These are poor gap selection and slow acceleration.

Poor gap selection

When selecting a gap in traffic, study the movement of the traffic thoroughly before you commit. Ask yourself whether you will disturb traffic or not

If you think you will disturb traffic flow, stay where you are. If you are confident you will not, then proceed.

Slow acceleration

The slower you accelerate, the more you increase your chances of disturbing the traffic flow.

If you have misjudged when selecting a gap you have two options to avoid affecting traffic flow.

These are: Speed up or pull over:

Remember

Concentrate on how your driving is affecting traffic flow always

Try to select a suitable gap in traffic before moving in.

If you have misjudged, get up to the correct speed quickly or pull over to avoid affecting traffic flow using indicators to reassure others of your intent.

If you can't see move into the cycle lane (if no cyclist is using it)

Flush Medians

A flush median is a road marking, it is designed to keep you out of traffic flow when turning and maintain traffic flow.

There are two ways to use the flush median

When turning right from an intersection and the traffic is busy both ways, observe a suitable gap and pull out into the flush median, and wait there until it is safe to merge into traffic.

When turning right into an intersection move into a flush median early (within 20 meters) allowing plenty of time to reduce speed before turning right, this helps traffic behind to continue

Common flush median faults in driving tests

When turning right into the flush median, instead of reducing speed on the flush median the driver reduces speed in front of traffic and enters the flush median late just before turning right.

Traffic behind is affected and this will earn you a fault.

Remember

When possible enter the flush median early to help traffic flow smoothly

Before you enter the flush median watch for:

Other vehicles on the flush median

Pedestrians

Cyclists

Raised islands

And finally

Do not use the flush median as a lane for overtaking vehicle.

Turning Bays

Turning bays are designed to keep you out of the traffic flow when turning right and to maintain traffic flow.

They come in a variety of designs.

They can be right turning with diagonal lines, left lane with an arrow, right turning incorporated with a flush median, right turning bay situated in part of the island in the centre of the road.

No matter how different they look, there is only one correct way to enter the turning bay and that is: **enter them early**

If you do happen to go into the turning bay late look over your shoulder for traffic beside you before you move across, your testing officer could award you with a fault for not checking your blind spot.

Speed control

Assume the compulsory speed limit is **50kmh**.

If it is safe to do so you are expected to keep the vehicle at or near 50kph

This means that you should travel at a speed appropriate for the situation but do not exceed the speed limit.

If you exceed the speed by **5 kph** whilst under assessment your test will be terminated.

If you over emphasise safety by traveling more than **5 kph** under the speed limit when unnecessary you may cause other road users to become impatient with you.

They may take an unnecessary risk to pass you.

This style of driving can lead to faults building up against you which could lead to a failed test.

Do not use erratic speed control during your test (for example, frequently speeding up and down unnecessarily) This will earn faults against you.

Be aware of compulsory speed signs located at road works or schools.

Finally, be aware of school busses picking up or dropping off passengers, slow down to **20kph** or less no matter what direction you are coming from, this also applies to Accident, Breakdown, Fire and Emergency Services.

Accelerating too Slowly

Try to build your speed up from a stationary position reasonably quickly so you are not unnecessarily affecting the flow of traffic.

Roundabouts

The purpose of a roundabout is to stop traffic build up, increase traffic flow and to keep traffic moving. When used correctly they perform this function very well.

The great thing about a roundabout is you only give way to traffic approaching from the right. This makes it easy to manoeuvre through an intersection.

To keep traffic moving at the roundabout you need to do two things:

Anticipate on the way into the roundabout by judging distance from the right.

Reassure on the way out of the roundabout by providing a **left signal known as the exit signal**, this will give oncoming traffic the confidence to move in.

Remember:

Traveling left indicate left,

Traveling straight don't indicate until the exit before you leave (approximately half way through) then indicate left to give notice of your intention to leave.

Traveling right indicate right until the last exit then indicate left to give notice of your intention to leave the roundabout.

Do not drive over prohibited parts of the roundabout or your test will be terminated.

Do not use the incorrect lane or your test will be terminated.

To select the correct lane at a roundabout, unless directed otherwise:

Always use the right lane for turning right or commencing a U-turn.

Always use the left lane for turning left.

The straight-ahead lane can alternate between left or right or at times be located in both. Follow the direction arrows on the road. They will indicate lanes allocated for going straight, keep a look out for them.

Five common roundabout faults in driving tests

Fault 1 Stopping unnecessarily

A roundabout is not a stop sign. You do not have to stop unnecessarily.

Fault 2 giving a false impression.

If turning right indicate right but indicate left at the last exit to leave.

Fault 3 Failing to give way.

Do not underestimate the speed of the car approaching from the right.

Fault 4 Driving over restricted or prohibited parts of the roundabout.

The outer part of the roundabout is intended for use of only heavy vehicles, using this will earn you a fault.

If you drive over the part of the roundabout not intended to be driven on your test will be terminated.

Fault 5 Using the wrong lane will result in your test being terminated.

Turning into the nearest lane

The law states that you must turn into the nearest lane to you: this helps reduce traffic build up.

If you turn into the wrong lane in your test you will earn a fault.

If you turn into the wrong lane and disturb traffic proceeding into their nearest lane your test will be terminated.

Stop Signs

You must STOP at a stop sign! What could be simpler than that?

The only reason this is here is people often fail their driving test for getting this wrong. Strange but true.

Come to a complete halt before proceeding.

If your vision is blocked at the STOP sign by parked cars, make sure you come to a complete stop before you move forward to obtain a better vision.

Positioning

Committing inside intersections: This is the term for moving into the middle of an intersection in anticipation to turn right, the driver waits for a suitable gap, make sure that before you commit inside the intersection you will be able to exit.

Remember if the lights are green and the intersection and exit are clear, then proceed to commit inside the intersection.

If the exit of the intersection is blocked, stay behind the lines.

If there is a car already committed inside the intersection, stay behind the lines.

If you move into an intersection when your exit is blocked and the lights turn red, and the exit is still blocked your test can be terminated

If you commit to an intersection and the exit is clear, then the lights turn red, you are permitted to continue with the manoeuvre when it is safe to do so.

If you are waiting behind the lines at traffic lights and you move into the intersection on the amber light your test will be terminated.

Remember Commit inside the intersection only if:

- ...the lights are green
- ... the intersection is clear
- ...the exit is clear.

Another thing to consider when committing to an intersection;

Try to place your vehicle in a position which enables good visibility past oncoming right turning traffic, and at the same time does not interfere with oncoming straight through traffic.

Positioning correctly before and after turning

Do not cut across the give way lines

...Do not turn left or right from the centre position at the intersection.

...Position to the left before turning left,

...Position to the right when traveling straight and turning right.

This helps to reduce traffic build up and its far more considerate.

When turning left are you allowed to position the vehicle over a solid white line or cycle lane before the turn?

YES: as long as there is no disturbance to road users using white lines or cycle lanes.

Bus lanes for up to 50 meters before turning is acceptable.

Crossing the no passing lines: your test will be terminated

Consider how your positioning is affecting traffic flow at all times and most importantly: do not cut corners.

Important Safety Tip

It is common in a driving test to be asked to pull over and stop on an expressway, and to be asked to carry out a specific manoeuvre such as a U turn or to merge back into the traffic flow, if you are asked to pull over try to position vehicle as far to the left as possible.

If you stop too close to the white line, you are also close to the path of fast moving traffic.

This is a dangerous place for you. This position leaves very little room for error, You are defiantly in harm's way.

The further you are from that white line, the safer you will be.

The two and four second rule

This rule will ensure you are following other vehicles at the correct distance no matter what speed you are travelling at. Following too closely during a driving test will earn you faults or worse, the testing officer could be encouraged to take control of the vehicle to prevent a possible collision and if that happens your test will be terminated. **So, remember keep your distance**

The correct timing is two seconds in normal conditions

And four seconds if the road is wet, slippery or you are towing a trailer.

How to ensure you are following the two second rule.

The correct timing is two seconds in normal conditions.

Watch the vehicle in front of you pass a landmark such as a tree or pole.

As soon as it has passed that landmark start counting

"One thousand and one; one thousand and two..."

As you finish those eight words you should begin to pass the same landmark.

If you have passed the landmark and you are still counting, then you are too close.

Reduce your speed and repeat the process until the following distance is correct.

Manoeuvres

We often find that when people are asked to perform a specific manoeuvre on their driving test like a three-point turn or a parallel park, they become anxious and mistakes are made unnecessarily. Remember: stay calm and concentrate because there are many areas where points can build up against you.

Let's say the testing officer asks you to stop besides a parked car and perform a parallel park. For one reason or another you panic, perhaps worrying about getting all the angles right; suddenly your concentration is affected, and you forget the simple things.

...You forget to indicate as you pull over. FAULT

...You forget to look in the mirror before pulling over. FAULT

...No indication to stay left or to reverse. FAULT

...Forgetting to look over your left and right shoulder to check blind spots including looking out the rear window before, before reversing. FAULT

OK. The actual park was good, but because of loss of concentration faults have been awarded against you.

Now you forget the head search before leaving the kerb. FAULT

Finally, not checking mirrors after leaving the kerb. FAULT

So, what's the conclusion here? Well you performed the parallel park well enough, but you forgot the basics-indication, mirrors, and head-searching! Most likely it could be a failed test.

Let's look at it the correct way.

You're pulling over to the left, therefore indicate to reassure others of your intentions. Check mirrors before pulling in.

When stopping next to the car leave the indicators on. You then check the mirrors to find a suitable gap.

...then perform a head-search over your left and right shoulders to check blind spots.

Just before reversing look directly out the rear window of the vehicle. When clear and safe proceed with the park.

Do not reverse more than 7 meters behind the vehicle in front of you. You must finish with the vehicle parallel to and within 300mm of the kerb.

Also, the rear wheels of the vehicle in front must be visible. **If traffic conditions allow you must finish the parallel park manoeuvre to this point within 2 minutes.**

Pulling out of a parallel parking space

Now before moving off if you are required to reverse your vehicle look over your right and left shoulder and directly out the rear window before reversing.

Don't forget to indicate, check the mirrors, then head-search to check blind spots before leaving the kerb.

And finally, check mirrors again before leaving the kerb.

Getting the parallel angles right.

When you pull over to stop next to a vehicle try to stop about half a meter apart. Make sure the back of both cars are in line with each other.

Now bring the front of the car out to the 1-2 o'clock position and straighten the front wheels just before you stop.

Reverse the vehicle straight back until the front of your car is in line with the back right corner of the parked car.

At this point if required adjust your left mirror down. This allows sight of the kerb, enabling correct timing for the next turn.

Now bring the front of the car in towards the kerb and its done.

Don't forget to reposition the mirror before moving off.

The 3- point turn

If conditions allow this manoeuvre must be completed within 2 minutes

You have been asked to do a 3-point turn. Indicate...

Check the mirrors.

And pull over to the side of the road when safe. Make sure the vehicle is parallel and within 300mm of the kerb when stopped.

Before moving off, indicate your intentions by signalling right. This is the only signal required for the 3-point turn.

Check the mirrors

And head- search to check blind spots before moving.

Now remember you will need a bit more time for this one.

OK it's all clear. Do the 1st part of the turn.

Do not allow the tyres to touch the kerb.

Before reversing. Check mirrors and head – search both directions.

As well as checking the rear window.

You are essentially in both lanes of traffic. If at this stage you have vehicles approaching, allow them to continue; it is Ok to gesture to the approaching driver to proceed around you by waving them on.

If they choose to wait for you, then proceed with the manoeuvre.

Now you reverse the vehicle and stop. Again, do not allow the tyres to touch the kerb.

You now check over your left and right shoulder again just before you drive off.

Finally, check the mirrors again just after you straighten up...A perfect 3-point turn.

Pedestrian crossings

You must give way to pedestrians and to riders of wheeled recreational vehicles that proceed onto the crossing from either side, the only exception to this is when the crossing is divided by a raised traffic island.

Vehicles must give way to both sides of crossing

If raised island only give way to your side of crossing

Driver must not enter crossing if exit is blocked by stationary traffic.

Before turning left or right at traffic lights give way to both sides of road. Unless there are raised traffic island in which case give way to your side only.

Drivers must give way before entering or exiting a driveway.

If pedestrians are making their way across intersections without pedestrian crossings allow them to continue.

Best of luck for your test.

Sheryl, Debbie and Mark

Critical Errors Fail to look, too fast, Too slow, fail to signal, road position, blocking a pedestrian crossing, incomplete stop, mounting a kerb stalling a vehicle, other illegal action.

Immediate fail Fail to carry out an instruction, testing officer intervention, stops in dangerous position, fail to give way, fail to stop, excessive speed, collision, other dangerous action.