



DRIVING
TEST
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A Guide to the Driving Test Summary





This summary is only an interpretation of the Roads and Maritime Services' (RMS) 'A Guide to the Driving Test' which itself is only an interpretation of the law made easy to understand by using plain English.

Relevant laws change frequently so make sure you have the [most recent handbook](#) when preparing for your test.

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1. THE DRIVING TEST

The way the test works

During the driving test an officer will direct you through a set course of 25 zones, and record your performance on a score sheet. Your score is based on your performance in a range of situations and your ability to demonstrate low risk behaviours. You are assessed against 5 key performance areas:

- Speed management (S)
- Road positioning (P)
- Decision making (D)
- Responding to hazards (H)
- Vehicle control (C)

High risk driving behaviour (breaking a road rule or following too closely) will result in a fail regardless of your score. To pass you must achieve at least 90% with no fail items.





2. BEFORE YOU START

Bribing people is against the law

It is illegal to attempt to bribe someone to get a licence. The penalties include fines and imprisonment. Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) sets the licence fees and charges you have to pay - do not pay more or offer to pay more.

A completed logbook

Before you can take a driving test you must have:

- The required hours recorded in your logbook
- 'The Declaration of Completion' in your logbook signed by a supervising driver

Taking the test

Someone who can provide transport must accompany you to your test, as you will not be able to drive by yourself if you fail. Arrive on time with your logbook and confirmation slip. The testing officer will ask you to sign the score sheet. Remember to ask any questions before you start – you cannot be coached during the test.

A monitoring officer may sit in on your test to make sure it is conducted properly. Nobody else is allowed to be in the vehicle during the test.

Relax. You are not expected to drive as skilfully as an experienced driver.

If you want, the testing officer will provide general comments (not on specific situations) reviewing your performance. If you fail, you will receive a record that shows areas for improvement and must wait at least a week before reattempting.

Your car must be roadworthy and ready to drive

Before the test the testing officer will check to ensure your car is safe to use.

Why a test can be cancelled

If there is any suspicion you are under the influence of drugs, the test will be cancelled and the booking fee will not be refunded. If you offer a bribe the test will be stopped and you may be taken to the police and charged.





3. LOW RISK DRIVING

The test assesses low risk driving skills in speed management, road positioning, and decision-making and your ability to perceive and respond to hazards.

Observation

The testing officer will assess your observation techniques. As this is essential to low-risk driving, poor observation will result in failure.

Scanning

Low-risk driving involves keeping your eyes moving from area to area to effectively observe traffic. Turn your head and look through corners to the road ahead. Slow down if vision is limited. You must check your rear vision mirror before you slow down or change direction and are expected to check regularly to see behind you.

When scanning look:

- In the distance
- At the road surface
- To the left and right
- In your mirrors
- At the instruments and gauges

Before going through traffic lights, turn your head and check there are no vehicles running the red light, or pedestrians crossing against the 'don't walk' sign. The same check must be done for oncoming trains at a railway level crossing.

Checking blind spots

Many crashes occur because drivers don't perform head checks and frequently failing to do so in your test will result in failure. Check blind spots before changing your road position and do not drive in the blind spot of other vehicles.

You must head check your blind spots before:

- Changing lanes
- Leaving or returning to the kerb
- Merging or diverging
- Reversing – for vehicles and pedestrians that may not be visible in your mirror
- Turning left – looking for pedestrians, bicycles and motorcycles that could be beside you in your blind spot
- Turning right – looking for vehicles that may be overtaking you
- Joining the traffic stream
- Leaving the inside lane of a multi-lane roundabout

Observation errors are recorded on your score sheet as a circle around 'D' (decision) and an 'H' in the notes column.





Speed management

You must manage your speed to suit traffic, weather and road conditions.

Maintain space to the front

You must adjust your speed to maintain crash avoidance space to the front of your car (minimum safe distance = 3 seconds). This must be increased in poor conditions.

When you change lanes or a vehicle moves into your 3-second gap, you are expected to drop back to maintain a safe distance.

Maintain space when stopped

You must keep 1-2 car lengths from the vehicle in front when stopped to reduce the risk of colliding with it if hit from behind. You can move to within 1 metre when the vehicles behind you are stopped and the risk of being hit from behind is reduced.

You must completely stop as close as possible before the stop line at a stop sign.

Reduce speed

You must slow down if you do not have a clear view 5 seconds ahead (blind corners, blocked intersections, crests, and poor weather). You must slow down where space to the side of your vehicle is limited. For traffic-calming devices (speed humps or chicanes) slow down to ensure you do not experience an excessive jolt or sideways roll.

Road positioning

Buffering

Buffering is keeping as much space as practical to the sides of your vehicle (at least 1 metre from other vehicles and hazards). You must allow space for parked cars to open doors. You are expected to change position to maintain this space and if you can't, you must slow down. On crests and curves, slow down and move away from oncoming traffic (at least 1 metre from the centreline). Avoid driving in the blind spot or high-risk area (directly beside) of other vehicles.

You will fail if you unnecessarily drive on the wrong side of the road, or unnecessarily cross any edge lines or lane markings.

Turns at intersections

When turning left on unmarked roads you must approach as far left as practical. On laned roads, you must approach in the left lane or left turn lane. You should exit a left turn into the lane that is best for the traffic conditions (dependent on where you are going next, parked cars in the left lane, or if outside lanes are for overtaking). When there are multiple turning lanes, you must finish in an allowed lane or you will fail.

When turning right on unmarked roads you must keep as close as practical to the centre. On laned roads you must approach in the right lane or right turn lane. In marked lanes you must stay in the same lane as you turn. You must keep your steering wheel





straight while waiting to turn right. This protects you from being pushed into oncoming traffic if hit from behind. When turning right, steer to the right of an imaginary centre of the intersection to allow vehicles opposite to turn right at the same time. When turning right into a one-way street, approach and exit as close as possible to the right side of the road.

On multi-laned roundabouts, position your vehicle according to the road markings and exit in an allowed lane. When approaching a roundabout, give way to any vehicles already in the roundabout. When exiting a roundabout you must signal left when practical. Check your blind spot before crossing lanes within and exiting a roundabout.

Manoeuvres

In the test you will be asked to do a number of manoeuvres selected from:

- A kerb side stop
- A hill start
- A three-point turn
- Parking (reverse parallel, 90° or 45°, front or rear to kerb)

During the manoeuvres you will be assessed on your ability to position your vehicle legally, safely and accurately. You must:

- Park as near as practical to the kerb (less than 50cm from the kerb)
- Not touch the kerb with your wheels
- Be between 1-2 metres away from other vehicles
- Reverse only as far as you need (if you reverse more than 7 metres from the rear of the vehicle you are parking behind, you will fail)
- Park as close as practical to the required angle and within any marked lines
- Use a maximum of 4 direction changes for all parking manoeuvres
- Check left and right for traffic before each movement during the three-point turn
- Use a maximum of 5 direction changes in a three-point turn. If it is possible turn around in 3 direction changes, this will be the expectation
- Not mount the kerb
- Signal for at least 5 seconds before leaving the kerb or a parked position

Observation checks during manoeuvres

During manoeuvres you must check for other vehicles, pedestrians and possible hazards. You must head check your blind spot before you:

- Move to the kerb to commence the manoeuvre
- Leave the kerb to rejoin the traffic
- Steer, if the front of your vehicle will swing into the lane during reversing

While reversing you must check the mirrors and through the rear and side windows in the direction of travel. Although you may use reversing cameras and sensors, you must still check mirrors and around your vehicle. Any park assist devices must be switched off for the reversing manoeuvres.





Decision-making

Affecting the crash avoidance space of others

The testing officer will be checking that you only choose safe gaps and are not affecting the crash avoidance space of other drivers (they should not be forced to change speed or position).

When turning across traffic you should be clear of the intersection by at least 3 seconds before approaching vehicles arrive. When joining traffic you should reach the traffic speed before the approaching vehicles are within 3 seconds of your car.

You will be expected to demonstrate smooth, flowing decision-making. You may fail if you reject safe gaps or unduly stop when it is clearly safe to proceed.

When approaching traffic lights that are green, check your mirrors and be prepared to stop. You must stop at a yellow light, unless sudden braking might cause a crash.

Situations with limited vision

At intersections where your vision is affected by other vehicles, trees or buildings you must demonstrate caution. You may fail if you proceed without due care.

After stopping at a 'stop line' you may move into an intersection to improve your vision, provided it is safe and doesn't affect other road users.

Responding to hazards

You will be assessed on your ability to recognise and appropriately respond to hazards.

Hazard and response

If, as you scan the traffic environment, you believe something could possibly enter your crash avoidance space you should respond by:

- 'Setting up' or covering the brakes
- Easing off the accelerator
- Reducing speed
- Creating a 'buffer' from the hazard by changing your road position or lane

You should respond before reaching hazards like:

- A vehicle that could enter your crash avoidance space
- A vehicle waiting to turn in front of your path
- A vehicle waiting to pull out from the left or right side
- Stopped traffic obscuring vision at an intersection





4. VEHICLE CONTROL

Operating the controls

You must be confident using all of the controls and be able to operate them without distraction. Some of the driving tasks that the testing officer will observe and record:

- Adjust the driver's seat posture and steering column (if adjustable) to ensure you have good control of the vehicle
- Operate accelerator and brakes smoothly when accelerating and decelerating (any harsh accelerating or braking will affect your score)
- Coordinate clutch and gear lever to make smooth changes
- Select appropriate gear for the situation
- Avoid over-revving on take off and gear changes
- Seat belt is correctly fastened, fitted and adjusted (low, flat and firm)
- Apply a brake when starting the vehicle
- Prevent rolling back when starting on hills
- Use park brake correctly when preparing to secure the vehicle and ensure it is fully released when driving
- Steer with both hands on the steering wheel (except when using another control), using either 'hand-over-hand' or 'pull-push' method with hands on the outside of the steering wheel
- Use other controls such as indicators, windscreen wipers and demisters

Driving posture

- The steering wheel should be adjusted low, facing the driver's chest rather than the face
- Adjust the head restraint for your height
- Keep your arms bent; thumbs should be on the rim of the steering wheel
- Keep your knees slightly bent
- Have the seat fairly upright to fully support your back and shoulders
- Sit deep in the seat
- Brace your body using your left foot





5. TEST RESULTS

Why you might fail

Some actions are classed as fail items. If you perform a fail item, your test will continue so you get an assessment of your driving but you will not pass. A list of all the fail items and some examples of how they may happen is provided below.

1. Disobey traffic signs, signals or road markings

Regulatory signs, traffic signals and road markings tell you what road rules apply and you must have a thorough understanding of each. Examples of this fail item include:

- Not stopping at a red traffic light (all of your vehicle behind the line)
- Not stopping at a yellow traffic light when safe (unless sudden braking might cause a crash)
- Not stopping correctly at a stop line (behind and within 1m of the line). If initially you stop more than 1m from the line you must move and stop closer
- Crossing a continuous centre line, lane line or edge line unnecessarily
- Disobeying lane markings (transit lane, turn arrows etc)
- Not obeying regulatory signs such as One Way, No Entry, No U-Turn, Keep Clear and Keep Left

2. Failing to give way when necessary

Examples of this fail item include not giving way:

- To any vehicle that has priority at an intersection
- To pedestrians at marked crossings and intersections
- If required when entering a traffic stream, merging or lane changing

3. Colliding with a vehicle, pedestrian or object

This includes mounting or straddling a traffic dome and mounting the kerb or roundabout. You will not fail if you touch the kerb face with your wheels.

4. Performing an illegal act or manoeuvre

An illegal act or manoeuvre is anything against road rules where a regulatory traffic sign, signal or road marking is not present. Examples of this fail item include:

- Unnecessarily driving on the wrong side of the road on unmarked roads
- Turning from the incorrect position (e.g. starting a left turn from the right lane)
- When turning in an arrowed lane, you do not exit to an allowed lane
- Stopping on a pedestrian crossing or stop line when giving way to pedestrians
- Not driving in the left lane when required
- Making an unlawful U-Turn
- Not using the correct lane to turn at a roundabout
- Overtaking or passing a stationary vehicle at a pedestrian crossing
- Entering a level crossing when it is unsafe
- Not wearing a seatbelt
- Answering or using a mobile phone





5. Exceeding the speed limit

The speed limit is the maximum allowable speed for that section of road under normal conditions. You will fail if you exceed the speed limit at any time including:

- The 40km/h limit at school zones during the hours of operation
- The 40km/h limit when passing a bus with flashing lights
- The learner driver speed limit
- Speed limits at road works

6. Action requiring testing officer intervention

You will fail if the testing officer has to give you verbal or physical assistance, including using the dual controls (if available).

7. Causing a dangerous situation

Any unsafe act or behaviour that puts you or others at risk (e.g. overtaking in an unsafe manner or giving way unnecessarily).

8. Failing to maintain proper control of the vehicle

Anything that could, or does, result in you losing control of the vehicle such as:

- Allowing the vehicle to roll back more than 50cm when moving off
- Skidding or spinning the wheels
- Allowing the vehicle to roll along with your foot on the clutch or in neutral
- Not maintaining effective control of the steering wheel

9. Failing to exercise due care to avoid an accident

You will fail if a situation occurs requiring your response and you are not prepared.

10. Failing to give way to an emergency vehicle

11. Disobeying directions from a person controlling traffic

This item includes failure to obey police, emergency services or armed forces personnel, traffic controllers (e.g. at road works) and pilot vehicles.

12. Frequently not signalling intention

You will fail if you repeatedly do not signal when legally required. You must signal:

- To give sufficient warning of your intentions when turning left or right
- For at least 5 seconds before leaving the kerb or a parking space
- When changing lanes, diverging or pulling over to the kerb
- When exiting a roundabout

13. Refusing to attempt any part of the test

You are required to complete the whole test to pass and cannot refuse any part.

14. Repeated or deliberate failure to follow directions

You must follow all reasonable directions given to you by the testing officer.

15. Unreasonably obstructing other vehicles or pedestrians

This includes if you:

- Block an intersection because there is not enough space on the other side





- Drive significantly below the speed limit when conditions do not require it

16. Receiving external advice or instruction during the test

You will fail if you receive any external advice from a third party at any time during the test (from when you sign the score sheet until completion).

17. Not parking to the required standard

During the manoeuvres you will fail if:

- Your car's final position is more than 1m from the kerb or obstructing traffic
- Your wheels are on or over marked parking lines
- You reverse more than 7m from the vehicle in front during the reverse park

18. Failing to maintain a safe following distance

19. Frequently not performing observation checks when required

Specifically this fail item applies to checking your blind spots when you:

- Leave or return to the kerb
- Merge, diverge or change lanes
- Are about to reverse, such as in a reverse parallel park and 3-point turn
- Turn at intersections, leave or join the road
- Cross lanes within a roundabout on exiting

You must turn your head and check it is safe to proceed when moving off after being stopped at traffic lights and railway level crossings.

Immediate fail

Even if you commit a fail item, your test will continue and you will be given a full assessment. However, in some circumstances you will not be permitted to finish and the testing officer may drive from that point. An immediate fail may occur if you:

- Do anything which is unsafe and there is an obvious danger to the public
- Refuse to cooperate with the testing officer and cannot be given a proper test

Test termination

Your test will be terminated and the test fee may not be refunded if any of the unsatisfactory items below cannot be rectified at the time of the test:

1. The testing vehicle

- Is not suitable for safe use
- Indicator lights (including side repeaters) or brake lights do not operate, are incomplete, dirty or discoloured
- Tyres are not in a satisfactory condition
- Is not registered
- Windscreen is cracked or broken so as to obscure driver's and/or testing officer's vision, (not including minor cracks)
- Doesn't have an approved and in working condition seat belt fitted for the testing officer
- Head restraints are not fitted (vehicle manufactured after 1 January 1972)





- Is not suitable for class of licence or type of disability
 - Has sharp edges caused by body damage
 - Has any mirror broken or damaged to the extent that it distorts vision
 - Has any wheel rim excessively damaged
 - Has any visible wheel nuts missing
 - Has any excessive under body fluid leaks
 - Dual brake is operational
 - Dual accelerator is not operational (secured out of reach or made inoperable)
 - Front passenger door or window handle is missing or inoperative
 - Does not have solid front doors (cloth or fabric doors are not acceptable)
 - Is a convertible and the roof is not capable of being covered in
2. The testing vehicle breaks down during the test, or a large number of assessments are missed while off the test course.
 3. You demonstrate unacceptable, inappropriate or unlawful behaviour including:
 - A. Attempting a bribe or any other form of corrupt conduct is suggested
 - B. Extreme emotional pleas, threats or sexual advances to influence a result
 - C. Repeated and persistent requests to ignore an error
 - D. Threatening, abusive, aggressive or violent behaviours
 4. The driver is, or is suspected to be, under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
 5. A crash occurs during the test, regardless of who is at fault.
 6. The applicant is ill, to the extent that they may not be able to drive safely.
 7. Weather conditions are bad and make the driving task too demanding.
 8. Learner driver logbook is not complete in accordance with requirements.

What happens after the test?

When you return to the registry you will wait inside until your testing officer calls you to the counter to tell you your result.

If you do not pass you will be given a test report that shows your score and where you need to improve. Testing officers will provide general comments and are not permitted to discuss specific situations or events. You should try again when you are ready.

If you are not satisfied with the way the test was conducted, please contact the manager at the registry. They will investigate and discuss the matter with you.

If you passed, you will need to pay for your P1 provisional licence.

After the test many people find it hard to concentrate because they are either elated or disappointed. Regardless of the result, it is best to allow your supervising driver to take over the driving when you leave.





6. TIPS FOR PROVISIONAL DRIVERS

Newly licensed provisional drivers have a far higher crash risk than learner drivers, as a supervisor no longer accompanies them. Some self-imposed constraints and seeking support when needed can reduce your risk as an independent driver.

Night Driving

If possible, avoid driving at night, particularly on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. These times represent significantly higher risk to provisional drivers.

Passenger influences

For the first year of provisional driving, try to limit yourself to one passenger. A relative or trusted friend can be very helpful, however, some passengers can distract you and make it harder to focus on driving.

Driving distractions

Activities like adjusting the stereo can divide your concentration and result in a crash. Get a passenger to do tasks or, if alone, wait until you are stopped. Mobile phones can only be used if you are pulled over with the engine off.

Licence restrictions for P1 licences

BAC	Zero
Demerit points	4 points
Plate display	Plates must be displayed clearly on the exterior of the front and back of the vehicle
Maximum speed limit	90km/h
Supervision	Not allowed to supervise a learner
Towing	Max = trailer of 250kg unloaded weight
Location restrictions	Not allowed in Parramatta Park, Centennial Park or Moore Park in Sydney
Mobile phone	Not allowed
Licence class	Only applies to C class (car)
Transmission	If tested in automatic, can only drive automatic
Passengers	Drivers under 25 are restricted to one passenger under 21 from 11pm to 5 am





Vehicles	Must not drive vehicle with:
	- 8 or more cylinders (diesel exempt)
	- Turbo or supercharged engine (diesel exempt)
	- Modifications that increase engine performance
	- Any other vehicle identified by RMS

Licence restrictions for P2 licences

BAC	Zero
Demerit points	7 points
Plate display	Plates must be displayed clearly on the exterior of the front and back of the vehicle
Maximum speed limit	100km/h
Supervision	Not allowed to supervise a learner
Mobile phone	Allowed for calls and audio only if securely mounted and automated audio device is used. Touching the phone while driving is illegal.
Vehicles	Must not drive vehicle with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 8 or more cylinders (diesel exempt) - Turbo or supercharged engine (diesel exempt) - Modifications that increase engine performance - Any other vehicle identified by RMS





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PRACTICAL DRIVING TEST



Check out some of the other Practical Driving Test resources on drivingtestnsw.com

- Test tips
- Preparation tips

Driver Knowledge Test



Road Users'
Handbook Summary
Practice tests
Test tips
Preparation tips

Hazard Perception Test



Hazard Perception
Handbook Summary
Practice tests
Test tips
Preparation tips

Driver Qualification Test



Driver Qualification
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