

I'm Driving Practical Test Continued

Eyesight test

Before getting to the car, the examiner will ask the candidate to read a car's number plate at a distance. The distance required is 20.5 metres for an old-style plate (A123 ABC) and 20 metres for a new style plate (AB51 ABC). If the candidate needs corrective lenses to do this, then they must be worn during the test. If the candidate fails to read the first number plate correctly, then the examiner asks the candidate to read a second number plate. If the candidate cannot correctly read the second number plate, then the examiner must use a tape measure to measure the correct distance between the candidate and a third number plate. If the candidate cannot read the third number plate, then the candidate is deemed to have failed and the test will not continue.

Vehicle safety questions

The "Show me tell me" changed on 4 December 2017. The examiner will ask the candidate one: 'tell me' question (where you explain how they would carry out a safety task) at the start of the test and before the candidate starts driving. This new element is to allow the candidate to demonstrate how to carry out a safety task while driving.

Format

The practical car test is taken on the road, with a professionally trained DVSA examiner directing the candidate around a pre-determined route. The examiner marks the candidate for driving faults, serious faults, and dangerous faults. A candidate will fail the test if he or she accumulates any serious or dangerous faults, or more than fifteen driving faults. If a candidate accumulates several driving faults in the same category, the examiner may consider the fault habitual and mark a serious fault in that category. The test usually lasts 38 to 40 minutes in a standard test, or approximately 70 minutes when the candidate is taking an extended test after having had their licence revoked.

Controlled Stop

The controlled stop, more commonly referred to as the "emergency stop", is an exercise which determines the ability of the candidate to stop the vehicle promptly yet under control during a simulated emergency. The simulation is performed by the examiner raising his or her hand and saying, "STOP!". A controlled stop exercise will be carried out on every extended test and one third of normal tests. This might be an emergency stop, or the candidate might be asked to make a controlled stop in a specific location. During dangerous weather conditions, such as rain and snow, this test can be left out for safety reasons.

Manoeuvres

The driving test changed on 4 December 2017. The manoeuvres that a candidate would be asked to perform no longer include a turn in the road or a reverse to the left. Candidates may be asked to:

Reverse park into a parking space either parallel to the kerb (on road), or oblique or right-angle (in a marked bay in an off-road car park)

Park on the right-hand side of the road, reverse two car lengths and re-join the traffic. (From December 2017)

Drive forward into a bay and reverse out.

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The test includes a self-navigation section that last for approximately 20 minutes. It can take one of two formats or a combination of both formats.

Format 1. Following a sat nav.

Format 2. Following Road Signs.

You will also be tested on your general driving including high speed roads. The test lasts approximately 38 minutes.

Candidates are permitted to deviate from the given route if they get lost and they will not receive any faults for this providing they are driving safely. For example, if a candidate is instructed by the satnav to proceed straight ahead at a junction but they find themselves in a 'left turn only' lane. The correct course of action would be to stay in the lane and turn left using normal and safe procedure (e.g., mirrors, signal, manoeuvre).

Once through the junction safely, the candidate can attempt to return to their route. A fault may be given if the candidate were to proceed straight ahead in the left turn lane as this can be dangerous to other road users. When a candidate deviates from the route the examiner may direct them back towards their destination until the candidate is able to resume independent driving. If a satnav is being used this may automatically recalculate a new route to get them back on course.

If there are poor or obscured traffic signs, the examiner may give the candidate directions until they can see the next traffic sign. Candidates do not need to have a detailed knowledge of the area. If the satnav gives incorrect directions the examiner will assist the candidate with verbal direction. The satnav device (if used) is brought by the examiner and they will set it up for the candidate. The DVSA currently issues the TomTom Start 52 to its driving examiners.

If the candidate has special needs, the examiner will be able to make reasonable adjustments. For the independent driving section, this could be asking the candidate which method they prefer - following signs, or a series of directions (a maximum of three)

Vehicle safety questions

You will be asked 2 vehicle safety questions during your car driving test.

The examiner will ask you one:

tell me' question (where you explain how you would carry out a safety task) at the start of your test, before you start driving.

show me' question (where you show how you would carry out a safety task) while you're driving.

You will get one driving fault (sometimes called a 'minor') if you get one or both questions wrong.

You will fail your driving test if your driving is dangerous or potentially dangerous while you answer the 'show me' question.