

HOW TO PASS YOUR DRIVERS TEST THE FIRST TIME

PREPARATION

The biggest enemy you have to overcome is fear. It is really **fear of the unknown**. The purpose of this booklet is to take some of the mystery out of the road test. A road test really **covers only basic driving skills**, but you do have to be knowledgeable, skilled, and confident in those areas to pass the first time.

This is a **TOP SECRET mission** which you are undertaking - you should tell no one when you are planning to take the test, except the person who is going with you, and they should be **sworn to secrecy**. Why all the mystery? The answer is really simple - when you go to the test, you will be under a lot of pressure - you do not need to be worrying what everyone else is going to think if you don't pass. You are better off to **surprise them by driving to their house with your new license**.

The examiner **expects you to be a little nervous**, however, you must still meet the standards. When you are under stress you will do **exactly what you have practiced**, therefore, it is essential to be trained in and practice the correct techniques.

You should have a **complete** understanding of the rules of the road **beyond** what it takes to pass the permit test. Not only must you know the rules but you must also be able to apply them in dealing with other drivers. You must be able to **instantly assess a traffic situation** and make the correct decision. This requires study, training and practice in traffic.

You must also thoroughly know the instruments and controls in the car and be able to **use them without hesitation**. You will be asked to use all of them at sometime during the test.

You must be able to handle the car so well that you can turn a corner or park with ease. **The handling of the car must be as natural to you as walking**. This requires proper training and many hours of practice. This ability will provide you with one of the most important keys to success - confidence!

THE DRIVERS TEST

If the DMV Service Center has perpendicular parking in the lot - park the car so that you can drive out of the space instead of having to back out to start the test. In the parking lot drive slowly, signal any turns and do not cross any lines.

When they give you the time for your test **it is the time that you are supposed to check in not when the test starts**. They usually give you a check in time that is at least 10 minutes before your test is actually scheduled to begin. This is to allow for the fact that you may be late and to allow time for you to complete the necessary paperwork. **You do not want to arrive before your check in time** - there is no point in sitting around getting nervous while you wait.

The car which you take to the test must be able to pass the safety inspection which is given at the start of the test. The car must have operating seat belts, the parking brake and all of the basic instruments and controls must work. If you borrow someone else's car for the test, take the time to learn how to use the controls before you go for your test.

Turn the radio off before you go into the station to check in - the examiner is not going to be impressed by your sound system, especially if you cannot hear their directions.

There is no examiner, at any testing station, that fails everyone the first time. They must follow a scoring chart with guidelines and if your performance meets those standards they cannot mark you down. **(The number one item on the list of standards is observation of traffic)** They are also required to meet standards and if they were failing everyone they would be replaced. They might ask you if the supervisor can ride along - my suggestion is that you politely refuse - say something like "I'd rather not"

At the beginning of the test the examiner will tell you three (3) things. 1. "I will not **trick** you." 2. "If I don't tell you to turn I want you to **continue straight**." 3. "I want you to drive at all times as if another vehicle is **present**."

The first statement is obvious - there is no reason for the examiner to **intentionally** trick you - they do not have to - if you don't know what you are doing, dealing with any traffic can be very tricky.

The second statement means that when you come to an intersection with lane controls, if the examiner does not tell you to turn, you must read the signs, make a lane change if necessary and **get in the correct lane to continue straight** - *it may be tricky but it is not a trick!*

The third statement "Drive at all times as if another vehicle is *present*" relates to signalling. The rules of the road state "That you must signal your intentions if there is another vehicle *present*" Since there is not always a car around when you are taking your test they tell you to use these guidelines to determine if you know when you are supposed to signal. Simply **signal every turn and anytime you move the car to the side more than 1/2 of the lane!**

If, during the test, the examiner gives you a direction, and you do not understand it - ask! It is better to find out what they mean now than to guess and find out later that you did not really understand, did the wrong thing and therefore did not pass. The examiner is not an instructor. You can ask them to clarify their directions, but **you cannot ask them how to do something** - you are supposed to know how to drive. For example, when the examiner tells you to turn, you can ask him to repeat the direction or the location, but you cannot ask anything about how to properly complete the turn. When they are giving directions, examiners usually will not identify a street sign, such as a stop sign or traffic light. They only use terms such as next corner, intersection or street (which all mean the same thing) to describe where to turn.

During the test, if you think you have made a mistake, it is critical that you make note of it but then **put the concern out of your mind**. If you worry about what you might have done wrong, it is going to take your concentration away from the current situation, and you could end up making a bigger mistake. The examiner may not have even caught your error - they have a lot of things to keep track of during the test. and they are only human. If they did catch your mistake, **there is nothing you can do** (except not repeat it) so just forget it!

While you are taking the test, **do not watch what the examiner is doing** - you can be marked down for inattention to traffic! During the course of the test the examiner will normally write things down. When they write something down it does not always mean that you made a mistake - they also write notes about the things that you do correctly. Regardless, they write their notes in shorthand which means that even if you could read it you wouldn't understand it - so just concentrate on your driving!

During the test the examiner will generally tell you to make a turn, at least one block ahead. If the examiner tells you turn more than a block ahead, it indicates that you are supposed to make a lane change. **The examiner will not tell you to make a lane change**. The examiner may tell you "Move into the next lane" - That means make a lane change! *It is tricky but it is not a trick!*

DO NOT exceed the speed limit and do not go too slow. Speeding is obviously illegal and going too slow is not a sign of a cautious driver, but of inexperience. If you find that it seems like they are telling you to turn at the last moment, it probably means you are going too fast!

There is no time limit on the maneuvers on the test. You can take as much time as you need as long as you do everything correctly.

When you parallel park, in most cases the examiner will not make you park between two cars. You must pretend that there is a car behind you. The mistake most people make is **trying to cram their car into an imaginary space that is too small**. (parking spaces are longer than the car) It is more important to get the car close to the curb in this situation than it is to be close behind.

The regulations state that **you cannot fail a road test only because you are unable to complete the parallel parking maneuver**. However, if you totally mess up your attempt at parking, ask the examiner if you can try again. If you do not say something, they are going to think that this is the best that you can do.

CONCLUSION

Finally, if you have confidence in your abilities **based on thorough knowledge and sound skills**, there is no reason you should fail. If you don't think you are going to pass the test you probably won't because if you do not believe in yourself no one else will.

When you are preparing for the test remember that **the worst thing that they can do to you is to ask you to take the test over again**. If you are prepared for the worst it will help you to remain calm, cool and collected during the test. If for some reason you do not pass the first test, remember **the only person who ever really fails is the one who stops trying**.