



Drivers License Road Test



Preparing for Behind-the-Wheel Driver Exam

What to expect from the road test and written exams.

Internet forums are filled with nervous new drivers asking how to best prepare for the driving test. With so much information available we'll just give a quick review.

Complete Your DMV Written Test Exam

You'll have to pass a written road rules and road signs exam. Most states use a computerized exam system with anywhere from 20 to 30 multiple choice questions. Each test is made up of questions drawn at random from a large database so you won't have all the same questions as any of your friends. Also, if you fail, your retake test will be different than your first test.

The best way to prepare for the written exam is to study and become thoroughly familiar with your state's driving manual. Many new drivers choose to take an online DMV practice test.

Complete Your DMV Road Test

After passing your written and vision exams, you'll be assigned a driver's license examiner for the road test. Each examiner has a checklist of things to look for during the test.

One thing to remember is that there are NO TRICK QUESTIONS! Driving is hard enough by itself and examiners don't need to ask any trick questions. Just follow your examiner's directions exactly as they are given and ask questions if you don't understand.

Listed below are some of the items on your examiner's checklist:

1. Is the Car Safe?
2. Turn Signals
3. The Road
4. Parking
5. Intersections
6. Backing Up
7. Three-Point-Turns

Is the Car Safe?

First, examiners check the vehicle's registration and insurance to see if they are current. Then they conduct a quick safety check on the vehicle; looking at tires and the overall condition of the car. Then, they will ask you to start the vehicle so they can see that the headlights, taillights, brake lights, and turn signals all work.

Turn Signals

Use your turn signals any time you change direction. This includes when backing into **and out** of a parking space and pulling over to the curb. Remember to signal for the direction you will be turning.

The Road

After you've completed the parking phase, the examiner will have you drive on the road and will be watching to see if you obey the speed limit and all traffic signs, especially stop signs.



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Parking

The examiner will ask you to park the car. Most of the time this just means you have to show you can park in a standard parking space like those you'd commonly see in any parking lot. Often, there will be traffic cones on either side of the space and you'll have to pull in and back out without hitting either of the cones.

The best way to practice parking is by looking at where you want the car to go and steering toward that spot. Don't focus on the hazards on either side of the car or you might steer into them.

In most states, the need to parallel park is rare so it is not included in the exam. Check your state's handbook to see if you will need to practice this maneuver.

Intersections

When you come to a stop sign, slow gradually and stop before the stop line. Look left, right, and then left again for one final check before entering the intersection. Watch carefully for small vehicles such as motorcycles or bicycles that are harder to see and can come up quickly. Take your time and make sure there is enough space in traffic for you to complete your maneuver before going. If you don't have a stop sign at an intersection, don't stop. Use caution and make sure cross traffic is stopped at their stop sign as you enter the intersection. If there is a yield sign, slow and be prepared to stop but don't stop unless there are pedestrians or vehicles crossing in front of you.

Backing Up

At some point in the exam, the examiner may ask you to stop and back up the vehicle until you're told to stop. This is to see if you follow the correct procedures for making sure the way behind you is clear and that you can back up in a straight line without veering all over the place. Don't just depend on your mirrors! Keeping your left hand on the wheel, turn your body at the waist, look over your right shoulder until you can look directly behind the vehicle, and then back up slowly.

Three-Point Turn

The examiner may ask you to pull over to the right curb on a narrow street for a three-point turn. Once you've pulled over, signal left, turn the wheel all the way to the left, and proceed forward, stopping before you reach the curb on the other side of the street. Then, turn the wheel to the right and back up until you are somewhat centered in your lane and facing in the opposite direction. You will have to do this without hitting the curb on either side of the street.

It really is a pretty straightforward test. Just remember that THERE ARE NO TRICK QUESTIONS and to follow the examiner's directions exactly as they are given as long as it is safe. Good luck!

