

DSA ezine for road safety professionals

Changes to theory test questions

From 2012 the multiple choice questions and answers used in theory tests will no longer be made public.

This is designed to help ensure that new drivers learn the principles behind driving theory rather than just learning answers.



In September 2011 DSA will change the format of books and other learning materials available to help people prepare for theory tests, at the same time as more challenging case studies are introduced to car and motorcycle theory tests.

Then, from 1 January 2012, DSA will create theory tests using questions which will not be published.

Practice questions and answers, not used in the actual theory tests, will still be available to help candidates with revision.

Other companies which publish products containing DSA theory test questions will also no longer have access to the questions used in the tests.

The move follows the introduction of independent driving and DSA's decision to stop publishing test routes in October 2010, to make sure the test assesses a learner's ability to drive rather than their capacity to memorise routes.

"The driving theory test should help to prepare drivers for real life on the road - good driving is not just about vehicle-handling skills, but also about having the knowledge and understanding of safe driving theory."

Mike Penning,
Road Safety Minister

Announcing the changes, Road Safety Minister Mike Penning said:

"No longer publishing these questions and answers will mean that successful candidates will have to understand the theory rather than simply memorising answers.

"I believe that this - along with the other changes we are making to the driving test regime - will lead to better drivers and safer roads."

Vocational tests: Controlled stop to be conducted on-road

People taking practical tests to be lorry, bus, coach or car-and-trailer drivers will perform the braking exercise on-road rather than off-road from 1 January 2011, the Road Safety Minister Mike Penning has announced.

Candidates will be asked to perform the braking exercise immediately before the angle start, where the driver is asked to pull away from behind a parked vehicle.

Mike Penning said: "This update to the testing process reflects advances in modern braking technology and allows us to strengthen our assessment of the candidate's ability to brake safely in real traffic conditions."



Currently candidates have to perform reversing, uncoupling (where appropriate) and braking exercises off-road. Only the braking exercise is being moved.

The new method does not mean any change to the actual content of the test. Other categories of test are unaffected.

Electronic parking brakes allowed on test



Vehicles equipped with electronic parking brakes will now be accepted for practical driving tests. The change, which came into force on 1 November, comes in response to advances in vehicle technology.

Until recently electronic parking brakes were fitted only to top of the range vehicles, and were not allowed on test, but this technology is now becoming increasingly available.

There are usually two ways of releasing an electronic parking brake:

- using the footbrake while releasing the parking brake, then coordinating the accelerator and clutch to move away
- coordinating the accelerator and clutch - when the electronics sense the clutch is at biting point the parking brake releases automatically

If there is no loss of control either method is acceptable.

For further information see [minimum test vehicle requirements for a car and car and trailer test](#).

Working together

DSA is working closely with motorcycle trainers to help modernise the services it provides for them

The agency has set up working groups with rider trainers and other members of the motorcycle community, which are looking at how services for rider trainers could be improved.

Joey Greenwood, one of the trainers taking part, said: "We're all very committed to improving training standards, and the work has been very constructive so far."

Lesley Young, DSA's deputy chief driving examiner, added: "The contribution from the group stakeholder experts is vital. DSA sees the working partnerships as the way forward to make motorcycling safer and even more enjoyable."

Areas that the working groups are focusing on include:

- **rider trainer registration schemes** - current arrangements for quality assurance, the initial qualification and registration processes for all motorcycle trainers
- **compulsory basic training** - updating the syllabus and making sure it reflects the National Riding Standards

- **trainer booking system** - improvements to the trainer booking system to make it more efficient for both trainers and DSA.



Compulsory basic training working group, L-R: Kevin Bryan - motorcycle trainer, Chris Wright - motorcycle trainer, Graham Shaw - DSA, Huw Davies - DSA, Mark Winn - DSA, Duncan MacKillop - Motorcycle Action Group (MAG), Karen Cole - Motorcycle Industry Association (MCIA), Heather Boldy - Motorcycle Industry Trainer Association (MCITA)

VAT change on non statutory services

The standard rate of VAT is currently 17.5 per cent but will be increased to 20 per cent on 4 January 2011.

As a result, DSA's non statutory fees will be affected. This includes the LGV voluntary register, ORDIT, special test for cars and taxi testing. Statutory theory and practical car, motorcycle, bus and lorry tests are unaffected.

Visit businesslink.gov.uk to view the revised charges.

Michelle Yeoh supports 'Decade of Action for Road Safety'

In 2011 the United Nations is launching a 'Decade of Action for Road Safety', which aims to reduce global road deaths, potentially saving millions of lives by 2020

Leading road safety experts believe that, with the right action, up to five million lives could be saved and 50 million injuries prevented during the Decade of Action.

Actress and former Bond girl Michelle Yeoh is supporting the Decade of Action in her role as global ambassador for the Make Roads Safe campaign.



Q: Why did you get involved in road safety?

A: When I realised how many people are dying and getting seriously injured around the world, the shocking scale of the statistics hit me and had a huge impact - the fact, for example, that every thirty seconds another child dies or is seriously injured on the roads somewhere in the world. I found this upsetting enough, but what makes it

even worse is that we have the means to stop this, to save lives, and yet nothing is being done.

Other good causes have the world's attention, the funding and the support of celebrities and high profile figures. We spend billions of dollars in research to combat Aids but, for road safety, we have the vaccine, we have the cure, so why is it not being implemented? That is the real tragedy - the road deaths epidemic

could be tackled but it needs the world's attention to be focused on it.

Q: Why is it a particularly important issue in developing countries?

A: This is a crucial issue for developing countries. More than 80 per cent of those killed in road traffic crashes live in middle and low income countries. What's more, the situation is predicted to get worse with a rise of over 80 per cent in road deaths in these countries by 2020.

Q: What can be done to improve road safety?

A: The Make Roads Safe campaign has been calling for a worldwide Decade of Action for Road Safety which is due to start in May 2011. We now need governments and the public to support this Decade of Action. And we need to ensure that simple but crucial life saving measures such as seatbelts, helmets and crossing points for pedestrians that are so common in rich countries, become the norm everywhere.

For further information and to find out what you can do to support the Decade of Action, visit decadeofaction.org

A new way of learning

As part of a trial launched by DSA earlier this year, 48 ADIs have now been recruited and trained to deliver a proposed new syllabus for learner drivers.

This new approach to driver training aims to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their own training rather than relying purely on instruction from their ADI.

“The trial will allow DSA to base decisions regarding the implementation of the new syllabus on objective scientific evidence gathered from ADIs who teach it, and the learner drivers who learn it”

Dr Shaun Helman,
Transport Research Laboratory (TRL)

The syllabus covers the whole range of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for safe and responsible driving, as set out in DSA’s National Driving and Riding Standards.

“The aim is to provide structures and incentives to raise professional standards, to the benefit of driving instructors and their customers”

Trevor Wedge,
DSA’s chief driving examiner

The trial will measure the effectiveness of the proposed new syllabus and teaching approach, and whether it improves road safety.

The performance and experiences of the instructors and learner drivers will be matched against a control group of ADIs not using the new syllabus.

Trial results will be available in spring 2012.



Road safety knowledge centre

Road Safety GB has developed a web-based library of road safety related information and expertise, known as the Road Safety Knowledge Centre.

Information within the knowledge centre is available free of charge to anyone with a professional interest in road safety, who registers to become a subscriber. Information is categorised and presented in summary format, with downloads and contact details available for people wanting more detail.

Visit roadsafetyknowledgecentre.org.uk

A round up of this month's news

ADIs: Check your details on Directgov



Members of the public can now see the contact details of their local ADIs on the 'find your nearest driving instructor' facility on the Directgov website. If you're an ADI you can make sure that your details are correct by going to businesslink.gov.uk/manageadi and clicking on 'manage your ADI registration online'. You can check that all your personal details are correct and choose whether you want DSA to publish your contact details on the website. You can also indicate if you're committed to at least one day per year of continuing professional development and abide by the voluntary ADI code of practice.

Facebook page for learners



DSA has launched a Facebook page for learner drivers. The page, which is called 'I can't wait to pass my driving test', has been set up to give learner drivers a way of keeping up to date with news about learning to drive and driving tests. The page also has links to information and services on Directgov. Learners can become a fan of the page by visiting facebook.com/mydrivingtest

Independent driving feedback

Thanks to those of you who have taken the time to send in your comments about the new independent driving part of the test. Feedback to date has been largely positive, but any comments and suggestions are appreciated. Send your thoughts to pressoffice@dsa.gsi.gov.uk

Have you signed up to DSA Direct?

You can sign up to DSA Direct, free of charge, and get email alerts about the latest news and updates at DSA. You can receive alerts about news and social media, learning to drive and ride, driver trainers, consultations and events. To sign up, visit dft.gov.uk/dsa and click on 'DSA Direct'.

Driving tests and bad weather

Some driving tests may be affected by winter weather over the next few months. DSA is advising candidates to follow the advice on their appointment email or letter and to call their test centre only if there's snow or ice in their local area on the day of their test. For more information visit: direct.gov.uk/drivingtest

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Information for candidates is available on direct.gov.uk/motoring and driver and rider trainers can visit businesslink.gov.uk/transport

Book and manage your test appointments at direct.gov.uk/drivingtest or businesslink.gov.uk/transport

A list of useful telephone numbers can be found at dft.gov.uk/dsa

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