Learner Drivers – Theory Test Factsheet

Background of the Theory Test for Learner Drivers

- The theory test for learner drivers was introduced in July 1996.
- It was extended in November 2002 to include the Hazard Perception Test (HPT).
- The current cost of the theory test for car drivers (as of 30th March 2009) is £31.00.

Bookings & Postponement / Cancellations

- Theory tests can be booked online or by phone (where an immediate date & time of the test will be given) or by post or fax on form TT26 (appointment will be provided by post within 10 days of receipt).
- When booking by phone or over the internet, the candidate will require their driving licence number and credit/debit card details (cardholder must be present).
- Candidates may cancel/postpone online or by telephone, at least 3 clear working days before test date (i.e. excluding the day of cancellation, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays).
- The 3 day cancellation rule can be waived in exceptional circumstances (e.g. family bereavement / documented ill-health).

At the Test Centre...

- On arrival at the reception desk, the candidate must present both parts of their licence (photocard and counterpart) or their old-style licence and a valid passport.
- No other forms of identification will be accepted (including photocopies).
- Lockers are provided for personal items – nothing can be taken into the test room.
- If candidate has any problems during the theory test, they should raise their hand to attract the attention of the test invigilator.

The Multiple-Choice Element

- The multiple choice element of the test is completed on a touch screen.
- Before starting the test, candidates are able to work through a practice session of up to 15 minutes to get used to the system.
- The candidate will be presented with 50 random multiple choice questions from a bank of more than 900, and is permitted 57 minutes to complete this element of the theory test.
- Only one question appears on screen at a time.
- Most questions only require one response from four possible answers given, but some may require two or more responses. The exact number of responses required is clearly shown on screen. If a candidate moves on without marking the correct number of answers, they are reminded that more answers are needed.
- To answer a question, candidates should touch the box next to the answer or answers they think are correct. If they change their mind, they can simply touch it again and select a different answer.
- The question number and time remaining are clearly displayed on screen. A warning pops up when there are 5 minutes left.
- Candidates can move backwards and forwards through the questions, and can also flag questions they would like to look at again.
- If a candidate has time at the end of the test, they can select the 'review' feature to check their answers.
- Candidates must score at least 43 out of 50 to pass the multiple-choice element of the test.

The Hazard Perception Element

- Candidates are permitted up to a 3 minute break before the start of the Hazard Perception Test.
- Before the test starts, candidates are shown a short video the explains how the test works and gives them a chance to see a sample film clip.
- The candidate will be presented with 14 film clips, shown from the driver's point of view, of approximately 60 seconds each. The total time for the Hazard Perception Test is approximately 20 minutes.
- In 13 of the clips there will be one developing hazard. In 1 of the clips there will be two developing hazards.
- Candidates should click the mouse as soon as they see a hazard developing that may result in the driver having to take some action, such as changing speed or direction.
- Candidates are scored out of 5 for how quickly they respond to each developing hazard. The quicker they respond, the higher the score.
- The maximum possible score is 75.
- Candidates must score at least 44 in order to pass the Hazard Perception element of the theory test.

After the Test is over...

- The candidate's results will be available within 10 minutes of completion (usually straight away).
- Anyone failing the theory test must wait 3 clear working days before retaking it.
- Once the candidate has passed both parts of the theory test in one sitting, they are eligible to apply for their practical driving test.
- The candidate must pass the practical test within 2 years of passing their theory test. If this 2 year period has lapsed, they will be required to take another theory test.

Special Needs

- People receiving the higher rate mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) are allowed to start driving at 16, and are also therefore eligible to take the car theory test from 16.
- The theory test is available in English & 20 other languages via headphones. If candidate's language is unavailable, they may use a DSA approved translator from the Institute of Translation & Interpreting (ITI).
- Special Needs issues (including use of an alternative language) must be stated at time of booking:
  - Reading difficulties / dyslexia: English voiceover available. Candidates may ask for up to twice the normal time to complete multiple-choice part (confirmation of the degree of the disability must be provided in the form of a letter from a suitable independent person, such as a teacher or employer).
  - Hearing difficulties: British Sign Language is available by an on-screen signer. An interpreter / lip reader can be provided if requested at the time of booking.
  - Physical difficulties: Notify DSA and special arrangements can be made.
- The cost of a translator/ interpreter must be met by the candidate.

Do I Need to Take a Theory Test?

- A candidate will need to take a theory test if they want a licence for a new category, e.g. if they have a car licence and they want a motorcycle licence.
- If upgrading within a vehicle category, they will not normally need to take a theory test, e.g. if they have a full automatic car licence and want a manual car licence.