



basic driving procedures

This section sets out the basic skills a learner driver must learn and be able to demonstrate without help before they attempt the practical driving test.

Basic driving procedures

The procedures in this section should be practiced until they become automatic.

When practising them, remember to check your mirrors constantly and signal your intention before moving off, changing course, slowing down or stopping.

The supervising driver must be in the vehicle and sitting next to the learner driver at all times while the learner is driving the vehicle (including parking practice).

System of vehicle control

The method of driving described in this section is the safest and most efficient way to drive a motor vehicle. It is called the 'system of vehicle control'.

A safe and experienced driver will automatically use the system of vehicle control when approaching and negotiating road or traffic hazards or other potentially dangerous situations.

Examples of hazards include:

- intersections, roundabouts and traffic lights
- lane changing and overtaking
- actions by other road users that could affect you.

The system of vehicle control is a series of actions that drivers should follow when approaching any hazard.

The following sequence of actions sets out the system of vehicle control

- Select your **course**: choose the safe and legal path.
- Check your **mirrors** and **signal/indicate**: check your mirrors for any vehicles following and/or overtaking you, and warn them about what you plan to do by using your indicator (blinker).
- **Brake**: adjust your speed so that you will arrive at the hazard travelling at an appropriate speed to negotiate it.
 - **Decision point**: do not release the brakes until you can see it is safe to continue. If it is not safe, you need to stop.
- When it is safe to continue, select the appropriate **gear** and check your **mirrors** (and **blind spot** if applicable) for any following or overtaking vehicles.
- **Accelerate** through the hazard: apply the appropriate level of power to leave the hazard quickly and safely.

General driving notes

'Dry steering'

'Dry steering' means turning the steering wheel while the vehicle is not moving.

Dry steering should be avoided because it can cause unnecessary wear and tear on the tyres, steering and suspension.

Friction point

In a manual vehicle, the friction point refers to the clutch and accelerator position at which engine power and the transmission engage.

A manual vehicle that is stopped and in gear will begin to move when the clutch is released past this point.

Every vehicle is different, so it is important that you find the 'friction point' in the vehicle you are driving. As a guide approximately 1500 revs should be adequate to achieve the friction point.

'Feathering' the clutch

'Feathering the clutch' is a phrase used to describe a method of controlling a vehicle's movement using the clutch during low-speed manoeuvres, such as parking.

When feathering the clutch, the driver moves their foot on the clutch pedal, near to friction point, to apply small amounts of power to move the vehicle slightly, without using the brake or accelerator.

Coasting

Coasting is when a vehicle is moving and the engine is not connected to the driving wheels.

In a manual vehicle, this happens when the driver puts the car out of gear and into neutral or pushes the clutch pedal down.

An automatic vehicle will coast when neutral is selected.

Coasting should be avoided until the vehicle is almost stationary.

Sideways pitch/roll

Sideways pitch is the amount a vehicle leans to one side when going around a corner or bend. In extreme cases, if a vehicle is travelling too fast when it takes a corner or a bend, the vehicle can roll.

Drivers should avoid excessive sideways pitch by always driving smoothly and at a speed suitable for the conditions. Some corners and bends are signposted with recommended maximum speed limits for negotiating them.

Lurch

'Lurch' is how much a vehicle pitches forward or backwards. This can happen when brakes are applied heavily or when a gear change or acceleration is not smooth.

Excessive lurch indicates that the driver is not in full control of the vehicle. It should be avoided.

Cabin drill

1. Get into the driver's seat (vehicle must be parked and the engine not running).
2. Check that the handbrake is firmly on.
3. Check that your seat is in the correct position and adjust if necessary.
4. Check all mirrors to make sure you have a good view of areas behind and around your vehicle.
5. Check your seatbelt is in the correct position and fastened.
6. Check all passengers have their seatbelts fastened.
7. Check that the steering wheel is in the correct position and adjust if necessary.
8. Check that all doors are securely closed.

Your notes:

Moving off in a manual vehicle

1. Check that the handbrake is on.
2. Push the brake pedal down.
3. Push the clutch pedal down.
4. Select first gear.
5. Check your mirrors for traffic or other hazards.
6. Indicate to signal your intention to move off.
7. Release the brake pedal and gently push the accelerator pedal to appropriate engine revs.

Appropriate engine revs will vary between vehicles but as a guide approximately 1500 revs should be adequate.
8. Bring the clutch pedal up to the 'friction point' and hold your feet still.
9. Check your mirrors again and look over your right shoulder to check that the road is clear (this is called a 'head check').
10. When the road is clear, release the handbrake as you gently release the clutch pedal and apply smooth acceleration to move off.
11. Cancel indicator (if required).

The conditions you practice in are important. It is recommended that you select a low-level traffic area to start and only move to heavier traffic areas when your confidence and ability improve.

Your notes:

Changing up gears in a manual vehicle

Vehicle manufacturers specify a suitable range of speeds for each gear – this will vary considerably between vehicles and the reference to maximum speeds suggested below should only be used as a guide – consult your vehicle handbook for details.

Maximum Speed	Appropriate gear
25 km/h –	1st gear
40 km/h –	2nd gear
60 km/h –	3rd gear
80 km/h –	4th gear
>80 km/h	5th gear

Using the guide above to change up gears in a manual vehicle:

1. Increase the speed of the vehicle until it is travelling at a speed appropriate to the next higher gear.
2. Push the clutch pedal down and fully release the accelerator pedal at the same time (you should not change gears with your foot on the accelerator)
3. Move the gear lever to the next higher gear, making sure the clutch pedal is fully pressed down.
4. Gently release the clutch pedal up to the friction point and at the same time press the accelerator to give a little power to 'balance' engine and road speeds.

5. Continue releasing the clutch pedal until it is fully released.
6. Repeat changing up gears until desired gear is reached.

Your notes:

Changing up and down gears in an automatic vehicle

Automatic transmissions vary between makes and models, so it is important to study the vehicle's handbook carefully.

Automatic transmissions allow gear changes to be made without the use of a clutch pedal. In an automatic car, selecting the D-drive position with the gear selector will mean that the vehicle will change gears automatically based on the load placed on the engine while the car is being driven. Alternatively, the driver can use the gear selector to select the gear appropriate to their needs.

The selector can be set in a number of positions, depending on the make and model of car. Most automatic vehicles allow for the vehicle to be held in a low gear as well as having a neutral and park position.

In neutral position there is no connection between the engine and the transmission, and in the park position the whole transmission is locked and the car cannot be moved.

Tips for driving an automatic transmission vehicle:

- Leave the gear selector in drive when doing most general driving. This means the gears will be automatically selected depending on the car's speed and how much pressure you put on the accelerator pedal.
- Listen to the engine: when the car is moving in and out of gears you will hear and feel the change in the car.
- Be careful not to over-rev the car or you could damage your transmission.

Consider using first or second gear when driving up or down steep hills. By selecting a specific gear rather than just putting it in 'drive', the car is held in the gear you select. On long, steep hills a lower gear will help restrain the car, which could tend to 'run away' if left in 'drive'.

Your notes:

Kerbside stop in a manual vehicle

1. Select a safe place to pull over and stop or park.
2. Check your mirrors.
3. Indicate your intention to move over.
4. Push the brake pedal smoothly.
5. Push the clutch pedal down – keeping pressure on the brake pedal – and change down gears if required (refer page 32 for changing down gears in a manual vehicle).
As you are slowing and changing down gears:
 - recheck your mirrors and glance over your shoulder to check that the road is clear
 - steer your vehicle towards your chosen stopping place.
6. Pull over and bring the vehicle to a complete stop.
7. Apply the handbrake.
8. Move the gear lever to neutral.
9. Release the clutch pedal.
10. Cancel indicator (if required).

Your notes:

Kerbside stop in an automatic vehicle

1. Select a safe place to pull over and stop.
2. Check your mirrors.
3. Indicate your intention to move over.
4. Push the brake pedal smoothly.
As you are slowing:
 - recheck your mirrors and glance over your shoulder to check that the road is clear
 - steer your vehicle towards your chosen stopping place.
5. Pull over and bring the vehicle to a complete stop (keep pressure on the brake pedal).
6. Apply the handbrake.
7. Move the gear lever to park or neutral.
8. Release the brake pedal.
9. Cancel indicator (if required).

Your notes:

Turning at corners/intersections/ road junctions

1. Check your mirrors.
2. Signal your intention to turn (if required).
3. Brake smoothly to arrive at the corner at a safe speed and be prepared to stop if necessary.
4. Change down gears before reaching the corner. (refer to page 32 for changing down gears in a manual vehicle.)
5. Turn the steering wheel as necessary.
6. When the corner comes into your view and it is safe and legal to proceed, either:
 - continue steering and as the vehicle starts to straighten on to the new road, gently accelerate out of the corner (do not 'ride the clutch' around the corner)
 - or
 - refer to moving-off procedure (page 27 and 28) if you have had to stop.

There is always the possibility that before turning you will need to stop to give way. Take extreme care around corners.

Your notes:

Manoeuvres

When you have mastered the basic driving procedures you can move on to the more complex manoeuvres of reversing, U-turns, three-point turns and parking.

Reversing

When reversing it is important to always:

- look back to the rear of the vehicle to get the best view possible
- drive very slowly.

When reversing straight back or to the left look through the rear window over your left shoulder. You will need to change your normal seated position so that your back is facing your door to do this. Your right hand should hold the steering wheel at the top (the 12 o'clock position on a clock), and use your left hand to stabilise your body in that twisted position.

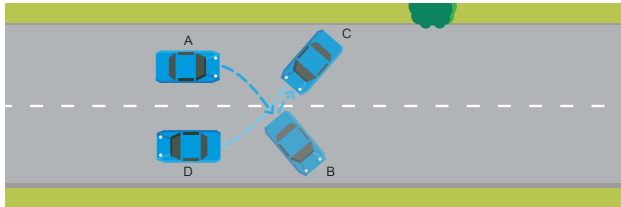
When reversing to the right look through the rear window over your right shoulder, and reverse your body's position from the above point so that your left hand is holding the steering wheel at the top.

Practice reversing in a straight line parallel to the kerb. When reversing parallel to the kerb the car should be at least half a metre from the kerb, allowing the front wheels to move freely.

Also practice reversing into and out of a wide entry, then move on to narrower lanes or your own driveway and out of carparks as you get more experience.

Make sure that you choose a place to practice reversing where there is little or no traffic.

Three-point turn



A three-point (or multi-point turn) is used when you need to turn the vehicle around to face the opposite direction and you are unable to complete the manoeuvre in a single motion.

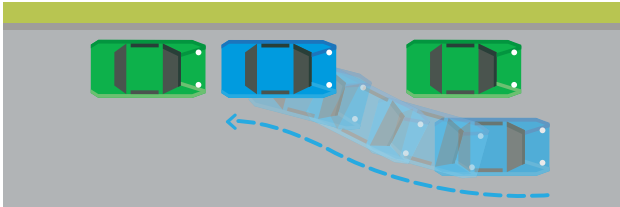
1. Use the correct process for stopping (refer to pages 34 and 36).
2. Signal your intention to turn right with your indicator.
3. When the road is clear of traffic in both directions, drive slowly forward while applying full right steering (Step A).
4. When the front wheels are within one metre of the opposite kerb, apply full left steering (Step B).
5. Stop the car before the wheels touch the kerb and apply the handbrake.
6. Select reverse gear.
7. Check in both directions to make sure the road is clear.
8. Release the handbrake and move the car slowly backwards.
9. When the rear wheels are within one metre of the kerb, apply full right steering (Step C).

10. Stop the car before the wheels touch the kerb and apply the handbrake.
11. Select first gear (or 'drive' if automatic).
12. Check the road is clear again.
13. Release the handbrake to drive forward and complete the turn, moving off on the correct side of the road (Step D).

Sometimes more than three movements may be required. This depends on the type of car and the width of the road.

Your notes:

Parallel parking



Driving into a parallel park

1. Select a parking space.
2. Check your mirrors and signal left to show your intention.
3. Slowly pull up next to (parallel with) the vehicle in front of the parking space you have selected. The rear bumper of your vehicle should be forward of the rear of the parked vehicle.
4. Check that your left indicator is on and select reverse gear.
5. Check your mirrors and constantly check for traffic or pedestrians throughout the parallel parking manoeuvre.

Extra care must be taken to make sure that the front of the vehicle does not intrude on nearby parking bays, and/or collide with any vehicles or other hazards.

The wheels of your vehicle should be within 30cm of the kerb in a straight position (parallel to the kerb), and you need to leave between one and two metres between vehicles.

6. Reverse slowly until your rear bumper passes the rear bumper of the parked vehicle and then turn the steering wheel to the left until the car is into the parking space and at an angle of 40 to 45 degrees from the kerb.
7. Straighten your wheels as you continue to slowly reverse into the parking space. When your windscreen passes the rear bumper of the parked vehicle in front of your parking space, start turning the steering wheel to the right.
8. Straighten the wheels again as you approach a parallel position with the kerb.
9. Move forward to position your vehicle in the middle of the space between the parked vehicles or parking lines. (When practicing this manoeuvre behind a single parked vehicle, your final position should be one to two metres from the rear of the other vehicle.)
10. Apply the handbrake and secure your vehicle.

It is a good idea to practice this manoeuvre in a quiet location using poles to simulate parked cars before moving on to practicing with actual parked cars when you are more confident.

Driving out of a parallel park

1. Check that the front wheels of your vehicle are facing straight ahead.
2. Check your mirrors for other vehicles or pedestrians.
3. Reverse very slowly in the space available.
4. Check your mirrors and signal right to show your intention to move off.
5. When it is safe, start moving off by turning the steering wheel to the right and drive slowly out of the parking space.

Do not disrupt the flow of traffic or pedestrians when leaving a parked position.

Your notes:

Angle parking

Always park at an angle of 90 or 45 degrees unless a sign or road marking indicates differently.

Driving into an angle park

1. Select a parking space.
2. Check your mirrors and signal your intention to park.
3. Brake and change down gears as required to arrive at the turn-in point slowly.
4. When you have a clear view into the parking space, either stop, or, if safe to do so, slowly proceed.
5. Turn the steering wheel quickly and enter the parking space in the middle between side marking lines (if the space is marked).
6. Straighten the steering wheel and drive straight ahead very slowly.
7. Stop before the front bumper of your vehicle goes over the kerb line but after the rear bumper (or towbar, if fitted) is fully within the parking bay.
8. Apply the handbrake and secure your vehicle.

Your vehicle should end up in the middle of the parking space and centrally between the parking lines.

It is a good idea to practise angle parking in a quiet location using poles or lines to simulate parking spaces. Only move on to practising in actual car parks between other vehicles when you have mastered the basics of the manoeuvre and you are confident you will not be putting the property of others at risk.

Your notes:

Driving out of an angle park

1. Select reverse gear.

Check your mirrors and look through back window over your left shoulder to make sure the road immediately behind your vehicle is clear. Whenever you are reversing you should be watching to the rear of your vehicle – the direction you are going – with frequent checks to both sides to make sure no unexpected hazards emerge during the manoeuvre.

2. Release the clutch (manual vehicles) or the brake pedal (automatic vehicles) to the friction point.
3. Release the handbrake.
4. Exit the parking space by slowly reversing the vehicle while turning the steering wheel either to the left or right, depending on which direction you intend to travel after leaving the parking space.

Take extra care to make sure the front of your vehicle does not intrude on nearby parking bays, and/or collide with any vehicles or other hazards.

5. When the vehicle has moved backwards out of the parking space and is facing in the direction you intend to travel, straighten the steering wheel so that when you start moving forward your vehicle will travel in the correct direction.

6. Bring the vehicle to a stop, select a forward gear, and then proceed forward in the new direction of travel.

It will be necessary to use some parts of the moving-off procedure (refer to pages 27 and 28) depending on the circumstances including how close other traffic is and whether the angle park is situated on a main road or in a shopping centre carpark etc.

Your notes:

Parking on steep hills

Parking facing upward on a hill

When a car is parked on the left kerb facing uphill:

- the car should be parked with the wheels turned to the right so that the front wheels will hold the car in position if it starts rolling backward.
- first gear should be engaged and the parking brake firmly applied.

Parking facing downward on a hill

When a car is parked on the left kerb facing downhill:

- the car should be parked with the wheels turned to the left so that the front wheels will hold the car in position if it starts rolling forward.
- reverse gear should be engaged and the parking brake firmly applied.

On one-way streets, you may be allowed to park on either side of the road. Reverse the direction of the turned wheels if parked on the right kerb i.e. turn wheels to left when parking facing uphill and to the right when facing downhill.