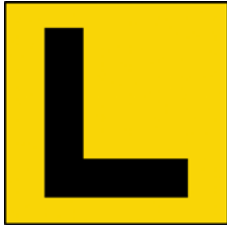




4. The Learner Driver's Guide



This section sets out details of the basic skills required by learner drivers before they present themselves for the practical driving test.

Practice Makes Perfect

Your instructor will show you the basic procedures for starting the car, changing the gears, turning corners and stopping. These procedures should be practiced until they become automatic. To remind you of the sequences the procedures are set out in the following pages. Whilst practising these procedures, remember check your mirror constantly and signal your intentions before moving off, changing course, slowing down or stopping.

Basic Driving Procedures

Cabin drill–7 steps

- 1) Get into the car.
- 2) Close and lock all doors.
- 3) Check that the handbrake is firmly on.
- 4) Adjust seat.
- 5) Adjust mirrors.
- 6) Locate controls.
- 7) Fasten and adjust seat belt.

Starting up drill – 8 steps

- 1) Check that the handbrake is firmly on.
- 2) Clutch pedal down.
- 3) Check that the gear lever is in neutral.
- 4) Switch on ignition.
- 5) Check all gauges and warning lights.
- 6) Start engine.
- 7) Check all gauges and warning lights again.
- 8) Release clutch pedal (unless you intend to move off immediately).

Note: Choke may be required for cold starts.

Moving off on level ground – 7 steps

- 1) Check the handbrake is firmly on.
- 2) Clutch pedal down (if not already down).
- 3) Select first gear.
- 4) Check mirror/s and signal intention.
- 5) Apply appropriate power.
- 6) Clutch pedal up to the 'friction point' and hold. Glance over the right shoulder to check that the road is clear.
- 7) Release the handbrake and gently release the clutch pedal until the clutch is fully engaged.

Practice Makes Perfect

Changing up – 6 steps

- 1) Increase the speed of the car until it is travelling at a speed appropriate to the next higher gear.
- 2) Clutch pedal down and release the power.
- 3) Move the gear lever to the next higher gear.
- 4) Clutch pedal up to the next friction point and simultaneously.
- 5) Apply a little power to 'balance' engine and road speeds.
- 6) Gently release the clutch pedal. Repeat until top gear is reached.

Changing down – 6 steps

- 1) Decrease the speed of the car until it is travelling at a speed appropriate to the required lower gear.
- 2) Clutch pedal down.
- 3) Move the gear lever to the required lower gear.
- 4) Clutch pedal up to the friction point and simultaneously.
- 5) Apply sufficient power to 'balance' engine and road speeds.
- 6) Gently release clutch pedal.

Stopping – 6 steps

- 1) Select stopping place.
- 2) Check mirror(s).
- 3) Signal intention (left signal). Kerbside stop only.
- 4) Brake to slightly above stalling speed.
- 5) Clutch pedal down (maintaining pressure on the brake pedal).
- 6) Cancel signals.

If stop prolonged – 3 steps

- 1) Apply handbrake.
- 2) Move gear lever to neutral.
- 3) Release clutch pedal.

Note: Traffic control signals which have just changed to red are considered to be prolonged stops.

Turning at corners – 5 steps

- 1) Check mirror/s.
- 2) Signal your intention to turn for a reasonable distance.
- 3) Brake to arrive at the corner slowly.

Practice Makes Perfect

- 4) When a view of the road onto which you intend to turn is obtained, either stop or if safe to proceed, clutch down and select a low gear.
- 5) Apply power with the right foot and at the same moment gently withdraw the clutch, turn the wheel as necessary.

Note: There is always the possibility that before turning, a driver must stop the car in order to give way. By using the above procedure the driver will be ready to stop, as both feet are already on the appropriate controls.

Uphill starts – 8 steps

- 1) Check the handbrake is firmly on.
- 2) Clutch pedal down (if not already down).
- 3) Select first gear.
- 4) Check mirror(s) and signal intention.
- 5) Apply appropriate power (more than on level ground).
- 6) Withdraw clutch until 50% of the power noise is absorbed. Keep both feet still at this point.
- 7) Glance over the right shoulder to check that the road is clear.
- 8) Without moving the feet release the handbrake and gently release the clutch pedal until the clutch is fully engaged.

Note: The car will either move forward or remain still. It will not roll backwards. In either event, apply a little more power and gently withdraw the clutch pedal.

Manoeuvres

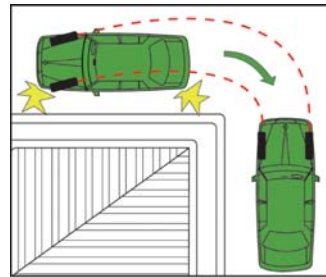
When you have mastered these basic procedures you will be introduced to the more complex manoeuvres which include reversing, U-turns, '3 point' turns and parking. These procedures are set out in detail on the following pages. These too, should be practised until they can be performed accurately and confidently. Remember the two principles of reversing:

- always look to the rear when reversing to get the best view possible; and
- when reversing drive very slowly.

Reversing and Entering to the Left

You should, whenever possible, look through the rear window over the left shoulder. This means changing the normal seating position so that your back is towards the door. The right hand should hold the wheel at 12 O'clock, the left hand being used to stabilise the body. Where a reverse to the right is required observation should be over the right shoulder and the body and arm position should be reversed so that the left hand is in the 12 O'clock position. The car should be at least 0.5 metres from the kerb, allowing freedom of movement for the front wheels. You should practice reversing into a wide entry after which the entry should be limited by using a narrow lane or your own driveway.

For practice purposes, after turning, continue on a parallel course for some distance after straightening your wheels.



Reversing into a restricted opening on the left (note path taken by front wheels).

U-turn – 4 Steps

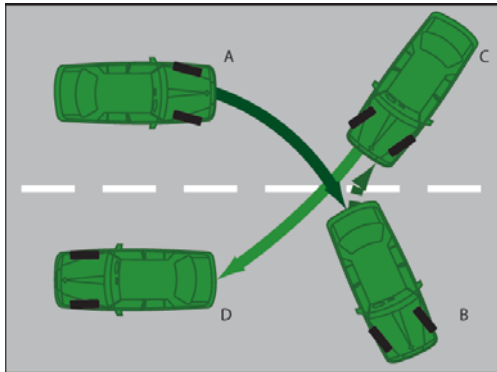
- 1) Correct sequence for stopping.
- 2) Signal your intention to turn right.
- 3) When the road is clear of traffic in both directions drive slowly forward applying full right steering.
- 4) Straighten up when the car has completed the 180 degree turn.

Note: U-turns should not be made at or near traffic lights, where a sign prohibits the same, or where other road users may be inconvenienced.

Manoeuvres

3 Point Turn – 15 Steps

- 1) Correct sequence for stopping.
- 2) Signal your intention to turn right.
- 3) When the road is clear of traffic in both directions drive slowly forward applying full right steering (Step A).
- 4) When the front wheels are within 1 metre of the opposite kerb apply full left steering (Step B).
- 5) Stop the car before the wheels touch the kerb.
- 6) Apply the handbrake.
- 7) Select reverse gear.



- 8) Check in both directions to ensure the road is clear.
- 9) Move the car slowly backwards.
- 10) When the rear wheels are within 1 metre of the kerb, apply full right steering (Step C).
- 11) Stop the car before the wheels touch the kerb.
- 12) Apply handbrake.
- 13) Select first gear.
- 14) Again check the road is clear.
- 15) Drive forward and complete the turn, moving away on the correct side of the road (Step D).

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

Parallel Parking

Driving 'in' to parallel park position – 5 steps

- 1) Assume a position 0.5 metres away from, and parallel to, the car in front and reverse until both rear bumpers are level.
- 2) Continue reversing slowly, turning the wheel very quickly to the left until the car assumes an angle of between 40 to 45 degrees.

Manoeuvres

- 3) Straighten the wheel and continue reversing until the front of your car is level with the rear of the front car.
- 4) Continue turning to the right, straightening again as the car becomes parallel with the kerb.
- 5) Move slowly forward parallel to the kerb, stopping midway between the cars.

Driving 'out' of parallel park position – 4 steps

- 1) Check that front wheels are in straight ahead position.
- 2) Reverse very slowly in the space available. Turn right immediately before stopping.
- 3) Check mirror, indicate right turn, and when safe:
- 4) Drive slowly forward out of the bay.

Where the Car Has to Be Parked Facing Upward on a Hill

Where there is a kerb the car should be parked with the wheels turned to the right so that the FRONT wheels will hold the car. First gear should be engaged and the parking brake firmly applied. Where there is no kerb the front wheel should be turned to take the car into the safest position and wheels chocked against movement. Gears and park brake should be used when the manoeuvre has been completed.

Where the Car Has to Be Parked Facing Downward on a Hill

Where there is a kerb the car should be parked with the wheels turned to the left so that the FRONT wheels will hold the car. Reverse gear should be engaged and the parking brake firmly applied. Where there is no kerb the precautions as in the above paragraph should be taken.

Manoeuvres

Angle parking

Driving into angle park – 6 steps

- 1) Check mirrors and signal intention for a reasonable distance.
- 2) Brake to arrive at the turn-in point slowly.
- 3) When a clear view into the intended parking bay (space) is obtained, either stop, or if safe to do so, slowly proceed (clutch down and select a low gear – manual vehicles).
- 4) Turn the wheel quickly and enter the space midway between side marking lines (if present).
- 5) Straighten steering and proceed straight ahead, then stop before the front bumper protrudes over kerb line but after the rear bumper (or towbar if fitted) is fully within the designated parking bay.
- 6) Make the car safe.

Driving out of angle park - 7 steps

- 1) Select reverse gear.
- 2) Check for clear roadway in both directions.
- 3) Check mirrors then look through back window – preferably over left shoulder - to ensure that the roadway immediately behind is clear. Whenever

possible whilst reversing, the driver should be observing to the rear (look where you are going) with frequent checks to both sides to ensure that no unexpected hazards emerge during the manoeuvre.

- 4) Release clutch (manual vehicles) or release brake pedal (Automatic vehicles) to the friction point – release handbrake.
- 5) Exit the parking bay by slowly reversing the vehicle whilst turning the wheel either to the left or right depending on intended direction of departure along the roadway. Extra care must be taken to ensure that the front of the vehicle does not impinge on adjacent parking bays, and/or collide with adjacent vehicles or other hazards.
- 6) When the vehicle reaches the intended direction of departure, straighten the steering to ensure that, on moving forward, the vehicle will travel in the intended direction.
- 7) Bring the vehicle to a stop, then proceed forward in the new direction of travel. It will be necessary to apply elements of the moving off procedure depending on circumstances including proximity of other traffic, any slope of the road surface etc.

Automatic Transmission

Automatic transmission allows gear changes to be made without the use of a clutch pedal. The changes can be made by the driver in the usual way, selecting the gear appropriate to needs – or the selector can be left in drive position, which means that the gears will be changed automatically according to the various loads placed on the engine while the car is being driven. The selector can be set in a number of positions depending on the make and model of car. Provision is usually made for the transmission to be held in a low gear and in addition a neutral and park position is provided. 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. As a safety precaution the engine of automatic transmission car cannot be started until the neutral or park position has been selected. If the engine will not start, check the selector has been moved to either the 'N' or 'P' position. An important point to remember when intending to move off from a stationary position is to apply the foot brake while engaging the appropriate selector position. If this is not done the car may move off prematurely.

Variations From Standard Procedures When Driving Automatic Transmission

Starting the engine – 3 steps

- 1) Handbrake on.
- 2) Selector at 'Park'.
- 3) Start engine.

Moving off – 7 steps

- 1) Right foot on brake pedal.
- 2) Select 'Drive' position.
- 3) Check mirrors and signal intention.
- 4) Glance over right shoulder to check that the road is clear.
- 5) Release foot brake pedal
- 6) Apply appropriate power on accelerator pedal.
- 7) Release handbrake to move off gently.

Stopping

To stop the car place the right foot on the brake and apply appropriate pressure.

Automatic Transmission

Re-starting (on level ground after temporary stop)

Remove foot from brake pedal and apply power.

Steep hills

The use of first and second gear positions should be considered when driving up or down steep hills. The car is then held in the gear you select. In the case of long steep downgrades the use of these lower gears helps restrain the car, which otherwise tends to run away.

Study the handbook

Automatic transmissions vary between makes and models and the handbook provided for your car should be carefully studied.

There is usually provision for changing gears by the use of the accelerator pedal. Your handbook will give you details applicable to the car you drive.

The principles involved in manoeuvring an automatic transmission car are the same as those already shown for the manual car.

Night Driving

Night driving has two essential prerequisites:

- good lighting equipment; and
- a spotlessly clean window.

Make sure you have both before attempting to drive at night. Compared with daylight driving, visibility at night is extremely limited. Even with the best street lighting combined with the most efficient headlights your ability to see at night is very much reduced.

Poor street lighting produces conditions which call for the utmost care. Isolated patches of light against a black background place a great strain on the eyes, which are constantly trying to adjust themselves to the changing light conditions. In these circumstances reduced speed is called for and a very careful lookout must be kept for both pedestrians and cyclists. Where there is no street lighting, driving is usually easier because the headlights give a constant amount of light which the eyes get accustomed to.

Normally, high-beam should be used, but you must change to low-beam when facing oncoming traffic and when closely following behind other traffic.

Dazzle is sometimes a problem, and a dirty windscreen accentuates this. If the light of an approaching vehicle dazzles you, slow down and avoid looking directly at them. Concentrate on looking at the edge of the road until the offending headlights have passed.

Basic Knowledge

The procedures set out in the previous paragraphs of this booklet are concerned solely with the use of the car's controls. It must be remembered, however, that there is much more to driving than a mere ability to make a car go, stop, or turn a corner.

Driving is a complex task and requires the use and coordination of various skills. Despite the need for a high level of concentration and attention some drivers become distracted because they engage in other activities while driving. This can include talking with passengers, tuning the radio, smoking, eating or drinking, shaving, applying cosmetics, map reading etc. Drivers can also become distracted by events happening outside of the car.

It is important to stay focused while driving and avoid becoming distracted. The overall principle of driving is that you should drive with the maximum degree of safety and the minimum of inconvenience to other road users.

This calls for skill in handling the car, combined with the conscientious application of the rules of 'defensive driving' – and above all, consideration for other road users.

These three ingredients together form the basis of safe driving.

Defensive Driving

Defensive Driving means driving so as to avoid becoming involved in a crash-producing situation. Most crashes occur because the crash-producing situation was not recognised in advance. Here are some worthwhile rules which will help to make your driving crash-free.

Following Distance

'Following Distance' is the safety space allowed between the vehicle you are driving and the vehicle immediately in front. This distance varies depending on the speed you are travelling and the braking ability of your vehicle and the vehicle in front.

The acceptable minimum following distance which is considered reasonably safe is the distance your vehicle will travel in two seconds. This distance allows you time to glance at mirrors, signs, side roads and vehicles further ahead while maintaining a sufficient safety space should the vehicle ahead suddenly brake.

To estimate this 'Following Distance' use the 'Time Lapse Formula'. This applies at any speed.

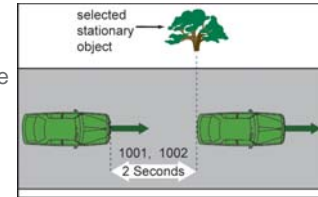
Time Lapse Formula

Allow 2 seconds to elapse between the time when the rear of the vehicle ahead passes some stationary object (eg a tree or power pole) and the front of your vehicle reaches that point.

To estimate that time, as the rear of the vehicle ahead passes over the selected point, count 1001, 1002 and your vehicle should not have reached that point in that time. This method applies at any speed.

In most cases you should at least double the count to four seconds if:

- the road is wet or slippery;
- your vehicle does not have the same braking ability as the vehicle in front; or
- the vehicle behind you is 'tailgating'.



Note: The 'following distance' is not the total stopping distance.

Always expect the unexpected – it often happens!

Make allowance for the possible mistakes of others.

Defensive Driving

Work out the probable intentions of other road users – but leave a margin for the possibility of them doing something else! Always give at least 1 metre clearance for all cars parked at the kerb side. You will then avoid hitting the door if it should open.

Give at least 2 metres clearance for cars angle-parked. Drivers reversing from these positions often cannot see cars approaching.

Give 2 metres clearance when passing bicycles – they often wobble just as you are about to pass. When braking is required the initial pressure on the pedal should be very gentle. This will light up the brake warning lamps and give following drivers as much warning as possible of your intention to slow down or stop.

Look at the drivers of other cars approaching your path – rather than at the car itself. You can learn much more. If a driver is looking in your direction you can assume that you can be seen. If the driver is not looking, you must assume that you cannot be seen. Having stopped at a level crossing in a queue of cars, never proceed until there is sufficient space for you on the other side of the crossing. Following the car in front in these circumstances can be most dangerous.

Regard your brakes as your first line of defence. Avoid the impulse to swerve when a car which should have given way to you fails to do so.

Always be ready to concede to other road users what is more than their legal right. The above rules are by no means exhaustive. As you become more experienced you will be able to add your own “do’s’ and don’ts” to those given here.