



Taxi Driver Assessments

Candidate's Information

This information leaflet details what the Taxi (and Private Hire) Driver Assessment involves and what is expected by the Examiner so candidates can be fully prepared.

Candidates often fail the assessment because they have not prepared for the assessment. We therefore strongly recommend candidates undertake some refresher training before the assessment. You can find full details on our website www.drivesafe.org.uk/taxi where you can also view Frequently Asked Questions.

Booking an assessment

A Taxi Driver Assessment can be booked online or by phone. Please have your Driving Licence Number and debit/credit card ready:

 www.drivesafe.org.uk/taxi

 **0300 123 1518** (we're open 8.30am – 3.00pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays).



1. Driving licence and identity check

All candidates **MUST** provide photographic identification at the start of the assessment:

- Photocard style driving licence **OR**
- Old paper style driving licence **AND** Passport or similar photographic identification

2. Eyesight test

At the start, candidates must be able to read a number plate from a distance of:

- 20m (for vehicles with a newer-style number plate)

Candidates must use glasses or contact lenses during the whole test if needed to read the number plate. The assessment will end if the candidate fails the eyesight test.

3. Vehicle road-worthiness check

The car must:

- be taxed
- be fully covered by a valid motor insurance policy
- be roadworthy and have a current MOT (if it's over 3 years old)
- have no warning lights showing (e.g. the airbag warning light)
- have no tyre damage and the legal tread depth on each tyre (a space-saver spare tyre must not be fitted)
- be smoke-free (this means the candidate can't smoke in it just before or during the test)
- be able to reach at least 62mph and have a mph speedometer
- have 4 wheels and a maximum authorised mass (MAM) of no more than 3,500 kg

The examiner will check the following visual safety checks before the driving assessment commences:

- Tyres (tread / correctly inflated / no cuts or bulges)
- Lights (Examiner may ask candidate to operate lights with engine switched off)
- Windscreen wipers and washer operational
- Windows and mirrors clean
- Seatbelts operational
- No warning lights are showing

The assessment will end if the vehicle is not roadworthy and road legal in the opinion of the Examiner, and the assessment fee will be lost.

4. Drive including urban, rural and where possible motorway

The assessment will include:

- a variety of road types: urban, rural and where possible motorway
- around 10 minutes of independent driving
- stops at the side of the road as if a passenger is getting in or out

The assessment may include:

- a controlled ('emergency') stop

The following will be assessed:

4.1 Controls

All the controls such as foot pedals, gear stick and steering should be handled smoothly. The examiner should not have to assist or prompt the candidate in the operation of the clutch, accelerator, gears, steering, brakes or any of the auxiliary controls that it may become necessary to use to maintain the safety of the vehicle and other road users.

The candidate should:

- ensure the handbrake is engaged and that neutral is selected before starting the engine
- make proper use of the accelerator and clutch to make a smooth start
- always press down on the clutch before stopping
- select the correct gear to match the road and traffic conditions
- change gear in good time but not too soon before a hazard
- don't allow the vehicle to coast by running in neutral or with the clutch depressed
- avoid looking at the gear stick when changing gear
- use the foot brake smoothly and progressively
- brake in plenty of time for any hazard
- make full use of the parking brake where necessary
- steer the vehicle as smoothly as possible
- avoid harsh steering or steering too early or too late

4.2 Ancillary Controls

An understanding of the function of all controls and switches, especially those relating to road safety, should be shown. The candidate should be able to access all controls without having to look down to locate them.

4.3 Move off

The candidate must be able to:

- move away safely, under control, on the level, from behind a parked car and where practicable, on a hill, with the correct observations, and without endangering or inconveniencing other road users
- demonstrate they can co-ordinate the use of the clutch and accelerator to move the vehicle from rest on level ground and on up-hill and down-hill gradients, without stalling or over-revving the engine
- move away quickly from rest, to take advantage of safe gaps in the traffic if they arise

The candidate should not:

- over-rev the engine
- roll backwards on uphill gradients
- lurch forwards as the clutch is released

4.4 Emergency stop

Even and progressive braking should be demonstrated. There should be no locking of the wheels. In wet weather conditions the candidate should understand that the stopping distance could be doubled.

4.5 Stopping at the side of the road

As this is common practice when driving a taxi the examiner will require the candidate to perform two or three stops. The candidate should:

- pull up at a reasonable distance from the kerb where it is safe, legal and convenient
- apply the handbrake
- select neutral gear
- make sure there are no obstructions, such as a street light column, that would stop a passenger opening the door

4.6 Use of Mirrors

Candidates should use the mirrors safely and effectively acting correctly to what they see.

Where mirrors are not enough, for example to cover blind spots, then the candidate should take effective rear observation.

Mirrors should always be checked carefully before signalling, changing direction or speed.

Candidates should demonstrate the **Mirror – Signal – Manoeuvre** (MSM) routine effectively.

4.7 Signalling

The candidate must give signals clearly and in good time to warn other road users of intentions in accordance with the Highway Code. Signals should be cancelled after any manoeuvre has been completed.

Candidates should not signal so early that the signal becomes confusing to others, or so late that they don't have time to react safely to it.

All signals must conform to the Highway Code. Candidates should not flash headlights or beckon other road users to tell them they are giving way.

4.8 Response to signs and road markings

The candidate must understand and be able to react to all traffic signs and road markings; check when proceeding through green lights, and respond to signals given by police officers, traffic wardens, school crossing patrols and all other road users.

4.9 Use of speed

Safe and reasonable progress should be made according to the road, weather and traffic conditions, the road signs and speed limits. Candidates should always be able to stop within the distance they can see to be clear.

Candidates must:

- take current road conditions into account
- drive at a safe speed for those conditions
- not drive unnecessarily slow but not too fast for the relevant road conditions

4.10 Following distance

The candidate must maintain a safe distance from the vehicle ahead in all conditions, including when stopping in traffic queues, and must react promptly to any change in speed of other vehicles.

When driving on good, dry roads the candidate should use the two second rule as a guide to a safe separation distance. If the road is wet the following distance should be increased.

The candidate should always drive at a speed so that they can stop within the distance that can be seen to be clear.

4.11 Maintaining progress and avoiding undue hesitation

Appropriate speeds must be maintained and the type of road, the speed limit, the type and density of traffic, the weather and visibility must be taken into account.

A safe approach to all hazards should be demonstrated without being over-cautious. All safe opportunities to proceed at junctions should be taken.

Where it is safe to do so, candidates should keep the flow of traffic moving.

Candidates must demonstrate to the examiner that they can drive confidently and competently. If candidates regularly stop at junctions when they could safely continue, keep slowing down for minor or non-existent hazards or keep driving unnecessarily slowly, this will demonstrate to the examiner that they lack the confidence to drive safely.

Candidates must be able to judge when it is safe to move out into traffic, without causing other traffic to change speed or direction.

The examiner will check candidates do not:

- sit waiting at junctions, allowing safe gaps to pass
- over-react to minor hazards
- drive unnecessarily slowly, when it is safe and proper to drive at normal road speeds

4.12 Junctions

The correct procedure must be demonstrated at all types of junctions. The mirror-signal-manoeuve routine must also be demonstrated, as should good all-round observations and safe responses to other road users.

Candidates should:

- judge the correct speed when approaching a junction
- position the vehicle correctly
- use the correct lane
- if turning right, keep as near to the centre of the road as is safe to do so
- avoid cutting the corner when turning right
- if turning left, keep over to the left and do not swing out
- watch for cyclists and motorcyclists coming up on your left and pedestrians who are crossing
- make effective observation before moving into a junction and make sure it is safe before proceeding
- The examiner will check candidates do not:
- endanger other road users by pulling out in front of them, causing them to change speed or direction

4.13 Judgement

Candidates must show correct response when dealing with other road users including overtaking, meeting oncoming traffic and turning across traffic. Other road users should not be made to slow down, swerve or stop. Candidates must be able to judge the speed of approaching vehicles and plan the road ahead so that they do not cause other vehicles to take evasive action if they meet in a restriction in the road or turn across their path.

Overtaking:

If candidates encounter a slower moving vehicle, and if it is safe to do so, the examiner will expect them to overtake it. When overtaking, candidates must:

- select a safe place
- take effective observations
- select the correct gear to give maximum acceleration for the speed they are travelling
- complete the manoeuvre quickly

The examiner will look to see candidates:

- overtake only if it is safe to do so
- allow enough room when overtaking a vehicle; cyclists/motorcyclist should be given the same room as a car
- avoid cutting in too early after overtaking

Meeting:

If candidates encounter a restriction in the road, such as a parked car on the side of the road, they must plan their approach and be prepared to slow down or stop. If the restriction is on their side of the road, and traffic is coming the other way, the examiner will expect candidates to stop. If the restriction is on the other side of the road, candidates should not assume a vehicle coming the other way will slow down or stop.

The examiner will look to see candidates:

- plan the situation early
- take appropriate action, slowing down or stopping if necessary
- give way to vehicles already in the hazard
- negotiate the hazard safely

Crossing:

Turning right across the path of approaching traffic is a particularly hazardous exercise. Candidates must be able to:

- judge the distance of the approaching vehicle
- judge the speed of the approaching vehicle
- move away and turn quickly

4.14 Positioning

The correct road position should be maintained at all times according to the type of road, the direction being taken and the presence of parked vehicles.

In normal driving conditions candidates should position the car well to the left.

The candidate should allow plenty of room when passing stationary vehicles and other obstructions that may be obscuring pedestrians. When passing stationary vehicles candidates should give enough room for the door to open.

Candidates should demonstrate good lane discipline and should take up the correct position on approach to hazards in good time.

4.15 Pedestrian crossings

The correct type of crossing should be recognised and the correct procedure demonstrated. Candidates should:

- at zebra crossings slow down and stop if anyone is waiting to cross
- give way to pedestrians on a pelican crossing when the amber lights are flashing
- give way to cyclists as well as pedestrians on a toucan crossing and act correctly at puffin crossings
- demonstrate courtesy and consideration for people waiting to cross

4.16 Awareness and planning

The candidate should think and plan ahead and anticipate the actions of other road users, should demonstrate safe attitudes when dealing with vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders and think and plan ahead so that they can:

- judge what other road users are going to do
- predict how their actions will affect them
- react in good time

5. Parking exercise

The candidate must be able to park accurately, by reversing:

- either into a parking space (bay parking)
- or into a parking space behind another vehicle (parallel parking)

The parking exercise must be executed under full control. Good all-round observation is essential, as is responding correctly to other road users.

The examiner will mark:

- accuracy
- observations
- judgement

The candidate can move forward or backwards once in order to correct their position.

5.1 Bay parking

The candidate must park the car straight and central in the bay and must judge accurately the distance of the rear of the vehicle with regard to any kerb, road marking, barrier or other vehicle.

5.2 Parallel parking

When parallel parking, the candidate should park the car a reasonable distance from the kerb.

6. Taxi manoeuvre

The assessment will require the candidate to undertake a manoeuvre where they are asked to turn their vehicle to face the opposite direction.

The examiner will select a section of road where there are various options available to do this. The candidate should select the safest and most appropriate method of turning the car around.

Methods the candidate can choose from are:

- a turn in the road using forward and reverse gears
- a left or right turn reverse
- a U-turn within the width of the road
- using the mouth of a junction on the left or right in which to swing around

All manoeuvres must be made safely, under control and in accordance with the Highway Code. A private driveway should not be used.

6.1 Turn in the road

Must be executed under full control. Good all-round observation is essential as is responding correctly to other road users. The candidate must demonstrate a high degree of ability to control the car at low speed.

The examiner will want to see that the candidate:

- can control the speed of the car by using the clutch
- can steer effectively and know which way to turn the steering wheel
- can compensate for the road camber
- retains full control of the car
- makes proper observations
- does not mount or hit the kerb

6.2 Left or right turn reverse

Must be executed under full control and with reasonable accuracy. Good all-round observation is essential as is responding correctly to other road users. The candidate must demonstrate a high degree of ability to control the car at low speed. The examiner will want to see that the candidate:

- can control the speed of the car by using the clutch
- can steer effectively and know which way to turn the steering wheel
- retains full control of the car
- makes proper observations
- does not mount or hit the kerb and keeps a reasonable distance from the kerb

6.3 U-turn within the width of the road

Good all-round observation is essential as is responding correctly to other road users. The examiner will want to see that the candidate:

- retains full control of the car
- makes proper observations
- does not mount or hit the kerb

6.4 Using the mouth of a junction

The candidate may use the mouth of a junction on the left or right in which to swing around.

Good all-round observation is essential as is responding correctly to other road users. The examiner will want to see that the candidate:

- retains full control of the car
- makes proper observations
- does not mount or hit the kerb
- does not reverse out of minor road into a major road

7. Independent driving

Candidates have to drive for about 10 minutes by following either:

- traffic signs
- a series of verbal directions
- a combination of both

The examiner can show a simple diagram to help the candidate understand where they're going when following verbal directions.

Independent driving is not a test of the candidate's orientation and navigation skills, it is about being capable of making their own decisions whilst driving, about their route and how to safely navigate that route without prompts - this includes deciding when it's safe and appropriate to ask for confirmation about where they are going.

- Can't see traffic signs

If the candidate can't see a traffic sign (for example, because it's covered by trees), the examiner will give directions until the candidate can see the next one.

- Forgetting the directions

The candidate can ask the examiner to confirm the directions if they forget them. It doesn't matter if candidates don't remember every direction.

- Going off the route

The test result won't be affected if the candidate goes off the route, unless they make a fault while doing it. The examiner will help get back on the route if the candidate takes a wrong turning.

8. Highway Code and 'cabology' questions

After returning to the assessment centre, candidates will be asked:

- Highway Code questions
- traffic sign questions
- 'cabology' questions (e.g. on the vehicle safety, responsibilities as a taxi driver or on the safety of passengers)


End of the Assessment

At the end of the assessment the Examiner will tell the candidate if they have passed or failed and offer to give a debrief.

If the candidate has passed they will be issued with a certificate. Do not lose this as it will be needed by the Local Authority issuing the Taxi or Private Hire Licence.

For more information

Please contact us:

 www.drivesafe.org.uk/taxi - where you can view our Frequently Asked Questions

 **0300 123 1518** - we're open 8.30am – 3.00pm Monday to Friday excluding bank holidays.

 taxi@drivesafe.org.uk