

Driving Tips for drivers going for their road test.

***Adjust your mirrors:** Most drivers adjust their side mirrors, so they can see the edge of their vehicle.

But that area of your vehicle is already visible with the rear-view mirror. Instead, sit at the steering wheel and place your head against the driver-side window and set the mirror so you can just barely see the edge of your vehicle.

For the passenger-side mirrors, tilt your head over the centre console and again adjust the mirror so you can just barely see the side of the vehicle. With the mirrors in these positions, you'll greatly reduce your blind spots. It's impossible to eliminate all the blind-spots and **checking over your shoulder before turns and lane changes is still a must and will be watched by the examiner.** And don't forget to use those mirrors, by glancing at the mirrors approximately every five seconds, a good driver maintains a sense of what's going on around their vehicle long before they plan any lane changes and stops.

Lane changing: **1.** Glance in the rear-view mirror to find out if it is safe. **2.** If safe; signal on. **3.** Check your Blind Spot (Shoulder Check) and **look forward.** before moving over **4.** (keeping your speed) to your intended lane. **5.** Cancel Signal.

***Lane changes** are done on the test when, changing lanes, pulling over to curb to park on a hill, pulling in and out from a curb (3-point turn).

***Keep your eyes moving:** Many drivers tend to stare at one thing for several seconds as they drive and typically that thing is the vehicle ahead of them. Look at least a block ahead, for stop signs, all way stops and traffic lights. Practice checking your rear-view mirror every 5 seconds (a glance is all it takes) and scanning all the other cars on the road instead of just straight ahead. Most drivers are not fully mindful of traffic around them as it constantly changes, so become more aware of other drivers around your vehicle and especially behind you. Scan and be alert for signs warning you of speed, construction (Spring Summer and Fall) and any changes to the road.

***Look left to right (SCAN)** at all intersections for cross traffic or vehicles pulling out from areas hidden by snow banks. Before moving off from a stopped position at lights or stop sign, in case of other drivers running a light. **On the road test, the examiners watch for slight head movement left to right and can dock marks if not obvious to them.**

Space, when driving *** Keep a good 3 second or more following distance** when following other cars.

***When stopping at traffic lights or stop sign,** keep one car-length behind the other vehicle in front, this will give you space in front when lights change.

Steering smoothness **on turns and all parking manoeuvres** is also important and can also attribute to losing marks on a road test.

Speed: On the road test the examiners ask at the beginning that you OBEY all signs and signals. This means that the speed limit is strictly enforced and could result in a fail if going over the limit or driving too slow also. The road test limit is 50klm and 40klm around posted areas such as school zones.

Left and Right Turns: When turning left, always turn from a left lane to a left lane, then change lanes to the right lane on the road test. *(the examiner doesn't tell you to change back to the right lane).*

Turns are also a very prominent feature on the test and the examiner wants to see turns into the proper lane (left to left and right to right) When turning left, try not to 'cut' the corner, which is difficult when you can't see yellow line, and turn smoothly into proper lane, then regain appropriate speed.

Driving Tips for drivers of all ages. continued

2. **Parking:** On the road test there are three parking manoeuvres, PARALLEL PARK / 3-POINT TURN / PARKING ON A HILL. These can all be done by reading the steps shown on our website

(Go to Downloads, then Parking Tips)

The parking can also be done step by step as it's important not to rush these skills and it is suggested to carry them out as shown on the website page one step at a time.

There is nothing on the road test to suggest you should rush the parking or accomplish it in one movement. Practice one of these skills each time you drive until they become a habit.

*An important note: Don't pull out into traffic (from a stopped position) unless you have time to make the manoeuvre safely and NOT impede other drivers.

Doing this is a dangerous action and can lead to instant failure.

It takes a driver about 3 seconds to make an actual turn (more in adverse conditions) and between 2 to 3 seconds to cross an intersection (in a 50 km zone) so allow about a 6 second distance (nearly a half block) to make the turn, crossing or pulling into traffic.

What can fail a driver on the road test:

*Braking Too Hard: erratic braking.

*Lack of Steering Control:, steering.

*Following Too Closely: follow the 3-second rule.

*Driving Too Slowly / Driving Too Fast for Conditions: ***Speeding or Going too slow:** *Caution is a word used by many drivers and in their estimation, they are driving with care (thoughtfulness) but caution in the driving sense is a skill and used correctly can equate to attentiveness to 'risk avoidance' whereas in mature drivers it's compensating for declining skills.*

*Rolling Stops: **Not making full stops** at red lights or stop signs (stop for the count of 3).

*Not Checking Mirrors: **Not observing enough** (mirrors, blind spots, other traffic) or making it obvious to the examiner.

*Confusion at Four-Way Stops

*Improper Lane Changing: see "Lane Changing" and /or Changing Lanes in an Intersection.

*Distracted Driving

*Improper Freeway Merging (G road-test)

*Parallel Parking: or any parking manoeuvre

*Not yielding to other road users (pedestrians included)

*Not obeying Signs / Traffic Lights

*An accumulation of errors made during the drive.

*Car Fail: Problems with the vehicle used for the road-test. Malfunctioning lights, safety issues.

Note: Although mature or seniors have the experience of years of driving, this doesn't always qualify them as good drivers or that they will pass a road test.

Habits built over many years are difficult to change and this sometimes is the most difficult barrier to overcome.

The examiners job is to make a qualitative assessment: measured by the quality of driving rather than the quantity (length of time) of the clients driving.

Hopefully the motivation of retaining the privilege to drive can help accomplish this aim and following the guidelines above helps accomplish this goal.

Check out our website, *seniors page* for more help or tips at www.progressivedriving.ca