



## **Guidelines for candidates conducting trailer training**

Some areas the Instructor will consider when assessing your driving.

### **Steering**

This should be smooth and accurate at all times. It is important that the driver is in full control of the steering wheel and in most circumstances the best way to achieve this is with both hands in contact with the wheel. The pull push method described in Roadcraft (Police driving manual) will help with this. <http://www.roadcraft.co.uk>

### **Clutch**

Operation should be smooth and progressive showing good balance with the accelerator to achieve smooth gear changes. However, you should not 'ride' the clutch or slip it excessively.

### **Gears**

The manner in which you use the gears can tell a lot about your ability as a driver. The Instructor will look for how you hold the gear lever to assist with positive location of the desired gear, the timing of your gear changes and how you match the engine speed, road speed and the gear to make changes smoothly.

### **Brakes**

The Instructor will expect brake application to be smooth and progressive with the pressure on the pedal being reduced gradually as unwanted speed is lost. Brake application should generally be in one smooth operation for any hazard.

### **Accelerator**

Smooth use of the accelerator together with good acceleration sense can do much to make the drive smooth and fuel efficient. The Instructor will be looking for the smooth application of the appropriate amount of power at the right time for the circumstances.

### **Mirrors**

You cannot make appropriate plans for hazards ahead unless you are fully aware of what is happening behind you. Therefore the Instructor will be looking for correct use of the mirrors. Remember there are times when a shoulder check is required no matter how much you have used your mirrors.

### **Horn**

The consideration of the use of the horn is as important in driving as actually using it. The Instructor will be looking to see if you correctly consider the use of the horn, do you move your hand / fingers to cover the horn, and if you do use it, is that use appropriate for the circumstances? Is the use timed correctly, is the length of the horn use correct? Remember the horn is a means of informing other road users of your presence, it is not a form of rebuke.

## **Visibility**

Ensure all windows and mirrors are clear and allow you the view intended by the vehicle manufacturer. Make full use of demisting facilities and fresh air flow by opening a window as required, remember air conditioning systems can also assist in demisting windows and keeping them that way. Any stickers etc should not obstruct your view through the windows and ensure that the area swept by the windscreen wipers is not obstructed.

## **Moving off and stopping**

Whenever you move off or stop you must ensure it is safe to do so and your actions should be smooth and precise. Remember when you initially move off this will be the first impression the instructor has of your driving. Make it a good one. Before moving off it is vital you conduct 'all round' observation, including mirrors and blind spot checks, then signal as appropriate. Similarly, when you intend to stop, ensure you check mirrors and signal your intention if appropriate remembering to brake smoothly. If this is the conclusion of your assessment it is the last impression you give the instructor, so make it a good one.

## **Use of the System - Roadcraft**

The instructor will discuss this with you to see how well you understand and apply the phases of The System, are they well timed and appropriate, do you go back to an appropriate earlier phase if circumstances change on the approach to a hazard? Do you consistently take, use and give information throughout your application of The System?

## **Positioning**

If you are to take in all the information available at any time, then you need to position the unit appropriately. This applies equally to roads subject to lower speed restrictions (30, 40 and 50) as it does to roads subject to the national speed limit. Consider on the approach to a hazard whether your position provides you with the best view whilst retaining appropriate safety margins? Remember you can assist other road users by making sure they can see you as well. However never sacrifice safety for view. If moving to a position to obtain what you consider to be the best view would place you in actual or potential danger, then do not do it!

## **Cornering**

You must always be able to stop on your own side of the road in the distance you can see to be clear. The Instructor will look at the line you take on the approach and through the corner, did it give you the best view with appropriate safety margins, was your speed of approach correct and were you in the right gear? You will be expected to control the unit smoothly and accurately maintaining stability through correct use of the controls and good observation and planning.

## **Signals**

Signals are the primary way you give information to other road users about your intentions. They must be given correctly and at the right time to avoid confusion. Give them only when they will benefit another road user and remember they indicate your intention, not what you are already doing. Remember giving a signal does not give you the right to conduct the manoeuvre.

## **Reaction to signs, markings and hazards**

As a trailer driver you need to be able to recognise and react to road signs, markings and hazards in good time. In this way you give yourself time to react and form a driving plan. The Instructor will be looking for evidence of this in the timing and manner of response to the various signs and hazards that you come across.

## **Reversing**

You will be asked to carry out a reversing manoeuvre. You will be expected to make all necessary checks to ensure it is safe to reverse, remember that aids, reversing sensors / cameras etc are just that, an aid. There is no substitute for proper all-round observation including listening, consider lowering a window. Stopping the vehicle during the manoeuvre to realign it may be acceptable depending on the circumstances.

## **Speed**

Respect your unit and do not ask too much of it. Always drive within the capabilities of the unit you are in whilst not being afraid to allow it to give you its optimum performance.

## **Concentration**

Concentration is a prerequisite of trailer driving and distractions are an ever present element with which you must deal whilst displaying a calm controlled approach to your driving. As part of this the Instructor may ask you questions relating to the conditions encountered.

## **Observations**

One of the skills of a trailer driver is the ability to see hazards and situations developing earlier than lesser skilled drivers. This is achieved by constantly scanning all around taking in the near, middle and distant views as well as to the rear. Like positioning mentioned earlier, this skill is just as relevant in lower speed limits as it is on the open road. The Instructor will be looking to see how and when you react to changes in conditions.

## **Temperament**

Ensure your seating position is comfortable and allows you easy access to all the vehicle controls. If you are comfortable you will be more able to demonstrate a calm controlled and confident manner throughout the test. The Instructor will anticipate you being nervous and will make some allowances for this so try not to let nerves affect your performance.

## **Judging distance**

The Instructor will look to see what you consider a safe following distance. How you use acceleration sense to maintain a safe following position and your appreciation of the speed and distance of approaching vehicles.

## **Motorways and dual carriageways**

When intending to join these roads from a slip road with more than one lane you should generally, dependent on traffic conditions, use the one which gives you the best view of the main carriageway. Use this view and acceleration sense to give you the correct speed to merge with the traffic on that carriageway smoothly and safely. When planning to leave the motorway allow time to get into lane 1 without having to 'cut across' other vehicles. When joining or leaving such roads consider a signal as required to inform other road users of your intentions.

## **Theory questions**

Following the on-road element of the test the Instructor will ask you some questions to check your knowledge of The Highway Code. You may also be asked some questions relating to your vehicle.