



## PRE DRIVE CHECK ADVICE FOR CARS

### Do we need to do one?

Firstly, the Car Test Guidelines issued by RoADAR, amongst other things states –

*“Before attending for the test ensure that you feel well prepared as this will help you to be more relaxed. .... You **may** be asked to conduct or talk through the pre drive checks for yourself and your vehicle, conduct an eyesight test by reading a number plate, and to carry out a moving brake test. This brake test only needs to be firm enough to confirm to the examiner that the brakes are working, it is not an emergency stop! Remember if you wear spectacles or contact lenses to drive you must wear them during the test.”*

So it says, you *may* be asked to do one.

However, secondly the Examiner's Marking Manual, Section A, under Preparation, states -

*“Before starting the driver should ensure that the vehicle is roadworthy and that he/she is familiar with the controls. A Pre-driving check accompanied by an explanation should be given. A moving brake check should be sufficient to indicate a serious fault and warrant further investigation. It is not necessary for the brake check to be at a speed that tests the seatbelts.”*

And the RoADAR Examiners Notes for Guidance (10/08) para 5.52 states –

*“Pre driving checks should be given as in Roadcraft. It is suggested that you tell candidates that they are to regard this drive with you as the first journey of the day in that vehicle. You will therefore expect a rolling brake test as early as possible.....”*

It is important to remember then that a pre drive check should be carried out before every guidance session and definitely on your test. The Examiner may not ask you to do a pre check, however you will be expected to do one so practise and remember to do it!

With the variety of cars on the road today, ie diesel, petrol, hybrids, mild hybrids and fully electric vehicles some of the advice below may not be relevant to everyone and may need to be adapted for your own vehicle. However, please see below for a summary of what you need to consider and check before going out on a guidance session or before your test.

Guidance for how to undergo a pre drive check can be found in Roadcraft, pages 274 – 278 and in Annexe 6 of the Highway Code..

## **Why do we do one?**

To inform the Examiner that you are familiar with your car and its controls.

To inform the Examiner that the tyres, wiper blades, washer bottle etc have been checked and are okay.

To introduce the car to the Examiner and explain added features etc, especially in newer cars that have many different safety aspects, and any other traits that the car may have, such as the parking brake operation.

To inform the Examiner that you are safe to drive, (remember the acronym I AM SAFE) and to notify him of any disabilities, special needs that you have.

To demonstrate to the Examiner that the brakes are in working order – see handout re moving brake test.

## **Where and when?**

The whole pre driving check can be done from inside your vehicle, however depending on where you meet the Examiner and the weather, you may opt to physically walk round your vehicle with the Examiner to check on the external aspects. There is no need to lift the bonnet or get your tyre pressure gauge out.

It should be started before you start the engine and signifies, in a way, the start of your test.

## **Is your VEHICLE fit to drive?**

This is a general roadworthy check and may be more applicable to police drivers who could find themselves driving different cars every day. However your vehicle should be roadworthy and if applicable should have an MOT certificate.

As you walk towards your vehicle look for any damage that may have occurred and check for any leaks/fluids under the vehicle.

Ensure that your vehicle is clean and that all windows and mirrors are clear and clean.

## **Are YOU fit to drive?**

Roadcraft page 274 explains the acronym - I AM SAFE

Are you feeling ill?

How is your attitude?

Are you on medication?

Have you had enough sleep?

Are you still affected by alcohol?

Are you hungry - low blood sugar – need food?

How are you emotionally?

### **POWDER checklist**

Do this before you attend your guidance session/test.

P = Petrol, however this could equally refer to diesel or electrical charge so we prefer to say that P = Power - the Power to propel your vehicle. Have you sufficient P?

O = Oil - ensure your oil level is appropriate - not necessary for an all EV.

W = Water. This is your radiator, washer bottles etc. Depending on how technically minded you are you can mention brake and hydraulic fluid but these are usually checked in a service and many vehicles now have warning lights for low fluid levels.

D = Damage - check this on walking toward the car.

E = Electrics - confirm that all lights are in working order.

R = Rubber - this includes tyres and wiper blades. Make sure you check your tyres regularly for their condition, tread and their pressure. Confirm to the Examiner/Tutor that you have done this and are happy that the tyres and wiper blades are in good condition. Remember that the Tutor /Examiner can refuse to go out with you if they deem your vehicle to have unsafe tyres. You can also mention if your vehicle has a spare tyre, a temporary run flat tyre or a repair kit.

### **How long should it take?**

The whole pre drive check should last only a few minutes. There is no need to point out individual controls, unless you think this is necessary for your particular car, ie the handbrake, stop/start etc. Just mention that it is your car, you are in your usual comfortable driving position and you are familiar with all the controls etc.

### **Internal checks**

Introduce your car, make and model and Power method. Auto/manual, number of gears, additional driving aids and any other special features that the Tutor/Examiner may need to be aware of. However, please don't put yourself in a position though, that if the Examiner asks you what a particular button is for, you reply that you don't know, as you should know! Look in your car handbook beforehand!

Doors closed properly - check via your side mirrors that there is a smooth line down the side of your car.

Seat belts - depending on where you are parked. If you are on the road then put seat belts on as soon as you get in the car in case you get rear ended. If in a car park then put them on later during your pre check, but obviously before you start to move. Remember to check your seat belts are functioning properly - give them a harsh tug.

State that your driving position is comfortable and that you are familiar with all of the controls.

Check mirrors are correctly positioned.

Check that everything in the car is safe and secure and that there is nothing loose that could 'fly' around if you need to brake suddenly.

Start the engine. This can vary. If your vehicle is a manually geared car then select neutral (depress the clutch if appropriate) and turn the key/press the button. If you have an EV press the start button.

Check the warning lights and take note of those that need to go out. Again these will vary from car to car – look in your car's instruction manual. Ensure those that need to go out have done so.

Turn off your radio and put your mobile phone away!

### **Brake tests**

Check your handbrake has tension - again this may vary as some cars have automatic 'holding' brakes or use a button method. If you have a lever hand brake test it by first pressing your foot brake down to hold the car, at the same time checking you have tension on your foot brake, release your hand brake, checking that the handbrake warning light goes out. Put your hand brake back on until you are ready to move off.

If your vehicle has cruise control or a similar speed control system, then inform the Tutor/Examiner, however Examiners does not advocate the use of cruise/speed control systems on test. You need to show that you have the ability and skill to control your car's speed without these aids.

Ensure that the Examiner has his seat belt on and is comfortable with his seating position. Have a low flow of air in the car ensuring your passenger/s are neither too hot nor too cold! When you are satisfied that you have checked everything you can move off as directed by the Tutor/Examiner.

Remember to check your mirrors and do a shoulder check if necessary. On test inform the Examiner whether you intend to do commentary, whether you intend to do it for a short period or for the duration of the test. If so then start by commenting on the road and weather conditions.

Remember to do your moving brake test! This is to test the efficiency of your brakes, check for any brake related noises and check that your vehicle does not pull to one side. This has been controversial in the past and although Roadcraft recommends performing the test at 30 mph the Group has agreed that 20 mph is sufficient for the check. NOTE the speed limit at the Greasley car park is 5 mph.

If you suddenly recall something that you've forgotten, try not to dwell on it as it could well distract you from the remainder of the drive.

**See separate handout on the Group's policy for performing the moving brake test.**

All done? Then you're off to a good start !