



Mid Yorkshire Group of Advanced Motorists

Affiliated to: IAM RoadSmart
as Group Number 4178

Registered Charity Number 1053843



Welcome to the Institute of Advance Motorists and the Mid Yorkshire Group.

Please take time to read this note carefully. It tells you about what is going to happen next. **In particular, please read and understand Pages 7 and 8.**

If you have any questions, please ask. We are here to help you.

You have chosen to enrol on an IAM Roadsmart Advanced Driver Course as your personal contribution to road safety. That gives you Associate membership of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) for the next twelve months. IAM Roadsmart in Chiswick will send you a 'welcome pack' that includes your Course Manual. If you do not receive your pack from IAM, please let me know.

Your details have been passed to the Mid Yorkshire Group (MYAM). MYAM is a separate road safety charity with over three hundred local members. The link with IAM also means that you are now an Associate member of MYAM for the next twelve months. It also means that you will receive the MYAM newsletter (usually by email).

Some of our experienced (and friendly) members are trained Observers who will guide and support the development of your skills as you prepare for the Advanced Driver Test – the final step in your Roadsmart Advanced Driver Course.

Some things that you need to know before you start

- Everyone in IAM and MYAM recognises that you are aiming to improve the standard of your driving – your personal contribution to road safety.
- Driving takes place in your own vehicle, although your Observer may do a 'demonstration run' in their car if they think it will help you.
- You are in charge of your car at all times when you are driving. Your Observer will guide and support you, but is not an 'instructor'.
- MYAM will:
 - help you develop your awareness of traffic situations
 - show you how to improve your observation and anticipation so that you are more able to spot hazards
 - explain how you can use 'the system of car control' to help you process information and make safe and effective decisions, giving you more time to react to changing road conditions
- MYAM will not train you to be a Police pursuit driver; drive at high speeds or on a 'skid pan'; how to do handbrake turns or to win races and rallies.

Starting your Roadsmart Advanced Driver Course

Once we receive your details from IAM Roadsmart in Chiswick, we will begin the process of allocating an Observer to work with you, usually on a one-to-one basis. Your Observer will guide and support the development of your skills.

At this stage, you are known as an 'Associate'. You become a 'Member' of IAM and the Mid Yorkshire Group when you pass your Advanced Driver Test.

Working with your Observer

Working with your Observer to develop your driving skills is made up of a series of 'observed drives' (often just called 'runs'). Initially, each drive will last about an hour, but your sessions will be a bit longer as you gain experience. A longer session may also be needed if it takes a while to get to a motorway or country roads.

If all goes well, you will be placed with the same Observer for the duration of your Advanced Driver Course so that you work it between you when you do your drives. It can be daunting to some people to have someone watching their driving, but do not worry about it. Our Observers can all remember what it was like when they were 'observed' for the first time. They are also 'observed' as part of their training.

If you have anything which may affect your driving (for example, limited mobility) please let your Observer know so they can adjust the way they work with you.

Your Observer will take you through various stages of becoming an advanced driver, using your Course Manual and the latest edition of the Highway Code. You should have both with you on your observed drives.

At the end of each observed drive, your Observer will discuss how it went. Your Observer will give you guidance about what you need to work on before the next session, and suggest parts of the Course Manual that you should read.

How many observed drives will I need?

There is not a fixed number, but between eight and twelve is typical. It depends on things such as your age, how much driving you do each week and on how many 'bad habits' you have developed since passing your ordinary driving test.

Ideally, you should aim for an observed drive once a week, with at least 100 miles of driving between each one. This will help you to practice the skills that you have been working on with your Observer.

Your Observer is there to guide and support you so do not be afraid to discuss things. Tell your Observer if you feel that you need to practice something again, or there are things that you do not understand.

After about six drives, you will have an observed drive with another experienced Observer. This 'second opinion' helps both you and your Observer to identify any driving skills that may need more work.

Where will I meet my Observer before a drive?

Your Observer will arrange a mutually convenient place where you should meet (but please remember that Observers are volunteers who pay for their own fuel). The meeting place may not be the same every time. Your Observer may want to introduce you to some different driving skills on another type of road.

It is often useful if you have a short drive before meeting your Observer. This helps to warm up the car engine and gets you thinking about your driving.

What happens if I cannot attend an observed drive?

Because you work with your volunteer Observer on a one-to one basis, it is important that normal social courtesies are followed. If things change at short notice, let your Observer know as quickly as you can. In return, your Observer will contact you if their plans change at short notice. The same courtesies apply to planned holidays.

If you consistently fail to turn up for the drives that you have agreed; are persistently late; or fail to answer telephone calls, emails or text messages, then your Observer will ask the Group to formally review the situation.

MYAM often has more Associates than Observers, so it is only fair that our volunteers spend their time with people who are committed to their Advanced Driver Course.

What happens if I do not get on with my Observer, or I have a complaint?

It can happen that two individuals don't get on or you don't like their way of doing things – that's life. If this happens (or something else troubles you) please make contact with the Membership Secretary or a committee member. Their names, telephone numbers and email addresses are listed in the MYAM newsletter.

Your concerns will be treated in confidence and will be taken seriously. We will do our best to do something about it.

Equally, please let us know if your Observer has done something particularly helpful.

Demonstration drives

If there is a driving skill that you struggle to understand, it often helps to be shown how to do it. Tell your Observer. Your Observer can include a 'demonstration drive' in their vehicle to show you how best to tackle the skills you are unsure about.

Theory sessions

From time to time, the Group runs 'theory' (class room) sessions for all its members. Details will be given in the MYAM newsletter. You should attend if you can.

Sunday morning drives

MYAM organises sessions on two mornings each month – one at Glasshoughton (close to M62, Junction 32), and one on the east side of Leeds (just off the A58). Dates and times are given in the MYAM newsletter.

Associates are encouraged to come along for a drive with a different Observer, enjoy a chat, and have a cup of tea or coffee afterwards.

When will I be ready to take my Advanced Driver Test?

When your Observer thinks that your driving skills are close to the standard expected by the IAM they will arrange for an experienced Observers to take you for a 'pre-test drive'. If that goes well, MYAM will ask IAM Roadsmart to book your test.

You can still have observed drives to 'polish' your skills before the test.

Although our experienced Observers have developed a good understanding of what will be expected by your Examiner, please remember that you may get a different 'mark' on another day.

How long will I have to wait before I get a date for my Test?

IAM Roadsmart will allocate your test to an Examiner. You should receive confirmation that your test has been requested, and the name of the Examiner allocated to you. The Examiner will then make direct contact with you to agree a date, time and meeting point. (MYAM is not involved in any way at this stage.)

Examiners are also volunteers, so the time it takes for them to make contact with you can vary. You should not have to wait more than four weeks to hear from an Examiner. If you are concerned about a delay, please let MYAM know.

Once you have a date for your test, please let your Observer know.

Do I have to take the Test?

A simple answer - no you do not have to.

It is not unusual for an Associate to be happy to improve their driving skill to a good level and leave it at that. We will always respect that decision, as long as things are done in an amicable way.

MYAM will not usually recommend that you are ready for your Advanced Driver Test if we do not think that you have a good expectation of meeting the required standard, but we will always encourage an Associate to 'go for it'.

The test is your opportunity to confirm that your driving skills are now at a good standard.

Where will I take my Test?

That depends upon the Examiner allocated to you, but IAM Roadsmart will try to match the allocated Examiner against your postcode.

There is no such thing as 'test route'. Your Examiner will want to assess your skills over a range of road types and traffic conditions, so you will probably drive on some roads that you are not familiar with.

Who are the Examiners?

Examiners are serving or retired Police drivers and instructors who have passed a Class 1 Police driving test. This is arguably the highest and most respected driving qualification in the world.

IAM examiners are normal people who will respect your decision to take the Advanced Driver Test as a personal commitment to road safety. They will not expect you to drive like a Police driver with many years' training and experience.

What happens on the Test?

The Test usually takes around an hour and a half in total. This includes a briefing before you set off, a drive lasting about an hour, and a discussion afterwards.

The Examiner will expect a good drive to at least the standard that you achieved in your later observed drives. Please remember that they cannot accept anything that could be considered as a driving offence – for example, driving more quickly than the speed limit, passing a red light, or crossing a 'double white line'.

What happens if I do very well on my Test?

Your Examiner can recommend that your name should be entered on the 'IAM F1RST' Register. This happens when you get 'top marks' for every skill category.

This does not happen often, and you should be very proud. Your Observer will be!

What happens if I do not 'pass' my Test?

Although the support that MYAM gives Associates means that the 'pass rate' is high, drivers do make mistakes on the day – we all do under pressure.

If you are not successful, please try again. You will have to pay IAM for another test, but a second go often results in success. We will usually be happy for you to carry on with your observed drives to help you sort out whatever went wrong.

Occasionally, your Observer may decide that you are unlikely to develop your driving skills to the required standard. If this happens, we will discuss it with you and other members of the Observer team.

What about a 'commentary'?

You may have seen television programmes where a Police driver 'commentates' on the road ahead. This skill takes a lot of practice and it is not a compulsory part of the Advanced Driver Test (but it used to be).

However, a bit of 'commentary' does help most people to develop their observation skills. It also gives the Examiner an idea about what you are seeing and thinking, and confirms that you at least know what the road signs mean. Your Observer will encourage you to do some commentary as your driving skills develop, but only for a few minutes at a time - and only if you are happy to do it.

What can I do next?

Once you pass your Advanced Driver Test there are other options available to you.

You can aim for an 'IAM F1RST' by taking the test again. You can take your driving to an even higher level by working to achieve the 'IAM Master Driver' qualification. IAM also run 'skills' events and MYAM occasionally organises 'skid pan training'.

You can also give something back to MYAM by becoming a volunteer Observer. Most Observers find that supporting other people who want to improve their driving also helps them to think about their own driving skills.

Our Observers often identify Associates who they think might make a good Observer, and you can speak to us about it if you are keen to get involved. It's not just how you drive but also your attitude, and your ability to guide and support other people. There is a formal training programme that leads to a qualification, but you will be supported by your fellow Observers as you develop additional skills.

What about annual subscriptions?

As explained on Page 1, you are now a member of the (national) IAM and the (local) Mid Yorkshire Group (MYAM) for the next twelve months. Although the two organisations are closely linked, they are independent of each other. This means that you must pay an annual subscription to each one in twelve months' time.

Maintaining your IAM membership gives you access to many benefits, including access to an insurance broker that specialises in IAM members. Maintaining your membership of MYAM helps us to support the Associates that follow you.

Most important of all, please enjoy safer driving.

David Rockliff

Membership Secretary, Mid Yorkshire Advanced Motorists

Please take time to read the formal bits on Page 7 and Page 8.

This sounds a bit formal but please read the next TWO pages CAREFULLY.

**They outline what MYAM expects of YOU
in return for the guidance and support that WE give you.**

1. You will recognise that MYAM is run by volunteers who receive no payment for helping you to achieve the standard of driving expected of an Advanced Driver.
2. You will read your Course Manual and the latest edition of the Highway Code. (Please let us know if you do not have a copy of the current Highway Code. We may be able to help.)
3. You will agree mutually acceptable times for the drives with your Observer and remember that Observers make their leisure time available for your benefit.
4. You will hold a current and valid full driving licence and insurance certificate at all times. You may be asked to show that you have your documents with you.
5. You will let MYAM know if you have any recent or potential penalty points on your licence, or pending prosecutions for a driving offence. (We do not expect a 'clean' licence, but too many points and some offences may prevent you from taking your Advanced Driver Test.)
6. You will ensure that your vehicle is taxed (VED has been paid), roadworthy and (if necessary) has a current DVLA (MOT) certificate.
7. You will sign the Declaration Form that is included in your IAM Roadsmart welcome pack, to confirm that the documents required by law are valid and that your vehicle is in a roadworthy condition. You will accept that your Observer will ask to see the Declaration Form and will keep the top section.
8. You will accept responsibility for compliance with the following parts of the Highway Code (current Edition):
 - Rule 90, Fitness to drive – 'You **MUST** report to the DVLA any health conditions likely to affect your driving'.
 - Rule 92, Vision – 'You **MUST** be able to read a vehicle number plate from a distance of 20 metres. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses to do this, you **MUST** wear them at all times while driving'.
9. You will accept that your Observer may ask you to read a vehicle number plate from a distance of 20 metres to confirm that you can comply with Rule 92.
10. **You will accept that you are deemed to be in sole control of your vehicle at all times.** Drives with your Observer will usually be in your vehicle. Your Observer will try to give directions in good time. Follow the road ahead or stay on the major road unless traffic signs direct you otherwise, or you are asked to make a turn.

The formal bit continues on Page 8.

The formal bit (continued)

11. You will accept that only in very exceptional circumstances will another person (such as a relative) be permitted to accompany you on an observed drive.
12. You will remain in contact with your Observer. If you fail to do so for more than two weeks without prior agreement, MYAM reserves the right to allocate your Observer to another Associate.
13. You will practice what you have learned every time you drive your car. (It sounds obvious, but every time any of us gets into a car is a 'learning opportunity'. It is no use driving every day without a care for those around us, then 'putting on a show' when someone is watching.)
14. You will keep your car in a clean, legal and roadworthy condition. The windows will be clean and free from unnecessary stickers and hanging objects, particularly within the swept area of the windscreen wipers and the area seen in the 'rear view' mirror.
15. You will not use a 'satnav', sound/music system or 'speed camera detector' on a drive with your Observer. They are a distraction. An exception is 'cruise control', but then only in appropriate circumstances. . Mobile phones should also be switched to 'silent' (but please tell your Observer if there is a reason why you need to keep in touch with someone).
16. You will accept that another Observer may take you for an observed drive, or may sit in the back seat during an observed drive. This is part of the MYAM 'quality control' procedures that monitor both your progress and the Observer's training.
17. You will share the results of your Advanced Driver Test with MYAM. (This also helps our 'quality control' procedures and your Observer.)
18. You will accept that your Observer may decide that your driving is unlikely to reach the standard required to pass the Advanced Driver Test. (This happens from time to time, but not often). In return, your Observer will only take that decision in consultation with colleagues. If this happens, MYAM reserves the right to withdraw the support of your Observer. In return, MYAM will always respect your right to take the Advanced Driver Test anyway, if that is what you want to do.
19. You will let MYAM know if you decide to stop your drives with an Observer because you feel that you do not want to take the Advanced Driver Test. As explained earlier in this note, this happens from time to time. MYAM will always respect your decision, as long as things are done in an amicable way.

The end of the formal bit. Please enjoy safer driving.