

PRELIMINARIES

Preliminaries are not a compulsory part of the Advanced Driving Test, but if carried out well, they demonstrate that you are a thinking driver and help get the test off to a good start. Before driving, consider the following three issues :

- Self, one's own condition
- Vehicle condition
- Anticipated environmental conditions during the drive

OUTSIDE THE VEHICLE

Self

Any aspects of physical and mental condition that may influence driving ability, eg health, mobility, medication, alertness, tiredness, availability of appropriate clothing, footwear, glasses, sunglasses etc

Vehicle

1. Regular checks ideally carried out weekly, summarised by the acronym **POWDER** :

- **P**etrol
- **O**il, including engine oil, brake fluid and power steering oil
- **W**ater, including radiator and screen wash
- **D**amage, visual check of all external surfaces
- **E**lectrics, lights, indicators, horn and wipers
- **R**ubber, tyre pressure, damage and tread depth; wiper blades for damage and condition, pedal rubbers

2. A simple physical check around the outside of the vehicle before getting in and driving, carried out by walking the whole way around the vehicle and checking :

- tyres - under inflation or damage
- lights - breakages, cleanliness, operation, including rear fog and stop lamps
- bodywork - damage
- windows - chips and cleanliness, inside and out
- fluid leaks - air con may drip due to condensation

ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

While still outside the vehicle consider :

- Potential hazards posed by weather conditions
- Seasonal hazards, eg low sun, leaves, harvest vehicles
- Holiday/weekend issues, eg leisure activities
- Time of day, eg school traffic
- Parking area, pedestrians, moving vehicles, how to exit safely
- Speed limit

INSIDE VEHICLE - COCKPIT DRILL

- Handbrake - on
- Gear lever - in neutral, autos in 'Park' if possible
- Shoes - if soles are wet, wipe on floor mats
- Doors - closed, including boot and tailgate
- Seats - driver's seat adjusted for optimum driving position, passenger seats for comfort, head restraints set to correct position, child seats correctly fitted and secure
- Mirrors - adjusted for maximum rear view
- Seat belts - fastened, tug to check operation, release
- Mobile phones - switched off

Depress clutch pedal and start engine

- Panel lights - all working, then correct ones go out
- Steering - power assistance cuts in at steering wheel
- Panel lights - only handbrake warning light should remain on
- Fuel gauge - adequate fuel for the journey
- Brake pedal - check that the pressure feels normal and the pedal stays firm and does not sink. While holding down the brake pedal release the handbrake. Warning light goes out to confirm electrical connection is working and also that there is adequate brake fluid
- Heater/ventilation - adjust to appropriate level
- Dipped beam headlights - switch on if conditions demand