

VEHICLE SAFETY CHECKS

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Vehicle safety checks are now part of the practical driving test. Here are two pages of examples of questions and expected answers:

Question: Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine oil level and tell me how you would check that the engine has sufficient oil.

Answer: Open the bonnet, identify the dipstick and describe how to check the oil level against the minimum/maximum markers.

Question: Show me how you would check the parking brake (handbrake) for excessive wear.

Answer: Demonstrate that when the parking brake (handbrake) is fully applied, it secures itself and the travel is not excessive.

Question: Show me how you would check that the headlights and tail lights are working.

Answer: Operate the relevant switch (turning on ignition if necessary) and walk round the vehicle, observing the correct functioning of the lights.

Question: Tell me how you would check the tyres to ensure that they have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe to use on the road.

Answer: Explain that there should not be any cuts or bulges, tyres are inflated to the correct pressure and that 1.6mm of tread depth is present across the central three quarters of the breadth of the tyre and around the entire circumference.

Question: Tell me how you would check that the brake lights are working.

Answer: Explain that while the brake pedal is operated, someone else could check the operation of the brake lights, or that you could make use of reflections in garage doors, windows, etc., making sure that the ignition is on or engine is running otherwise the brake lights will not work.

Question: Tell me how you would know that the power steering had stopped working.

Answer: The steering wheel would feel stiff and a warning light would appear.

Question: Tell me how you would know that the steering lock had stopped working.

Answer: When the key is removed from the ignition, the steering wheel would not lock.

Question: How would you tell if your foot brakes were worn?

Answer: The foot brake would feel 'spongy' and the car would not stop within the required distance. Vehicle should not pull to one side.

Question: Tell me where you would find the information for the recommended tyre pressures for this car and how tyre pressures should be checked.

Answer: The information is in the manufacturer's guide. Use a reliable pressure gauge, check and adjust pressures when tyres are cold, don't forget spare tyre, remember to refit valve caps.

Question: Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine coolant level and tell me how you would check that the engine has the correct level.

Answer: Identify high/low level markings on header tank where fitted or radiator filler cap, and describe how to top up to correct level.

Question: Tell me how you make sure your head restraint is correctly adjusted so it provides the best protection in the event of a crash.

Answer: The head restraint should be adjusted so the rigid part of the head restraint is at least as high as the eye or top of the ears, and as close to the back of the head as is comfortable. N.B. some restraints might not be adjustable.

Question: Show me how you would check that the horn is working (off road only).

Answer: Check is carried out by using control (turn on ignition if necessary).

Question: Show me how you would clean the windscreen using the windscreen washer and wipers.

Answer: Operate control to wash and wipe windscreen (turn on ignition if necessary).

Question: Show me how you would set the demister controls to clear all the windows effectively, this should include both front and rear screens.

Answer: Set all relevant controls including: fan, temperature, air direction / source and heated screen to clear windscreen and windows. Engine does not have to be started for this demonstration.

Question: Show me how you would switch on the rear fog light(s) and explain when you should use it/them. (No need to exit vehicle.)

Answer: Operate switch (turn on dipped headlights and ignition if necessary). Check warning light is on. Explain use.

Question: Tell me how you would know if there was a problem with your anti lock braking system.

Answer: Warning light should illuminate if there is a fault with the anti lock braking system.

Question: Show me how you switch your headlight from dipped to main beam and explain how you would know the main beam is on whilst inside the car.

Answer: Operate switch (with ignition on if necessary). Check with main beam warning light.

Question: Tell me how you would know if one of your indicator bulbs was not working?

Answer: It would flash rapidly.

You are not expected to have the knowledge of a garage mechanic, only the basic understanding that all drivers should be able to demonstrate in order to ensure that their vehicle is safe and legal