

TAG Trailer Towing Training

The B+E practical driving test Information on the practical test procedures

Updated October 2012

The B+E practical driving test

The purpose of the B+E driving tests is that candidates must satisfy the examiner as to their ability to carry out properly the activities and perform competently, without danger to and with due consideration for other road users, the manoeuvres below.

Minimum test vehicle requirements for a car and trailer test

The minimum test vehicle standards for a car also apply to a car and trailer test, with additional requirements for the towing vehicle and trailer. Vehicles that don't meet the minimum standards are not suitable for the purpose of taking a test, and your test may be cancelled with loss of fee.

Category B - cars and vans

The car or van you use for your test must be:

- a four-wheeled vehicle of no more than 3,500 kilograms (kg) maximum authorised mass (MAM)
- capable of a speed of at least 62.5 miles per hour (mph) or 100 kilometres per hour (km/h)
- fitted with a speedometer that measures speed in mph
- displaying L-plates ('L' or 'D' plates in Wales) on the front and rear, but not interfering with the driver's or examiner's view
- a smoke-free environment

The vehicle must also be fitted with:

- a seatbelt for the examiner
- a passenger head restraint - it does not need to be adjustable, but must be an integral part of the seat - 'slip on' types are not allowed
- an interior mirror for the examiner's use

The vehicle must be legal and roadworthy and have no warning lights showing - for example, the airbag warning light.

Category + E

Car and trailer test vehicles must be an unladen category B vehicle towing a suitably braked, unladen trailer of at least one tonne MAM. The examiner may ask for evidence of the trailer MAM - for example, the manufacturer's plate.

The vehicle must also be fitted with:

- externally mounted, nearside and offside mirrors for use by the examiner or any person supervising the test
- an audible or visual device to indicate correct operation of the trailer indicators

All vehicle combinations must operate on appropriate brakes and use a coupling arrangement suitable for the weight.

The cargo compartment of the trailer must consist of a closed box body which is at least as wide and as high as the towing vehicle. The trailer may be slightly less wide than the towing vehicle, but the view to the rear must be by the use of external mirrors only.

The view to the rear should only be possible by use of the external rear-view mirrors of the towing vehicle.

Eyesight: Read in good daylight (with the aid of glasses or contact lenses if worn) a registration mark fixed to a motor vehicle and containing letters and figures 79.4 millimetres high at a distance of 20.5 metres (or 20 metres for new style number plates).

Vehicle safety checks: The examiner will ask up to five 'show me' 'tell me' questions. The examiner will record a driving fault if the candidate answers a question incorrectly.

Reversing exercise: You will be asked to reverse the combination over a distance of five times the distance of the combination from right to left into a bay one and a half times the width of the combination with the back of the trailer within a specific area of about a metre in length. The combination must not cross the boundary lines and no part of the combination must not touch any traffic cone or marker pole.

The candidate may shunt twice whilst reversing and may inspect the final position of the combination and return the vehicle to complete the reverse exercise.

On the road: To pass the test a candidate must demonstrate a high standard of competence in handling the vehicle. The candidate must also be able to apply the rules of the Highway Code. They must show that, generally, they have a full understanding of the principles involved in towing and of the application of those principles, and can demonstrate proper control in a wide variety of situations. In addition, because of the size and weight of their vehicle, the drivers must have a highly developed level of courtesy and consideration for other road users.

Independent drive: The test will include a section of independent driving where the candidate is asked to follow traffic signs or verbal directions or a combination of both.

Hitching exercise: The candidate will be assessed on their ability to safely unhitch the trailer from the towing vehicle and reverse the vehicle next to the trailer. The candidate will then be asked to re-couple the trailer as if the combination is about to be hitched for the first time. Visual checks of the trailer should be completed before reversing the vehicle and once hitched all lights should be checked to ensure electrics are working correctly.

Source: Driving Standards Agency