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Motorcycle practical test explained

The practical motorcycle test is made up of lots of different elements, an eyesight test, vehicle safety questions, a test of driving ability, a test of specific manoeuvres and a question about riding with a passenger.

At the test centre you must present a valid certificate DL196 unless the test is being conducted on one of the exempted islands. A rider who is upgrading a full moped licence obtained by passing a two part test since December 1990 is exempt.

Vehicle safety check questions and eyesight test

Before you actually start your practical riding test you will be asked to read a number plate to prove you can meet the eyesight requirements. You will also be asked two machine safety check questions before moving away.

The practical test

After the usual pre-test preliminaries e.g. licence and identification check the examiner will help the candidate with the fitting of the radio and earpiece. While accompanying the candidate to the machine the examiner will explain how the test will be conducted and how the radio equipment works.

The law requires anyone riding a motorcycle, scooter or moped, with or without sidecar, to wear protective headgear securely fastened. The test cannot therefore be conducted unless the candidate is wearing properly secured protective headgear.

Note: An exemption to this requirement exists for followers of the Sikh religion if they are wearing a turban.





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Test manoeuvres

During the test specific manoeuvres must be carried which include:

- ***emergency stop exercise***

An emergency stop is given on every motorcycle test and can be given at any time during the test. The candidate will be told the route to take and the examiner will demonstrate the signal that will be given.

- ***wheeling / stand exercise***

The candidate will be asked to position the machine alongside the kerb and put it on its stand, then take the machine off the stand and wheel it across the road in a 'U' turn. (Either a centre or side stand is acceptable, but a machine without a stand is not suitable for the purposes of the test).

- ***U-turn exercise***

Via the radio, the examiner will ask the candidate to ride the machine back across the road. The candidate will be asked to move off from a parked position and to turn the machine around to face the opposite way, within the road width.

- ***slow ride exercise***

If the candidate has not had the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to control the machine at slow speed e.g. at junctions, they will be asked to ride as if in slow-moving traffic as a separate exercise.

After the practical part of the test the candidate will be asked a question on 'balance when carrying a passenger'.

At the end of the test

When the practical test is over, the examiner will tell you whether you passed or failed. You can request feedback on your test from the examiner, who will then go through your performance during the test.





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If you pass...

If you pass and have a photocard driving licence issued after 1 March, 2004 the examiner will ask you if you want your full driving licence issued to you automatically. If you want to use this service, the examiner will take your old licence off you, scan the details and send them electronically to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

You will then be given a pass certificate to prove you passed your test. DVLA will then send you your new full licence by post within three weeks of you passing your practical test.

If you pass your test but do not want to use this automatic service, or have a licence issued before 1 March 2004, you will be given a pass certificate by the examiner. On the back of the pass certificate it tells you what you need to do next.

This involves sending your licence to DVLA who will then check your application and issue you with a new full licence. Once you pass your standard motorcycle test you are restricted to machines of 25 kW (33 bhp) with a power to weight ratio of 0.16 kW/kg for two years.

If you fail...

If you fail the test you should ask the examiner for some feedback to help prepare yourself for your next test. Your driving report form will also show you where you made any mistakes.

You must wait 10 clear working days after your practical test before you can book another one.

Minimum test vehicle requirements

Any vehicle presented for use in a driving test must meet minimum test vehicle standards. These standards are part of European Community legislation on driver licensing.

Great Britain as a member of the European Union is obliged to comply with these requirements. Below are the minimum test vehicle requirements for mopeds and motorcycles..





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Minimum test vehicle requirements for mopeds

A moped must have an engine capacity not exceeding 50 cc, and a maximum speed of 50 kilometres per hour (km/h) which is approximately equivalent to 31 miles per hour (mph). If first used before 1 August 1977, it must be equipped with pedals by which it can be propelled.

Minimum test vehicle requirements for motorcycles

If your motorcycle is less than 75 cc it is not acceptable for the practical motorcycle test. If you pass your practical test on a motorcycle with automatic or semi-automatic transmission, this will be recorded on your licence. Your full licence entitlement will be restricted to motorcycles in this category.

A light motorcycle (category A1) is defined as a solo motorcycle between 75 and 125 cc, with a power output not exceeding 11 kilowatts (kW) (maximum 14.6 brake horse power (bhp)).

A standard motorcycle (category A) is defined as a solo motorcycle between 121 and 125 cc, capable of exceeding 100 km/h (62.1mph). Please note that the BMW C1 motorcycle is not a suitable machine for a practical test.

Vehicles used for the accelerated access and direct access scheme can have an unspecified engine capacity of at least 35 kW (46.6 bhp), with an unspecified speed.

The minimum test vehicle requirements for a motorcycle and side-car are the same as the solo machines, but categories A and A1 must not exceed a power to weight ratio of 0.16 kW/kg.

Passengers are not allowed to ride in the sidecar during the test. Only candidates with certain disabilities can use a motorcycle and side-car combination for the test. The licence obtained as a result of this test will be restricted to this combination of vehicle.





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Speedometers on imported vehicles

Regulation 35 of Construction and Use Regulations 1986 requires any motor vehicle used on or after 1 April 1984 to be capable of indicating speed in both mph and k/mh.

Therefore vehicles used for test must display speed in either mph and k/mh or mph only. Vehicles displaying speed in k/mh only are not acceptable. Overlays on speedometers are not allowed.

Notes:

A light motorcycle licence (category A1) will give you full licence entitlement to ride machines up to 125 cc with a power output of up to 11 kW.

A standard motorcycle licence (category A) will restrict you for a period of two years to riding machines with a power output not exceeding 25 kW and a power/weight ratio not exceeding 0.16 kW/kg.

After the two year period you may ride any motorcycle.

If you are aged 21 or over you can take the test on a motorcycle with a power output of at least 35 kW (46.6 bhp). If successful you can then ride any motorcycle.

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