

Pass Your Driving Test

DMV Shares Top 10 Mistakes

The behind-the-wheel test is the last exam new drivers must take to obtain their California driver license. For some, it's a breeze, thanks to the time spent driving under the tutelage of parents or diligent driving instructors. For others who haven't studied or don't have enough experience on the road, the test can be disastrous and very stressful. DMV examiners across the state have seen it all. Drivers changing lanes without checking their blind spots, speeding in school zones, and even waiting beyond the limit line when a train is headed right toward them!

To avoid freezing up and be as prepared as possible for your test, study the handbook. It's the best way to find out what is required on the drive test. But more importantly, spend ample time behind the wheel before your test so you feel comfortable and know what to expect. Another great tool is the DMV YouTube page at www.youtube.com/californiadmv which offers free educational videos on the top 10 reasons people fail their behind-the-wheel test. The key issues are listed below, with a quick tip for each.

1. **Unsafe lane changes** – Make sure to use the correct signal, check your mirrors and look over your shoulder to see if it's safe **before** changing lanes.
2. **Failure to yield** – When making a left turn at a stop light, you must yield to oncoming traffic unless you are protected by the green arrow. Even in that case, you should make sure no other cars are still approaching before entering the intersection.
3. **Failure to stop** – You must come to a complete stop before you cross the limit line or proceed into a cross walk. After stopping and checking for pedestrians, it is then okay to slowly approach and make sure it is safe to make the turn.
4. **Illegal left turns** – Stay in your lane when making a left turn. Fading into the outer lane is an automatic fail on the test, is very dangerous and could result in a collision with another car.
5. **Improper speed** – Be aware of the speed limit everywhere you go. Always pay attention to the posted speed signs and adhere to them. They vary in school and construction zones, as well as residential and commercial areas, so it's very important to stay aware at all times and heed the speed laws.
6. **Lack of experience** – Prepare for your test. Try to make sure that you are driving in different situations so that you can become more comfortable on the road. Review the YouTube page the DMV has to become more familiar with all the mistakes others have made before you, and then maybe you can avoid them altogether!
7. **Unfamiliar with vehicle** – Part of the behind-the-wheel test is knowing how to use certain functions of your car. While it's always better to use the car you learned to drive with, if you must borrow a friend or family member's car to take
8. **the test**, learn how to turn on their windshield wipers, hazard lights, turn signals and where their parking break is located **BEFORE** coming in to take your test. .

- 9. Poor scanning** – Be aware of what is going on around you and what other drivers are doing. Look to your left and right and check your mirrors periodically. Driving is dangerous and it should be taken seriously. Avoid any distractions and pay close attention to what is going on around you.
- 10. Too cautious** – While it's important to be careful when you are driving, being *too* careful can also create traffic hazards. Be confident, drive the speed limit and accept the right of way when it's yours.
- 11. Unfamiliar with traffic situations** – Again, experience behind the wheel is key when taking the test. Exposure to different road elements (such as roundabouts) and traffic environments (like downtown or highway driving) will help you be better prepared for your driving test.

And there you have it! The behind-the-wheel test can be simple for someone who is ready and prepared. Just get out there and drive because the best way to prepare is to have real life, practical experience.

For more information on how to successfully pass your driving test, or other DMV related services, visit www.dmv.ca.gov. Save time. Go online!