Section 13
On-road Driving

This Section Covers

- **How You Will Be Test**

You will drive over a test route that has a variety of traffic situations. At all times during the test, you must drive in a safe and responsible manner.

During the driving test, the examiner will be scoring you on specific driving maneuvers as well as on your general driving behavior. You will follow the directions of the examiner. Directions will be given to you so you will have plenty of time to do what the examiner has asked. You will not be asked to drive in an unsafe manner.

If your test route does not have certain traffic situations, you may be asked to simulate a traffic situation. You will do this by telling the examiner what you are or would be doing if you were in that traffic situation.

13.1 – How You Will Be Tested

13.1.1 – Turns

You have been asked to make a turn:

- Check traffic in all directions.
- Use turn signals and safely get into the lane needed for the turn.

As you approach the turn:

- Use turn signals to warn others of your turn.
- Slow down smoothly, change gears as needed to keep power, but do not coast unsafely. Unsafe coasting occurs when your vehicle is out of gear (clutch depressed or gearshift in neutral) for more than the length of your vehicle.

If you must stop before making the turn:

- Come to a smooth stop without skidding.
- Come to a complete stop behind the stop line, crosswalk, or stop sign.
- If stopping behind another vehicle, stop where you can see the rear tires on the vehicle ahead of you (safe gap).
- Do not let your vehicle roll.
- Keep the front wheels aimed straight ahead. When ready to turn:
- Check traffic in all directions.
- Keep both hands on the steering wheel during the turn.
- Do not change gears during the turn.
- Keep checking your mirror to make sure the vehicle does not hit anything on the inside of the turn.
- Vehicle should not move into oncoming traffic.
- Vehicle should finish turn in correct lane.

After turn:

- Make sure turn signal is off.
- Get up to speed of traffic, use turn signal, and move into right-most lane when safe to do so (if not already there).

13.1.2 – Intersections

As you approach an intersection:

- Check traffic thoroughly in all directions.
- Decelerate gently.
- Brake smoothly and, if necessary, change gears.
- If necessary, come to a complete stop (no coasting) behind any stop signs, signals, sidewalks, or stop lines maintaining a safe gap behind any vehicle in front of you.
- Your vehicle must not roll forward or backward.

When driving through an intersection:

- Check traffic thoroughly in all directions.
- Decelerate and yield to any pedestrians and traffic in the intersection.
- Do not change lanes or shift gears while proceeding through the intersection.
- Keep your hands on the wheel.

Once **through** the intersection:

- Continue checking traffic.
- Accelerate smoothly and change gears as necessary.

13.1.3 – Urban/Rural Straight

During this part of the test, you are expected to make regular traffic checks and maintain a safe following distance. Your vehicle should be centered in the proper lane (right-most lane) and you should keep up with the flow of traffic but not exceed the posted speed limit.

13.1.4 – Urban/Rural Lane Changes

During the multiple lane portion of the urban and rural sections, you will be asked to change lanes to the left, and then back to the right. You should make the necessary traffic checks first, then use proper signals and smoothly change lanes when it is safe to do so.

13.1.5 – Expressway

Before entering the expressway:

- Check traffic.
- Use proper signals.
- Merge smoothly into the proper lane of traffic.

Once on the expressway:

- Maintain proper lane positioning, vehicle spacing, and vehicle speed.
- Continue to check traffic thoroughly in all directions.

You will be instructed to change lanes:

- You must make necessary traffic checks.
- Use proper signals.
- Change lanes smoothly when it is safe to do so.

When exiting the expressway:

- Make necessary traffic checks.
- Use proper signals.
- Decelerate smoothly in the exit lane.
- Once on the exit ramp, you must continue to decelerate within the lane markings and maintain adequate spacing between your vehicle and other vehicles.

13.1.6 – Stop/Start

For this maneuver, you will be asked to pull your vehicle over to the side of the road and stop as if you were going to get out and check something on your vehicle. You must check traffic thoroughly in all directions and move to the right-most lane or shoulder of road.

As you prepare for the stop:

- Check traffic.
- Activate your right turn signal.
- Decelerate smoothly, brake evenly, change gears as necessary.
- Bring your vehicle to a full stop without coasting.

Once stopped:

- Vehicle must be parallel to the curb or shoulder of the road and safely out of the traffic flow.
- Vehicle should not be blocking driveways, fire hydrants, intersections, signs, etc.
- Cancel your turn signal.
- Activate your four-way emergency flashers.
- Apply the parking brake.
- Move the gear shift to neutral or park.
- Remove your feet from the brake and clutch pedals.

When instructed to resume:

- Check traffic and your mirrors thoroughly in all directions.
- Turn off your four-way flashers.
- Activate the left turn signal.
- When traffic permits, you should release the parking brake and pull straight ahead.
- Do not turn the wheel before your vehicle moves.
- Check traffic from all directions, especially to the left.
- Steer and accelerate smoothly into the proper lane when safe to do so.
- Once your vehicle is back into the flow of traffic, cancel your left turn signal.

13.1.7 – Curve

- When approaching a curve:
- Check traffic thoroughly in all directions.
- Before entering the curve, reduce speed so further braking or shifting is not required in the curve.
- Keep vehicle in the lane.
- Continue checking traffic in all directions.

13.1.8 – Railroad Crossing

Before reaching the crossing, all commercial drivers should:

- Decelerate, brake smoothly, and shift gears as necessary.
- Look and listen for the presence of trains.
- Check traffic in all directions.

Do not stop, change gears, pass another vehicle, or change lanes while any part of your vehicle is in the crossing.

If you are driving a bus, a school bus, or a vehicle displaying placards, you should be prepared to observe the following procedures at every railroad crossing (unless the crossing is exempt):

- As the vehicle approaches a railroad crossing, activate the four-way flashers.
- Stop the vehicle within 50 feet but not less than 15 feet from the nearest rail.
- Listen and look in both directions along the track for an approaching train and for signals indicating the approach of a train. If operating a bus, you may also be required to open the window and door prior to crossing tracks.
- Keep hands on the steering wheel as the vehicle crosses the tracks.
- Do not stop, change gears, or change lanes while any part of your vehicle is proceeding across the tracks.
- Four-way flashers should be deactivated after the vehicle crosses the tracks.

Not all driving road test routes will have a railroad crossing. You may be asked to explain and demonstrate the proper railroad crossing procedures to the examiner at a simulated location.

13.1.9 – Bridge/Overpass/Sign

After driving under an overpass, you may be asked to tell the examiner what the posted clearance or height was. After going over a bridge, you may be asked to tell the examiner what the posted weight limit was. If your test route does not have a bridge or overpass, you may be asked about another traffic sign. When asked, be prepared to identify and explain to the examiner any traffic sign which may appear on the route.

During the driving test you must:

- Wear your safety belt.
- Obey all traffic signs, signals, and laws.
- Complete the test without an accident or moving violation.

You will be scored on your overall performance in the following general driving behavior categories:

13.1.10 – Clutch Usage (for Manual Transmission)

- Always use clutch to shift.
- Double-clutch if vehicle is equipped with non-synchronized transmission.
- Do not rev or lug the engine.
- Do not ride clutch to control speed, coast with the clutch depressed, or "pop" the clutch.

13.1.11 – Gear Usage (for Manual Transmission)

- Do not grind or clash gears.
- Select gear that does not rev or lug engine.
- Do not shift in turns and intersections.

13.1.12 – Brake Usage

- Do not ride or pump brake.
- Do not brake harshly. Brake smoothly using steady pressure.

13.1.13 – Lane Usage

- Do not put vehicle over curbs, sidewalks, or lane markings.
- Stop behind stop lines, crosswalks, or stop signs.
- Complete a turn in the proper lane on a multiple lane road.
- Finish a right turn in the right-most (curb) lane.
- Move to or remain in right-most lane unless lane is blocked.

13.2 – On-road Driving – School Bus

13.2.1 Off-road Simulated Student Stop (School Bus Only)

According to Michigan law (Public Act 187 of 1990), school bus drivers are not allowed to activate the alternately flashing lights when operating a school bus on a public highway or private road while transporting passengers primarily other than school pupils. Therefore school bus drivers will be asked to simulate a student pick-up at an off-road location.

As you approach the designated student pick-up location:

- Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- Decelerate smoothly and gently apply the service brake to warn motorists of your impending stop.
- You must activate the appropriate signals as required not less than 200 feet from the designated stop (with the 4-light system, activate the alternately flashing red lights; with the eight light system activate the alternately flashing amber lights). Note: Failure to perform this portion of the Student Stop

exercise will result in an automatic failure of the driving test.

- Activate your right turn signal after the alternately flashing lights (red or amber) are on.
- Stop your vehicle as far to the right as possible (without obstructing the normal flow of traffic) and bring your vehicle to a full stop.

Once stopped:

- You must apply the parking brake and shift to neutral or park. **Note: Failure to perform this portion of the Student Stop exercise will result in an automatic failure of the driving test.**
- Cancel your right turn signal and open the passenger door when it is safe to do so.
- With the 8-light system, the alternately flashing red lights activate, and if equipped, the stop arm fully extends when the passenger door is opened.
- Check traffic in all directions and make sure that all entering pupils are safely seated and that all exiting pupils are safely clear of the vehicle by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- Once you have accounted for all of the entering and exiting pupils, cancel all of your signals and wait for traffic to clear, (traffic dispersal).

Before you resume:

- Check traffic in all directions by looking in your mirrors and moving your head.
- Activate your left turn signal.

When it is safe to do so, merge smoothly into traffic and cancel your turn signal.

13.2.2 Steering Technique

- While driving, keep both hands on the steering wheel.
- Do not palm the steering wheel or over/under steer the vehicle.
- Do not let the steering wheel slide freely through hands upon completing a turn.
- Keep the wheel straight while stopped prior to turning.

13.2.3 Traffic Checks/Search

- Use all available mirrors and maintain awareness of the entire traffic environment. **Regularly** check surrounding traffic conditions with **head/body movements** to the left and right.
- Always check traffic **before** using turn signals, changing lanes, or performing any maneuver.
- Be able to identify any traffic sign, bridge weight, or overpass clearance when asked by the examiner.

13.2.4 Vehicle Spacing

- When following another vehicle, try to maintain a safe and legal following distance. You must allow, at a minimum, one second per 10 feet of vehicle length when traveling under 40 mph. (Add one second for speeds over 40 mph.)
- When stopping behind another vehicle, you must be able to see, at a minimum, the rear wheels of the vehicle in front of you (safe gap).
- Be prepared to yield to pedestrians and traffic already at or in the intersection.
- You must maintain proper spacing when changing lanes or during the expressway merge/exit.
- When parked during the Stop/Start exercise, do not position the vehicle in an area with limited sight distance (curves, hills, etc.)
- When parked during the Stop/Start exercise, do not block road signs, driveways, fire hydrants, and other vehicles, etc.

13.2.5 Speed/Throttle Control

- Always maintain steady and even speed control when accelerating and decelerating. Minimize disrupting traffic by keeping up with traffic flow, but never exceed the regulatory speed limit.
- Do not drive too fast in or near intersections or during turns and curves.
- Adjust your speed according to the traffic and weather conditions on your route.

13.2.6 Signal Usage

- Always use turn signals properly when turning and changing lanes (not too early or too late).
- Use 4-way flashers during the Stop/Start, Upgrade/Downgrade and Railroad Crossing maneuvers as required.
- Use alternately flashing lights on school bus during Student Stop exercise as required.
- Do not forget to cancel signals.