

SAFETY OFFICER'S ROAD SAFETY AND HIGHWAY CODE QUIZ

I guess it's some time since most of us picked up the Highway Code to refresh our memory? Maybe you think you don't need to as you have a pretty good knowledge of the code and protocols - even if you haven't looked at the code since you passed your test.

Well, let's see how well you do with the following questions! Hopefully it will be a bit of fun and maybe at the end of it you may decide to brush up on the Highway Code and safety issues.

Q. 1 Do Vehicle & Operator Services Agency Officers have powers to stop vehicles on all roads?

A. Yes. They have powers to stop vehicles on all roads, including motorways, in England and Wales. They will attract your attention by flashing amber lights. You must obey and stop. Failure to do so is an offence.

Q. 2 Do Highways Agency Traffic Officers have powers to stop vehicles on all roads?

A. No. They have powers to stop vehicles on most motorways and some 'A' class roads in England only. Failure to comply is an offence.

To most of us the above two Q's and A's are a little confusing so the best advice is to pull over and stop if you are directed to do so either by the VSOA or HA officers.

Q. 3 When should you flash your headlights and for what purpose?

A. You should only flash your headlights to let other road users know that you are there. Do not flash your headlights to convey any other message or intimidate other road users. Never assume that flashing headlights is a signal inviting you to proceed. Use your judgement and proceed carefully! Flashing headlights are a good substitute for sounding the horn in the hours of darkness when you cannot use your horn – *see next question*

Q. 4 When can you use your horn?

A. You can use your horn only when the vehicle is moving and you need to warn other road users of your presence. You must not use your horn when the vehicle is stationary or when driving/riding in a built up area between the hours of 1130pm and 0700 am **except** when another road user poses a danger.

Q. 5 Unless otherwise instructed, what is the speed limit for cars and motorcycles on a dual carriage way?

A.70mph

Q. 6 When road conditions are good, should you leave a gap of 2, 3 or 4 seconds between you and the vehicle in front?

A 2 seconds (4 seconds in the wet and even more in fog, and ice and snow). *Safety Officer comment: pick a marker on the road/roadside and as the vehicle in front passes the marker, say to yourself 'only a fool breaks the two second rule' at normal speech speed. This takes two seconds to say!*

Q.7 At 50mph, what is the guideline stopping distance in metres?

A.53 metres

Q. 8 As your speed doubles, does your braking distance double, treble, or quadruple?

A. Quadruple

Q. 9 On roads with double white lines where the line nearest you is solid (unbroken), under what circumstances can you cross the solid white line?

A If you need to enter an adjoining premises or enter a side road/opening. You also may cross/straddle the line to pass a stationary vehicle, or overtake a pedal cycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle, if they are travelling at 10mph or less.

Q. 10 There are five coloured road studs or cats eyes, can you list them and state where on the carriageway, each is used?

A. White studs mark the lanes or middle of the road. Amber studs mark the central reservation of a dual carriageway or motorway. Red studs mark the left edge of the road. Green studs mark the edge of the carriageway at lay-bys and slip roads. Green/yellow studs mark/indicate temporary adjustments/lanes to lane layouts e.g. commonly through road works on motorways. *There are also some blue studs to mark areas used by emergency vehicles – mainly police vehicles*

Q. 11. If a pedestrian has started to cross a road you intend to turn into, who has priority?

A. The pedestrian

Q. 12 At roundabouts, are the directional lane arrows compulsory when choosing the approach lane? (e.g. the arrows pointing left, right, straight ahead)

A. No, they are advisory. If the lane marking reads 'left only', 'ahead only', 'right only' then they are compulsory. *Safety Officer comment: If you intend to use the left arrowed lane, for example, and you intend to go straight ahead, you risk annoying/confusing other vehicles as to your intentions. Personally, I use the lanes as directionally marked.*

Q. 13 On the motorway, amber flashing matrix signs often display a speed limit. Is this

a compulsory speed limit?

A. No, it is advisory and is used to warn of a hazard ahead.

Q.14. If the matrix sign displays red flashing lights and contain an X in your lane, what does this mean?

A. You must not proceed any further in this lane.

Q. 15 When entering a motorway via a slip road, there is usually an area dividing the slip road from lane one of the motorway. This area contains chevrons or cross hatchings that are bordered by a **solid** white line. Can you enter this area when joining the motorway?

A. No

Q. 16 On non motorway roads, there are lane dividers that contain cross hatchings that are bordered by **broken** white lines. Can you enter the cross hatched area?

A. Yes, if it is safe to do so. *Safety Officer comment: take care when entering a cross hatched area in the wet as the white paint can be slippery. Cross hatched areas often collect road debris that can also affect tyre grip and increase the chance of punctures.*

Q.17 Road signs divide into three main types. Circular signs give orders, triangular signs warn, and rectangular signs inform. There are a few exceptions to the shapes (and colours) of which there are two very important exceptions. Can you name them and explain why they are so shaped?

A The Give Way sign is an inverted triangle and the Stop sign is octagonal. They are so shaped to make them recognizable at times when they are covered/obscured by snow. *Safety Officer comment: Recently, some new Give Way signs of a different 'design' have appeared at junctions – the inverted triangle is set against a yellow background on a square sign!*

Q. 18 There are eight road signs that feature animals in the red triangular warning signs. Can you name them?

A. Cattle, Sheep, Wild Animals (the stag), Wildfowl, Migratory Toads, Wild Horses or Ponies, Horses with Riders, Horse-drawn Vehicles.

Q. 19 What is the background colour of primary route signs?

A. Green

Q. 20 What is the background colour of motorway signs?

A. Blue

Q. 21 What is the colour of non-primary (local) signs?

A. White

Q. 22 Where would you see a St Andrews Cross?

A. At a railway level crossing

Q. 23 What is the distance between the 3, 2 and 1 exit warning markers on motorways?

A. 100 yards

Q. 24 At 70mph, how many metres do you travel per second, 21, 31, Or 41?

A. 31 meters (about 100 feet).

Q. 25 When joining a motorway via a slip road, should you match your speed to that of the traffic on the motorway, go slower, or go faster?

A. Assuming that the traffic is not exceeding the speed limit, you should match your speed to that of the traffic on the main carriageway and then move into an appropriate gap in the traffic. You may want/need to accelerate as you move into the gap. *Safety Officer comment: Slip roads when entering the motorway are often elevated thus giving the motorcyclist a good view of the traffic on the carriageway. Use this to your advantage when planning your entry onto the motorway. Also, indicate as soon as you are on the slip road to give motorway traffic advance warning of your presence and intention to join the motorway. Remember motorcyclists are more vulnerable than other vehicles and drivers of motorway vehicles can often be drowsy if on a long journey and therefore not concentrating fully.*

Q. 26 When joining a motorway via a slip road, why is it advisable to get onto the motorway at the earliest opportunity?

A. It is advisable to enter the motorway ASAP to avoid running out of road on the slip road. If you leave it too late to join the motorway you must give way to traffic on the carriageway and you will have to slow down or even stop if there is not a gap to move into. This greatly increases the danger to the motorcyclist; you could get hit from behind or have to accelerate quickly to join the carriageway from either a slow speed or a standstill.

Q. 27 What is the law of physics that keeps a moving motorcycle upright, centrifugal, hydroscopic or gyroscopic?

A. Gyroscopic. *Safety Officer comment: the gyroscopic action also is an important force that aids 'counter steering'. If you are not familiar with counter steering, it is advisable to acquaint yourself with the technique and understand how it improves cornering.*

Q. 28 What is the minimum legal age that a person can ride pillion on a motorcycle?

A. There is no minimum age. The requirement is that the pillion rider can rest his/her feet on the footpegs when seated on the motorcycle.

Hopefully, you've had a bit of fun answering the above questions and maybe learnt something?

Tony Burns
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