

Safety check questions for practical car tests

Vehicle safety checks have always been part of the officially recommended syllabus for learning to drive.

The source material can be found in the DSA publication 'Driving the essential skills' and 'The official DSA driving test'. Advice and information on how to carry out vehicle safety checks can also be found in the manufacturer's handbook.

Below is a list of the combinations of questions to be used on test. Each combination of questions contains two questions and answers.

Combination 1

- Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine oil level and tell me how you would check that the engine has sufficient oil.

Identify dipstick / oil level indicator, describe check of oil level against the minimum/maximum markers.

- Show me / explain how you would check that the power assisted steering is working before starting a journey.

If the steering becomes heavy the system may not be working properly. Before starting a journey two simple checks can be made. Gentle pressure on the steering wheel, maintained while the engine is started, should result in a slight but noticeable movement as the system begins to operate.

Alternatively turning the steering wheel just after moving off will give an immediate indication that the power assistance is functioning.

Combination 2

- Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine coolant level and tell me how you would check that the engine has the correct level.

Identify high/low level markings on header tank where fitted or radiator filler cap, and describe how to top up to correct level.

- Show me how you would check the parking brake for excessive wear.

Demonstrate by applying parking brake that when it is fully applied it secures itself, and is not at the end of the working travel.

Combination 3

- Identify where the windscreen washer reservoir is and tell me how you would check the windscreen washer level.

Identify reservoir and explain how to check level.

- Show me how you would check that the horn is working (off road only).

Check is carried out by using control (turn on ignition if necessary).

Combination 4

- Open the bonnet, identify where the brake fluid reservoir is and tell me how you would check that you have a safe level of hydraulic brake fluid.

Identify reservoir, check level against high/low markings.

- Show me how you would check that the direction indicators are working.

Applying the indicators or hazard warning switch and check functioning of all indicators.

Combination 5

- Tell me how you would check that the brake lights are working on this car.

Operate brake pedal, make use of reflections in windows, garage doors, etc, or ask someone to help.

- Show me how you would check the parking brake for excessive wear.

Demonstrate by applying parking brake that when it is fully applied it secures itself, and is not at the end of the working travel.

Combination 6

- Tell me how you would check that the brakes are working before starting a journey.

Brakes should not feel spongy or slack. Brakes should be tested as you set off. Vehicle should not pull to one side.

- Show me how you would check that the headlights & tail lights are working.

Operate switch (turn on ignition if necessary), walk round vehicle.

Combination 7

- Tell me where you would find the information for the recommended tyre pressures for this car and how tyre pressures should be checked.

Manufacturer's guide, use a reliable pressure gauge, check and adjust pressures when tyres are cold, don't forget spare tyre, remember to refit valve caps.

- Show me how you would check that the direction indicators are working.

Applying the indicators or hazard warning switch and check functioning of all indicators.

Combination 8

- Tell me how you would check the tyres to ensure that they have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe to use on the road.

No cuts and bulges, 1.6mm of tread depth across the central $\frac{3}{4}$ of the breadth of the tyre and around the entire outer circumference.

- Show me how you would check that the headlights & tail lights are working.

Operate switch (turn on ignition if necessary), walk round vehicle.

Combination 9

- Tell me how you would check the tyres to ensure that they have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe to use on the road.

No cuts and bulges, 1.6mm of tread depth across the central $\frac{3}{4}$ of the breadth of the tyre and around the entire outer circumference.

- Show me how you would check that the horn is working (off road only).

Check is carried out by using control (turn on ignition if necessary).

Combination 10

- Open the bonnet, identify where the brake fluid reservoir is and tell me how you would check that you have a safe level of hydraulic brake fluid.

Identify reservoir, check level against high/low markings.

- Show me / explain how you would check that the power assisted steering is working before starting a journey.

If the steering becomes heavy the system may not be working properly. Before starting a journey two simple checks can be made. Gentle pressure on the steering wheel, maintained while the engine is started, should result in a slight but noticeable movement as the system begins to operate.

Alternatively turning the steering wheel just after moving off will give an immediate indication that the power assistance is functioning.

Combination 11

- Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine oil level and tell me how you would check that the engine has sufficient oil.

Identify dipstick / oil level indicator, describe check of oil level against the minimum/maximum marker.

- Show me how you would check that the headlights & tail lights are working.

Operate switch (turn on ignition if necessary), walk round vehicle.

Combination 12

- Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine coolant level and tell me how you would check that the engine has the correct level.

Identify high/low level markings on header tank where fitted or radiator filler cap, and describe how to top up to correct level.

- Show me how you would check that the headlights & tail lights are working.

Operate switch (turn on ignition if necessary), walk round vehicle.