

Preparation

After you have performed your cockpit drill, you should make sure it is safe to start the engine of your car. To do this, ensure you are in neutral by pushing the gear stick from left to right. If it is in neutral then it should move around 3 inches from left to right. If still in gear, the gear stick will move very little from left to right. Then ensure the handbrake has been applied by giving it a gentle tug upwards. You are looking to see if the handbrake is raised and is tense. Once you have made these checks, you can start the car.

These are the actions you need to undertake to move the car off safely. First you will need to press the clutch pedal all the way down and select first gear. This is the gear you will always use when you want to move the car off from a stationary position. Next is setting the gas. You need to press the gas (accelerator) pedal slightly. If you can imagine pressing the pedal around the width of a one pound coin. This will usually give you around 1500 revs on the rev counter. Once you have steadied it a 1500 revs, hold the pedal still. By doing this, you will have provided the engine with enough power to move the car off. By not setting the gas at the start can result in a stall or a very jumpy start.

Next is setting the bite point of the clutch. That means bringing the clutch slowly up, until the engine sound slightly lowers it's tone. You might also notice on a rev counter that revs drop by about 200. If the car engine starts to make a grumble noise or starts juddering and creaking, then you will need to slightly lower the clutch. Now the car is prepared and ready to move.

Before moving the car off however, you must ensure that it is safe to do so by doing the appropriate observations. Check the road ahead and behind you using your main and a right side mirror. It is also very important to have a good look around checking blind spot to your right as there could be a cyclist that couldn't be seen by your mirrors. Now you can make the decision if it is safe for you and others to move off and whether it is necessary and beneficiary for others to give a signal to the right before moving. Providing you take the appropriate observations before moving off, you can indicate even if no one will benefit.

It is recommended however that you ensure it is clear from vehicles approaching from behind before you indicate. If your actions slow another vehicle or make them change course due to your actions then this is dangerous and also a potential driving test fail. By leaving your indicator on whilst vehicles are approaching from the rear, what they can tend to do is to slow down and flash you with their headlights, this is their signal telling you to move off. Only indicate if there is anything approaching from the front. This is to include vehicles, cycles and even pedestrians if you think they may benefit.

Moving off

Now that we have established that it is safe to move off and indicate if necessary, release the handbrake. The car may start to slowly move forward. If it doesn't then very slowly bring the clutch pedal up around the width of a one pound coin. Apply gentle pressure to the gas pedal. Gently steer to the right to the middle of your side of the road. This will be around 1 meter from the curb on your left. Once you are happy with your position, gently steer left to straighten up the car.

Parking up on the left

Now that we are on the move, we are going to try parking the car. Please see our tutorial for parking up on the left.