

During the driving test this exercise may be conducted if the examiner asks you to pull up on the left behind a parked car or after completing the parallel parking manoeuvre. If you do park up behind another car, ensure you leave enough space between yourself and the car in front to move off without the need to reverse.

Moving off is generally seen as a simple task. It does however represent a great many test fails and minors incurred. This is mainly due to poor observation and often the incorrect use of signals.

Common mistakes

Insufficient or poor observation

Ideally full 360 degree all round observation is required just before moving off. Ensure you have the car ready to go as our moving off safely tutorial suggests. Once your car is ready start your observations by looking in your left blind spot, then look in your left mirror, then your main mirror, take a look at the road ahead, then your right mirror and finish off looking over your right shoulder at your blind spot.

Observations are carried out from left to right as the last point of check needs to be where the most danger is. In most cases, this will be the traffic to the right. A shortened version of observations can be used. For this look in your main mirror, your blind spot to the right and finish with your right mirror.

Delay after observations

After you have completed your observations, ensure there is no delay between this and moving off. If there is a delay for what ever reason, then complete your observations again before moving off. It only takes a few seconds for circumstances to change. In that delay of only 10 seconds or so a cyclist could emerge from a side road or a fast approaching vehicle could be behind you.

Inappropriate use of signals

A common mistake made by learners before moving off is to signal to the right inappropriately. It is not often that you will need to signal when moving off.

If for instance you complete your observations and then signal to the right to let other road users know your intentions. A car is approaching from behind, they see you signaling, slow down to allow you to move off. Or they might perhaps swerve out of your way thinking you may move off in front of them. By doing this, you have now become a hazard. By causing another vehicle to change direction or speed is dangerous and may will fail your test. Signaling just before a cyclist is going round you for instance could cause them to swerve or brake.

If you don't intend to move off in another vehicles path, then why signal at all?

Only signal if it is of benefit to other road users. This could be for instance a car or cyclist approaching from the front. If there are several pedestrians in the area then it may be of benefit to signal.

Use the **POM** routine

Prepare. Getting your car ready to move so there is no delay after observations.

Observe. Use all round effective observations and signal only if necessary.

Move. Move off in a timely manor without delay. If there is a delay, observe again.

You will also need good clutch control if parked close to a vehicle in front of you. Potentially you could hit the car in front by moving off too fast. Using clutch control keep your car slow and steer briskly to the right.

