

SOME MISCONCEPTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS:

MISCONCEPTIONS:

At least one brake must be covered/applied while stationary in traffic

This is not a requirement of the test on a level road, if the bike is stable and does not have to be stopped from moving forwards or backwards by use of the rider's legs. The rider should nevertheless be in full control of their machine at all times.

The front brake must not be used when coming to rest

Use of the front brake only when coming to rest will not result in adverse marking per se, unless the Examiner considers that insufficient control is being exercised i.e. its coarse application affects the stability of the machine. The machine should be brought to rest safely, smoothly and in complete control and ridden away again in a similar fashion.

It is important which foot you put down first when coming to a halt

This has never been a requirement of the test. When coming to a stop it is immaterial which foot is placed on the ground first (or leaves it last) providing the machine is stopped safely, smoothly and in control and is moved away from rest in a similar fashion.

You must keep at least one hand on the handlebars when stationary

This is not a requirement for the test - but the bike must remain stable at all times.

Indicators must be used whenever changing lane or turning left or right

Indicators need only be used when they would be of benefit to other road users. However, use of indicators without obvious benefit is unlikely to affect the test result unless they are misleading to other road users. If there is any doubt, then rule 103/page 34 of the Highway Code applies.

A "lifesaver" must be carried out whenever changing course or speed

This is wrong and they should not be carried out by rote. A "lifesaver" (or blind-spot check) should only be carried out when it would be of benefit and serve a purpose. However, failure to execute a "lifesaver" when the scenario dictates the need might adversely affect test success.

Neutral must always be selected when stationary in traffic

This is not correct. Neutral should be selected when you are likely to be stationary for some time. This counts towards the test competency of Vehicle Sympathy. To not select neutral will not attract adverse marking on its own but might contribute with other faults to an adverse result overall.

You must make good progress and need to ride at the speed limit plus 10% or some other margin that is above the speed limit

This is wrong.

The IAM briefing statement made to all Candidates is that they must comply with all traffic regulations. The Advanced Rider Course Logbook in the "The Test - What to Expect" section states that "Your ride must be safe and legal. Use your speedometer to keep to the speed limits which must be adhered to at all times."

You should rely on your own speedometer on the day of the test and not try to make any adjustments for perceived inaccuracy. The Examiner will realise if your speedometer reads inaccurately and will not penalise you for this, unless there is a significant defect with the reading which would then class the vehicle as not roadworthy.

You may use a SatNav on the test.

Although you might be *marked down* for making insufficient progress (a significantly more involved set of skills than mere speed alone), you will be failed for exceeding a speed limit.

At STOP lines the rider must place at least one foot onto the road surface

There is no specific requirement to do so. The essential requirement is that a rider's machine must come to a complete STOP in a controlled manner and be stable when stopped.

When overtaking, the speed differential should not exceed a given percentage

This is incorrect. Overtaking should be carried out as briskly and safely as conditions allow, whilst remaining within any speed limit appropriate at the time.

When riding on a three-lane dual carriageway/Motorway, a rider should position themselves towards the nearside in lane 1, towards the centre in lane 2 and towards the offside in lane 3.

This is incorrect. A rider's positioning within their lane in any given situation should always be whatever the safest position is considered to be, when taking into account the hazards around them. An Advanced Rider adopts a flexible, 'thinking' approach to all situations.

CLARIFICATIONS:

Mini-roundabout stalemate (Highway Code rules 184, 185, 188, 189, 190 (HC revised 2007) apply)

If a Candidate has stopped at the Give Way line to give priority to traffic from the right, then they have fulfilled their obligation within the confines of the Highway Code. If the vehicle from the right is not going to move (because they are waiting for the vehicle from their right who, in turn, is waiting for the vehicle from their right who is probably waiting for the Candidate) then they should cautiously make the first move and proceed. Do not wave vehicles on.

Off-siding - the crossing of the centre line/hazard line (or in the absence of such a line, the centre of the carriageway) in order to extend a view

Off-siding – Single track road:

In situations where there is no possibility of passing an oncoming vehicle due to the width of the road and in order to enable your presence to be seen earlier, this is acceptable, providing it is both advantageous and gives no risk of conflict. You should always be aware of the road conditions on single track roads and should the centre of the lane be muddy or overgrown then avoid crossing it and keep in the Nearside Tyre track (P1), reducing speed as necessary.

Off-siding (to extend view) – two-way carriageway

Experience is showing that this is causing Candidates to put themselves in danger. The IAM actively discourages this practice and it is therefore not acceptable on test.

Straight-lining (or trimming) a set of open bends

Trimming or straight-lining a set of open bends whilst acceptable on test must not be carried out if there is a risk of conflict with other road users or where it will inconvenience, confuse or cause alarm or distress, to others. If the Candidate compromises their own or any other road user's safety they will fail the test.

Straight-lining (or trimming) roundabouts

Trimming or straight-lining roundabouts is often encouraged to enhance safety, stability and progress. This is correct if the situation is appropriate.

This must not however be carried out if it will inconvenience or confuse or where there is a risk of conflict with other road users. The risk from traffic approaching from the rear is also a serious consideration in the decision as to whether to straight-line a roundabout. If the rider compromises their own or any other road user's safety, they will fail the test.

Crossing solid white lines

Highway Code rule 129 p43 (HC revised 2007) applies.

You can cross a solid white line in the following circumstances, providing it is done safely and causes no conflict with other road users:

- To pass stationary vehicle(s); N.B. Queuing traffic is not considered to fall within the meaning of this term.
- When it is necessary to turn right into a side road, premises, drive or other access but you must not straddle the line whilst waiting for a gap in oncoming traffic or for your exit to be clear;
- To pass a bicycle, horse or road maintenance vehicle providing they are not travelling at more than 10mph; The road maintenance vehicle has to be actively engaged in road maintenance with its amber light on and keep right arrow on the back;
- If you are directed to do so by a Police officer, VOSA or HATO officer

You may overtake moving traffic by staying on the correct side of the solid white line providing there is sufficient space available between the vehicle(s) to be overtaken and the solid white line and the manoeuvre is carried out safely and causes no conflict or confusion with other road users.

Crossing a solid white line under any other circumstances, such as at the end of an overtake will result in a test failure.

Overtaking speed

Any overtake needs to be accomplished safely and without risk of conflict with other road users. If to overtake successfully a Candidate will have to exceed the speed limit, they should not commence the overtake. If the posted speed limit has to be exceeded the Candidate must ask themselves the question as to whether they should have attempted the overtake in the first place.

The Advanced Rider Course Logbook states (page 36) "Never plan to exceed the speed limit, so if the other vehicular is travelling at close to the limit, recognize that overtaking may not be legal."

Slowing for a change in speed limit

Misconception 1: brakes must not be used when reducing speed to a lower speed limit.

Misconception 2: a brake light must be shown when slowing for hazards or a change in speed limit.

It depends on how much speed must be lost and over what distance and relative to other traffic.

'Acceleration Sense' should be used encouraged where it is practical, to promote smooth yet progressive riding. In many situations there may be no need to brake if the manoeuvre has been planned properly, unless it is considered that a brake light needs to be shown to traffic following too closely or approaching too fast. Brakes should be used when it is necessary, even if it is only to reduce the need for excessive/hard engine braking which is not good for a bike or its stability.

It is important that the Candidate does not get into the habit of always braking under the guise of showing a brake light as an excuse for poor 'Acceleration Sense' or a lack of planning or observation.

The point at which a speed limit starts or ends is at the change of limit signs.

When entering a lower limit, the change of speed should have been achieved by the sign.

When entering a higher limit the increase of speed should only commence on actually passing the higher limit signs.

Accelerating to a higher speed limit

Exiting a low speed zone (or junction or other hazard) and increasing speed to a higher posted limit is sometimes thought by the Candidate to have to be race-like. This is incorrect. Progressive acceleration should be used but not to the point of a drag start or racing-type behaviour. Brisk instead of fast is a better descriptive word to use.

Acceleration needs to be smooth, progressive and controlled with due regard for the prevailing conditions.

Cutting into RH Junctions off a main road

Under what conditions can a rider 'cut into' a RH junction, initially proceeding on the wrong side of the road?

If it is done correctly and without any danger or potential danger whatsoever, this may be allowed. It should be part of an early plan.

Joining a Motorway

Does it have to be Lane 1 for a short distance initially?

As an Advanced Rider in the making, planning a motorway entrance should be early and accurate. If progress into Lane 2 or 3 is appropriate and can be made safely, it should be done promptly.

Use of the rear brake

Will I be expected to make use of my rear brake on test?

The Examiner will expect to see use being made of both brakes as appropriate. In dry conditions use of only the front brake should not adversely affect the marking of the test, unless its use is seen to have an adverse effect on machine stability.

In wet or slippery conditions, use of the front brake only will have an adverse effect on the marking of the test.

Where a machine has linked brakes, failure to make use of the rear brake pedal will not adversely affect the marking of the test providing the rider has an understanding of the result of their actions. This may involve some questions from the Examiner to establish this.

Standing on the footrests

Where a rider is approaching the brow of a hill whilst gaining on a vehicle, in circumstances that would otherwise certainly be an overtake if it were on a road with sufficient visibility, by standing up momentarily on the pegs to extend their view, the rider may be able to confirm that it either is, or is not, safe to overtake. Is this an acceptable technique?

No. Such actions would likely result in an IAM test failure. Should the car unexpectedly brake hard, the rider would not be able to do the same without first having to sit back down, which would then delay any corresponding braking actions.

If the rider's view was sufficiently marginal to feel the need for such actions, then it would be unlikely to be a viable overtaking situation in the first place.

Mini roundabouts

Can I just ride over a mini-roundabout?

The subject of mini roundabouts is a regular debate, especially when the roundabout is:

- 1) clearly just paint on the road and
- 2) offset in the carriageway rather than centrally positioned

The first rule of the Four S's of advanced riding is to be SAFE. Whilst the IAM does not advocate the breach of any road traffic legislation, it does advocate that the driver or rider remains in the safest position on the road at all times, with full regard to all the circumstances.

The basic rule (and the exemption provided by law) is that riders must stay to the left of the painted circle, unless the size of their vehicle, or the layout of the junction makes it impractical to do so.

However, it is unlikely that the examiner would fail an associate for riding over a portion of the painted circle where this was done to avoid imminent danger (having debriefed them and been assured that this was done for the right reason).

If, however, the Candidate rides over a mini roundabout when there is no reason other than convenience, then the Examiner would consider failing them (having considered their reasoning and the drive or ride in its entirety).

Congratulations on reading all the way through this document

**If you have any questions on the content, please ask a HERAM Observer
They will be happy to help.**