

Emergency stop

Most emergencies can be avoided with good hazard perception and planning. However, there may be occasions when you unexpectedly have to stop very quickly. On your driving test, you may be asked to perform an emergency stop. The examiner will warn you beforehand, then raise their hand and say 'stop' when they want you to do it.



How do you do it?

Hold the steering wheel firmly and brake very firmly. Increase the pressure on the brake progressively as you come to a stop. Put the clutch down just before stopping, as late as possible. (Brakes work better with the clutch up.) Once stationary quickly apply the handbrake (in a real emergency this will stop you being shunted forward so far if you are hit from behind). Then put the car in neutral. The examiner will ask you to move on. Check all around the car before you go. Signal as necessary to other road users.



What about a mirror check?

If a human life is at risk, do not look in the mirror before braking as this causes an unnecessary delay. Just brace yourself and expect to be hit from behind. However, always check behind before braking for an animal or non-emergency situation. It might be safer to run an animal over or swerve around an obstacle. (Would you rather save a squirrel or the child in the front of the car behind?). Only swerve if there is space to and road surface conditions allow.



What about skidding?

Correcting skids is difficult. Avoid them by braking, accelerating and steering GENTLY to keep your car balanced. Also check your brakes, tyres & steering regularly. Skid control info is overleaf.

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Skidding

SKID CONTROL COURSES

We have given basic skid control information below but we strongly recommend that you enrol on a skid pan course in order to practise correcting skids in a safe environment. Without practical experience you are likely to panic or forget what to do in an emergency.



CAUSES OF SKIDS

Here are some common reasons tyres lose their grip on the road:

- * You drove too fast for the conditions - eg cornering/slippery surface/worn tyres
- * You braked too hard
- * You steered too suddenly
- * You accelerated too harshly

IMPORTANT TIP: WHEN YOU SKID OUT OF CONTROL, LOOK AT THE SPACE YOU ARE AIMING FOR, RATHER THAN THE OBSTACLE.

CORRECTING SKIDS

Front wheel skid: (when you continue straight on after steering left or right)
Come off the gas or brake & steer in the direction of the skid so the tyres can regain grip more easily. When you feel the tyres bite, gently steer back on course.

Rear wheel skid: (when the back of the car skids sideways, often when cornering)
Come off the gas or brake & steer in the direction the rear of the car is skidding, then straighten the wheel as the slide is stopping. If a counter skid occurs, quickly steer the other way. If you do nothing, the car may go into a spin.

Four wheel skid: (all the wheels skid, often having locked due to harsh braking)
In a car without ABS (anti-lock braking system) come off the brake to allow the wheels to rotate and regain grip, then quickly brake again. Repeat as necessary. If you need to steer to avoid an obstacle you should pump the brake in a rhythmic fashion, steering only when you are off the brake. This is known as cadence braking.

In a car with ABS, simply brake hard & continuously and steer as necessary. The ABS will repeatedly release and apply the brakes rapidly to provide steering control.

Wheel spin: (the driving wheels spin on the spot due to harsh acceleration)

Come off the gas to allow the wheels to slow down and regain their grip.

Aquaplaning: (the wheels 'water-ski' on a very wet road, often when tyres are worn)
Come off the gas and wait for the car to slow down and settle back on the road. Keep the steering straight otherwise the car will lurch whichever way the front wheels are pointing when the tyres regain their grip.