

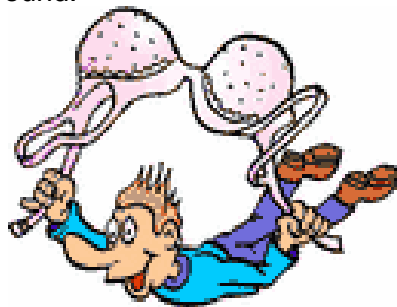


Emergency Stops

The Highway Code says, "Leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front of you so that you can pull up safely if it slows down or stops suddenly. Although, most drivers will agree with this advice but few put it in to practice. This is probably because they don't realise how far the car will travel before it will stop.

The reaction times and braking distances are printed on pages 28 & 29 of the Highway Code; they should be learnt and understood for what they actually are. (The absolute minimum space you will require in the event of things going wrong.) For example when travelling at 70mph you are covering distance of 32 meters (eight car lengths) in one second. Your thinking distance at 70 mph is given as 21 meters (five car lengths) which is less then two thirds of a second, it is barely enough to pivot your right foot from the accelerator to brakes. Your braking distance is given as 75 meters (19 car lengths), which equates to less then two and a half seconds, giving you the total stopping time of approximately three seconds.

Now imagine diving from an aeroplane falling to earth at 70mph and waiting to open the parachute three seconds before you hit the ground.



Throughout your driving your aim should be to slow down in good time and pull up gently. With early planning and anticipation there should never be a reason why you should need to brake really hard to make a stop. But emergencies do some times arise, for instance a child may run in to the road in front of you. Therefore knowing how to make an emergency stop is essential.



On the driving test

The Examiner will ask you to stop at various places during the driving test. It's during one of these 'stops' that the Examiner will explain to you that, very shortly he will ask you to as in an emergency.

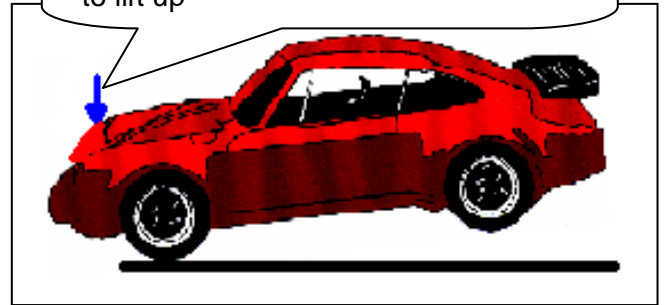
The signal he will give you as he says 'Stop' will be shown to you, usually with holding up their right hand onto the windscreen and saying the word 'Stop'.

This is the one occasion in the test when you don't follow the *mirrors-signal-manoevre* routine. Before giving you the signal to 'Stop' the Examiner himself would have normally checked the road behind with a look over his right shoulder. He won't ask you to stop if there could be a danger to you from following traffic.

When braking, the weight of the car is transferred to the front of the car thus causing the rear wheels to lock up earlier due to lack of grip between road surface and tyres resulting in a rear wheel skid. If the hand brake is applied before the vehicle has stopped the problem would be compounded due to the fact that the handbrake is only operational on the rear wheels.

Therefore use of handbrake should be only after the vehicle has come to a complete stop.

Vehicles Weight will be flung to the front thus causing the rear of the car to lift up



When you get the signal, release the accelerator pedal and pivot your right foot across to the brake pedal. Apply firm pressure and judge pedal movement so that the brakes are near the point of locking.

Hold the pedal firmly as the car slows to almost standstill, gradually relax some of the braking pressure and press the clutch in as the car nears the final stop, keep both hands on the steering wheel and hold the car in a straight line, be alert for the first signs of the wheels locking up. If a skid has actually started, ease the pedal but don't release it completely, and then re-apply the pressure.

Avoid depressing the clutch until just before you stop, by continuing to keep the clutch up as late as possible you will achieve maximum braking from the engine resulting in more stability and less likely hood of the wheel locking up.

With the car safely at a standstill, and the clutch and brake pedals still depressed, apply the handbrake and move the gear lever into neutral.

Move on again when told to do so by the Examiner, not forgetting the *all round observation before you move away*

The main points to remember when making an emergency stop

- Keep both hands on the steering; you need absolute control over the steering.
- Avoid braking so hard that you lock any of the wheels and end up skidding.
- Leave the clutch pedal alone until just before the stop. (By keeping the clutch up as late as possible you will gain maximum assistance from your engine in helping you to slow the vehicle).
- Leave the handbrake alone until the vehicle has come to a halt. (Most handbrakes operate on the rear two wheels only. and you would apply extra braking on the rear wheels if the hand brake was applied before the vehicle stopped thus increasing the possibility of rear wheel skid.).