

# Customer service

A guide to our service standards and your opportunity to tell us what you think



We aim to give a high-quality service to all our customers. We welcome your comments and complaints, as they help us to improve how we provide our services.

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# Who we are

We (the Driving Standards Agency) are a member of the Motoring and Freight Services (MFS) group of the Department for Transport (DfT).

Our main aim is to promote road safety in Great Britain through improved driving standards.

## **We are responsible for**

- carrying out theory and practical driving tests fairly and consistently for all vehicle categories
- setting the standard for Approved Driving Instructors (ADI) for car drivers and Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) for motorcyclists
- carrying out taxi tests for local authorities (these are not tests set out in law but are designed to support a high standard of driving amongst taxi drivers)
- providing the national Drink Drive Rehabilitation Scheme.

## **We oversee**

- the Voluntary Register of Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) Instructors
- the Voluntary Register of Fleet Driver Trainers
- the Register of Post-test Motorcycle Trainers (RPMT)
- the Official Register of Driver Instructor Training (ORDIT)
- the Integrated Register of Driver Trainers (IRDT).

## **We manage**

- the Pass Plus scheme for newly qualified drivers
- the Driver Qualification Card (DQC) for professional bus, coach and lorry drivers for their Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC)
- the Enhanced Rider Scheme for fully licensed motorcyclists.

DSA is a trading fund, which means that we cover our costs and fund our road safety initiatives mostly from the income we get from test fees.



## Our aims

- Improve road safety.
- Provide fair tests within an acceptable timescale and which keep to a nationwide standard.
- Provide a national network of test centres.
- Make sure high and consistent standards are used in assessing drivers and driving instructors throughout Great Britain.
- Promptly tell candidates their results, and arrange for driving licences to be issued automatically when this is appropriate.
- Provide constructive feedback at the end of each practical test.
- Provide value for money.
- Treat all customers in a polite and helpful way at all times.
- Run an efficient, user-friendly service to book tests.
- Handle enquiries and complaints promptly and efficiently.
- Work closely with business and trade associations to improve our services to the public.
- Provide road safety presentations (Arrive Alive) free of charge to organisations including schools, colleges, the armed forces, youth football teams, the probation service, young offenders and the over 50s (Arrive Alive Classic).

# Service standards

## **Our targets and promises**

We aim to carry out all areas of our work in a fair, independent, polite and helpful way.

We judge our performance against agreed standards (printed in our business plan) and we review them each year.

You can download a copy of our business plan from our website or contact us for a paper copy. Our contact details are on pages 16 and 17.

**The targets and promises below are from our business plan for 2009/2010**

## **For all our customers**

- Our online booking service will be available 99% of the time over 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- We will respond to 90% of general enquiries within 10 working days.
- We will respond to 90% of complaints within 10 working days.

## **For our business customers and instructors**

- The national average waiting time for ADI practical qualifying tests will be no longer than four weeks.

## **If you're taking a theory test**

- We will keep 99.5% of appointments.
- We will give 95% of candidates an appointment at their chosen centre within two weeks of their preferred date.

Theory tests are usually available between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Tests are also available on weekday evenings between 6pm and 9pm, and on Saturdays (usually in the morning) at no extra cost. Depending on the demand, some centres may be open for only part of the day.

## **If you're taking a practical test**

- We will answer phone calls quickly and try to sort out any enquiries you may have when you first call. This may involve transferring your call to a different part of the DSA.
- We will keep 98% of practical test appointments that have been made at least three days before the test.
- You will get an appointment within nine weeks at 90% of permanent test centres.
- The national average waiting time for practical driving tests will be no longer than
  - six weeks for car tests
  - six weeks for motorcycle tests
  - three weeks for statutory practical vocational tests.

Vocational tests are for candidates taking large goods vehicle (LGV) or passenger-carrying vehicle (PCV) tests.

We do not have a fixed number of people who can pass or fail their tests so, if you perform to the necessary standard, you will pass.

Practical tests are usually available at all permanent test centres between 8am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday (we can offer earlier and later tests at some test centres). We only provide tests at some centres when there is enough demand and it is economical to do so. We also provide tests on Saturdays, Sundays and weekday evenings at some test centres, but these will cost extra.

## Keeping you informed

We will give you information by

- updating our websites  
([direct.gov.uk/drivingtest](https://direct.gov.uk/drivingtest) and [businesslink.gov.uk/transport](https://businesslink.gov.uk/transport))
- sending the *Learning to Drive* leaflet and our *Driver's Record* with provisional licences through our partner, the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- publishing a wide range of books
- publishing video clips on [youtube.com/dsagov](https://youtube.com/dsagov) giving information about theory and practical tests and the standards needed to pass them
- issuing news releases to the media
- putting up posters in test centres
- sending our magazine *Despatch* to driving instructors, training organisations, road safety officers and others within the industry
- publishing our business plan, which sets out our aims and targets (and our annual report and accounts, which show our performance against those aims and targets).

## Listening to you

To make sure we listen to you, we will

- carry out regular customer surveys so that you can let us know your views on our services
- consult driving instructor organisations and the wider public on the service we provide and any changes we propose
- make it easy for you to get in touch, so you can give us your comments and complaints.

Please tell us when we do well. If we do not meet your expectations, please tell us how we can improve our services. Our contact details are on pages 16 and 17.

If you suspect that someone is taking a driving test (either theory or practical test, or both) for another person, or if you think that someone who is not a qualified instructor is giving driving lessons, please contact our Fraud and Integrity Team. Their contact details are on page 17.

## How you can help us

Please come to your theory or practical test

- on time and properly prepared
- with both parts of your valid photocard driving licence (including the paper counterpart).

If you do not have your driving licence and you are planning to take a test, please let us know beforehand as you will not be able to take the test without it. If you only have a paper licence, please bring your valid passport as photo ID.





For the practical test, as well as the items listed above, you will need a roadworthy vehicle that meets the test vehicle requirements.

If you lose your licence, you must apply for a replacement from the DVLA, **which could take up to 15 days to arrive. If this happens, you may have to rearrange your test.**

## Equal opportunities

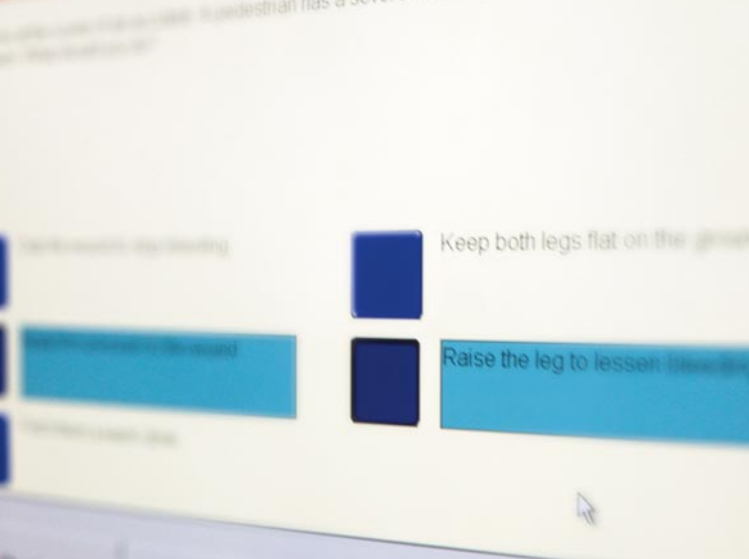
We are committed to equal opportunities for everyone, and provide a number of facilities for candidates who have special needs or physical disabilities.

We recognise and value our customers. We will treat all our customers with respect, and deliver our services in an objective, polite and fair way.

### The theory test

When you book your test, please tell us if you need

- wheelchair access
- your test signed on-screen in British Sign Language (BSL), if you are deaf or have other hearing difficulties (you may bring a signer or lip speaker if you do not understand BSL)
- an audio version of the test in English
- a Welsh version of the multiple-choice part of the test
- an audio version of the test in one of 20 languages.



If you do not understand or read English, or you want to take your test in your first language, you can bring a DSA-approved translator with you (if we cannot provide an audio version of the test in the language you need).

## The practical test

Please tell us if

- you are deaf or have severe hearing difficulties
- you are in any way restricted in your movements
- you have any special needs or disability.

You can bring your own interpreter for your practical test as long as they are aged over 16. Your Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) may act as an interpreter.

Please tell us when you book if you would like to take your test with a Welsh-speaking examiner.

## Putting things right

We always aim to keep test appointments, but occasionally we have to cancel a test at short notice (by which we mean fewer than three clear working days). If we cancel your test, we will try to book your next appointment for within three weeks.

## Refunding fees and expenses

We will either refund your test fee or arrange another test for you at no further cost if

- we cancelled your test
- you cancelled your test and gave us at least three clear working days' notice (we now class Saturdays as a working day as far as tests are concerned).

We will also refund certain expenses that you had to pay on the day of the test if we cancelled your test at short notice, unless it was because of bad weather or poor light. We do consider reasonable claims for the following:

- Reasonable cost of travel to and from the test centre if you were taking a theory test.
- Any standard pay or earnings you lost through taking unpaid leave (usually for half a day on the day of the test), after tax and National Insurance contributions but not including any overtime or commission payments.
- If you were taking a practical test, we will refund you a set mileage rate if you have used your own vehicle to travel to and from the test centre, based on reasonable distance travelled.



- For practical tests, we will generally pay the cost of hiring a vehicle if you did not use your own vehicle. We will pay up to two hours' hire for a car and up to four hours' hire for a motorcycle, LGV or PCV. Costs are usually based on your instructor's or trainer's standard hourly lesson rate.

We do **not** pay the cost of driving lessons or any training course that you arranged before a particular test appointment, or any extra lessons that you decide to take while you are waiting for us to rearrange your test.

## Applying for a refund

If you want to claim a refund, please fill in the 'Reimbursement of candidate's out-of-pocket expenses' claim form, which you can get from test centres and our website.

As well as the claim form, you will need to send us

- an employer's letter on headed paper showing your lost earnings (not including income tax and National Insurance contributions), normally for half a day only, on the date of your test
- receipts for travel costs you paid on the day of the test
- a receipt signed or stamped by your instructor or trainer for vehicle-hire charges for the day of the test, based on their usual hourly rate and showing their instructor or trainer number, your name, the total amount they charged and the period this covers
- receipts for any other expenses that you had to pay on the day.

If you were taking a practical test, you can ask your instructor or trainer to fill in the relevant part of the claim form instead of sending us a receipt to confirm car-hire charges.

You can download a copy of the out-of-pocket expense claim form from [direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](https://direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)

You will find the address of where to send claims on the back of this leaflet. Please make sure you make any claim within six months of the date of your cancelled test, otherwise we may not pay it.

# Data Protection Act 1998

We know how important it is to make sure that we handle any information you give us properly and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We mainly use the information to help us

- manage our registers of trainers and instructors
- book and manage theory and practical tests
- carry out research to improve road safety and our performance.

Under certain circumstances, the Act allows us to give information to other organisations such as the police, to help them with their enquiries. We may also give information to

- other government departments for statistical analysis, for scientific, technical, health, social or economic research, or for collecting tax or similar charges
- non-government organisations if they can prove that they have a legal reason to ask for it.

At times we may need to contact you to make sure that we have your agreement to:

- ask your employer, or your instructor or trainer (or both) about an out-of-pocket expense claim
- answer a question or complaint from someone else on your behalf.

We will try to make sure that this does not cause an unreasonable delay in dealing with any claims or questions.

## Complaints procedure

### Step one

**Data Protection Act** – The Data Protection Act 1998 does not allow us to provide information to other people about individuals without their written permission. If you are contacting us about someone else, you must include the following statement from them in your letter.

**“I [their name] authorise [your name] to request this information on my behalf.”**

The person concerned must sign next to the statement for us to be able to act on the statement.

**Complaints about tests** – You can phone, email or write to the Customer Enquiry Unit that deals with the theory test or the practical test (see page 16 for the contact details) if you have any questions or complaints about

- booking your test
- test cancellations
- out-of-pocket expenses
- delays in getting a test date.

You must write to us if you have a complaint or question about

- the result of your test
- how the test was carried out.

See the 'Right to appeal' section on page 15.

Please give the reasons for your complaint and the solution you are looking for.

### **Complaints about your Compulsory Basic Training (CBT)**

If you have any questions or complaints about your CBT course that you cannot sort out with your trainer, you should contact the CBT section at DSA Headquarters, Nottingham (see page 17 for contact details).

### **Complaints about ADIs**

If you have a complaint about an instructor that you cannot sort out with them, the driving school or the contractor, you can write to the Registrar of ADIs at DSA Headquarters, Nottingham (see page 17 for contact details).

### **Complaints from ADIs**

If you have a complaint about your ADI registration, you can write to the Registrar of ADIs at DSA Headquarters, Nottingham (see page 17 for contact details).

## **Step two**

If you have followed the procedure in step one and you are not satisfied with the response, you can write to our Chief Executive at DSA Headquarters, Nottingham. We aim to answer complaints within 10 working days of receiving them (not including weekends).

## **Step three**

If you have followed steps one and two and are still not satisfied, you can also ask to have your complaint investigated by the Independent Complaints Assessor (ICA), by asking our Chief Executive at our headquarters. You can find contact details on the letter or email you received from the Chief Executive, or on page 17 of this booklet.



## Step four

You can ask the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman, through your MP, to investigate if you have

- had your case investigated by the ICA
- asked for your case to be investigated by the ICA but we told you that your case was not one the ICA could investigate

and you are still not satisfied.

**Right to appeal** – If you do not pass your driving test, you will obviously be disappointed. Although we cannot change your examiner's decision, if you think your test was not carried out in line with the regulations, you have the right to appeal.

If you want to appeal against the way your test was carried out, you must write to our Customer Enquiry Unit, explaining your concerns and including the date, time and location of your test, so that we can investigate the matter fully.

If you live in England or Wales, you have six months after the test in which to appeal.

If you live in Scotland, you have 21 days after the test in which to appeal.

## Freedom of Information Act 2000

If you have any enquiries under the Freedom of Information Act, you must send a written request to our headquarters address on page 17. Please make it clear that you are requesting this information under the Freedom of Information Act so that we can follow the correct procedure.

# How to contact us

## Booking theory and practical tests

### Tests for all categories of vehicle

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Website:                  | <a href="https://direct.gov.uk/drivingtest">direct.gov.uk/drivingtest</a> |
| Phone:                    | 0300 200 11 22  |
| Welsh speakers:           | 0300 200 11 33  |
| Minicom – practical test: | 0300 200 11 44  |
| Minicom – theory test:    | 0300 200 11 66  |

### Instructional tests ADI parts 1, 2 and 3

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Website:        | <a href="https://businesslink.gov.uk/transport">businesslink.gov.uk/transport</a> |
| Phone:          | 0300 200 11 22  |
| Welsh speakers: | 0300 200 11 33  |

## Customer Enquiry Unit – theory test

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Email:          | <a href="mailto:customercare@pearson.com">customercare@pearson.com</a> |
| Phone:          | 0300 200 11 88   |
| Fax:            | 0300 200 11 77   |
| Welsh speakers: | 0300 200 11 33   |

Driving Standards Agency, Customer Services,  
PO Box 381, Salford, Manchester M50 3UW

## Customer Enquiry Unit – practical test

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Email:          | <a href="mailto:customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk">customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk</a> |
| Phone:          | 0300 200 11 22   |
| Fax:            | 0300 200 11 55   |
| Welsh speakers: | 0300 200 11 33   |

Driving Standards Agency, Customer Enquiry Unit  
PO Box 280, Newcastle upon Tyne NE99 1FP

### **ADI registration customer service**

Email: [adireg@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:adireg@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

### **CBT customer service**

Email: [cbt@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:cbt@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

Phone: 0300 200 1122

### **Drink Drive Rehabilitation Scheme**

Email: [ddradmin@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ddradmin@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

### **Fraud and Integrity Team**

Email: [integrity.team@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:integrity.team@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

Phone: 02920 581 290

### **Register of Post-test Motorcycle Trainers**

Email: [rpmt@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:rpmt@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

Phone: 0115 936 6546

### **Driving Standards Agency Headquarters**

The Axis Building, 112 Upper Parliament Street,  
Nottingham NG1 6LP

Email: [customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

Phone: 0115 936 6666

### **Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency**

For all enquiries about driving licences and entitlements, contact:

DVLA Customer Enquiry Unit  
Longview Road, Swansea SA6 7JL.

Online contact service: [direct.gov.uk/emaildvla](https://direct.gov.uk/emaildvla)

Phone: 0300 790 6801

# The Driving Standards Agency

We set the standards for theory and practical driving tests in Great Britain, and we carry out driver testing for all vehicle test categories.

## Contact us

Please see pages 16 and 17 for more information.

Website: [direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://direct.gov.uk/motoring)

Email: [customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk)

Phone: **0300 200 11 22**

**Driving Standards Agency**

PO Box 280, Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE99 1FP

## Directgov

Directgov is the place to find all government motoring information and services.

From logbooks to licensing, and from driving tests to vehicle tax, go to [direct.gov.uk/motoring](http://direct.gov.uk/motoring)



*An executive agency of the  
Department for  
**Transport***

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**Reference: CSER05/11**