

9-10. Why do we not need to be careful to write $\frac{1}{2} [\mathbf{p}_1 \exp(-i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x}) + \exp(-i\mathbf{k} \cdot \mathbf{x})\mathbf{p}_1]$ in the matrix elements?

In this case \mathbf{p}_1 is not an operator, hence \mathbf{p}_1 and the exponential commute.