

Clarification of Common Confusions

Motorcycles

The following document has been put together to provide guidance in relation to 'Common Confusions' identified with both Observing and Examining within the IAM. It has been compiled and adapted from the guidance provided by Examiners across the UK and with input from Observers from New Zealand.

Suggestions for further feedback or clarification of confusing or ambiguous guidance should be emailed to your regional group so it can be vetted and passed on to the Chief Examiner for further evaluation and inclusion.

References:

- A. Roadcraft
- B. The NZ Road Code for Motorcyclists
- C. The IAM (NZ) Riding Standard
- D. IAM (NZ) Safety Guidelines

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SECTION 1. THE ADVANCED TEST AND EXAMINERS.

1.1. What is expected of an associate during the advanced test?

Associates are required to pass a written exam based on Roadcraft, The Road Code for motorcyclists and/or the IAM (NZ) Riding Standard as a prerequisite for going on the Advanced Test ride.

During the ride, you are expected to demonstrate safe, systematic, smooth and progressive riding that complies with the law and follows the advice set out in the Riding Standard. The Examiner will direct you along the test route which will encompass a cross section of differing road types and circumstances. The test will last between 90 and 180 minutes depending on traffic conditions.

You will be asked to deliver a commentary during the ride as this helps the Examiner to assess your observation skills, however you will not be assessed on the actual quality of the commentary itself.

1.2. What should I expect in the way of a briefing from the Examiner?

The Examiner, once they complete introductions, will conduct a briefing based on the format given at Annex C of the safety guidelines. In addition, they will:

- Ask you to complete a Driver/Rider Pre-Test Declaration form which replaces a physical check of your driver licence (they will still visually check your vehicle licence [registration] and warrant of fitness) and make a visual check of your machine, both for its legality and suitability for use in the test. *The test **will not** proceed if there is non-compliance.*
- Ensure you are wearing appropriate riding gear (protective equipment for open road speeds includes suitable helmet, jacket, pants, boots and gloves. Hi viz clothing is highly recommended though not compulsory).
- Outline what it is they will expect from you. In essence, this will be a ride incorporating the advice set out in the Riding Standard, in particular the section titled 'Meeting the Test Standard'. This amounts to providing a safe, systematic, smooth and progressive ride that complies with the law in all respects.
- Explain how they intend to guide you, either by means of signalling or via use of communications systems.
- Explain how they intend to stop you should that become necessary and what to do in the event of separation or you missing one of their directions. They will explain that missing one of their directions will not impact on the result of the test unless this keeps happening, which might indicate poor observation skills on your part.
- Explain their positioning in relation to you and that you should ignore their positioning for the purposes of your own positioning.
- Point out any local circumstances or hazards applicable to the test route that might lead to confusion or risk, and will ask if there are any questions.

Note - It is a good idea to think beforehand of any points that you may need clarified, and if they are not covered in the briefing, to raise them at the end of the brief. However, matters of legality are not within the Examiner's remit to make allowance for.

Examiners may appear more detached than your Observer, but this should be viewed as a professional attitude owing to the nature of the exercise. In the end they want the same result as you (after all, giving good news is always preferable to giving bad news). However, they must ensure that the standards set out for the test are met and the integrity of the Riding Standard is not compromised.

1.3. What should I expect if I make a critical error?

The Examiner may stop the test as soon as a major critical error occurs. This may immediately prompt a not recommended (fail) result even if the rest of the ride was faultless. Critical errors include, but are not limited to:

- Failure to comply with the road code (speed limits, stop signs, traffic lights etc.)
- Failure to adhere to the Riding Standard (not using the system, riding aggressively or without due care)
- Endangering yourself or others.

1.4. What should I expect in the way of a debriefing from the Examiner?

Examiners' debriefs can vary and while it would be wrong to cramp any individual's style, the feedback to the Associate will be more than a cursory 'recommended' or 'not recommended' followed by a couple of minutes on some weakness.

The Examiner should cover the following in their post - test debrief:

- A recommended/not recommended decision should be made as promptly as possible.
- Feedback will be informative, reinforce the better aspects of your performance and illuminate the areas of weakness. The Examiner will endeavour to make sure that you are in no doubt when it comes to areas that have been identified as strengths and weaknesses.

1.5. Test postponement.

There may be circumstances where weather conditions could make testing on two wheels unsafe. Similarly, both Examiners and Associates may encounter situations which require short notice test rescheduling. In cases other than for weather-related safety reasons, a one-off rescheduling of test dates may occur without financial consequences for the Associate.

In all other cases, a period of at least 24 hours' notice of a need to reschedule must be given, and such rescheduling will then be catered for without financial consequences. Repeated postponement should not be tolerated, and Examiners should exercise reasonable discretion and common sense in this circumstance.

1.6. Other points of note for Examiners.

Examiners are encouraged to feed test results back to Observers. This can be achieved through forwarding the Driver/Rider Test Report to the Chief Examiner of Motorcycles. They will apprise the Director of Tests who will disseminate any issues to the Chief Observer of Motorcycles to deal with. This will ensure an aligned focus on areas of improvement that are required in cases of 'Non - Recommendation', or to assist more generally in Observer development where Associates pass the test.

Examiners are not expected to be actively involved in the on-road training of any of their potential Associates.

Examiners should not test Associates they have trained. Refer to the Chief Examiner for a decision if the training took place over one year ago.

The IAM have no objections to Examiners liaising with Regional Groups and attending their Observers meetings.

SECTION 2. OBSERVERS

2.1 Declining an Associate.

An Observer has the right to decline to ride with any Associate or any other rider. The refusal should be made through the Chief Observer of Motorcycles.

Possible reasons for declining an associate:

- A friend or family relation
- Common membership of another club or entity
- Personality clash

SECTION 3. MACHINES

3.1. Legality or condition of the machine

If, for any reason, an Observer considers the machine an Associate is riding to be either unsafe or illegal, the Associate should be advised of the fact, the reason for it, and that the observed session will not take place until the faults/issues are remedied.

MISCONCEPTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

SECTION 4. WHEN STATIONARY

4.1. Misconception - Neutral must always be selected when stationary.

This is not true. Neutral should be selected when the bike is likely to be stationary for some time, and this action 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.

Note - selecting neutral reduces machine control and the ability to take evasive action. As such, doing so at a traffic light should only be done after at least one vehicle behind the rider (excluding Observers or others in riding group) has safely stopped.

4.2. Misconception - At least one brake must be covered/applied while stationary.

This is not a requirement of the test 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 always nevertheless be in full control of their machine.

4.3. Misconception – At least one hand must be on the handlebars when stationary.

This is not a requirement for the test, but the bike must always remain stable. Removing hands from the handlebars reduces machine control so any circumstances in the situation should be considered.

4.4. Misconception - Positioning of feet must be considered while stationary.

Riders must consider the road surface when coming to a halt, and should use the foot best suited to stabilise the machine where the road falls away steeply or where there is the presence of gravel, etc.

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.

Best practice dictates stopping with the rear brake only whilst travelling under 20kmph which allows for placement of the left foot on the ground subject to a safe surface appraisal.

SECTION 5. BRAKES AND BRAKING

5.1. Misconception - A pre ride brake check and running brake check is a requirement of the test:

There is no requirement to carry out a pre ride check or undertake a running brake check as part of the test, as the Associate has already ridden the machine to the test venue. However, if the Associate wishes to demonstrate their knowledge in this respect, they will not be discouraged from doing so.

5.2. Misconception - Use of front brake – only the front brake is needed when coming to rest.

Using only the front brake 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.

Riders are encouraged to stop their machine with their rear brake once they are below 20kmph. As part of a planned stop or approach to a give way, this facilitates the right hand being returned fully to the throttle grip to assist with a clean uninterrupted acceleration if required. This also removes the sudden grabbing of the front brake if a moving hazard abruptly presents itself which could result in a locked front end and resulting imbalance.

In all cases, the machine should be brought to rest safely, smoothly and in complete control and ridden away again in a similar fashion.

5.3. Clarification - Use of rear brake.

Query - 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 questioning from the Examiner to confirm this understanding.

SECTION 6. SPEED

6.1. Misconception - 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 Riding Standards states: *"The Advanced Rider must not exceed speed limits and should ride at lower speeds, with due regard for progress, where safety demands"*.

When available, vehicles should travel at a GPS indicated road speed (on a flat level surface once the displayed speed has settled).

If a GPS is not fitted, the Associate should rely on their own speedometer on the day of the test and not try to make any adjustments for perceived inaccuracy. The Examiner will realise if the Associate's speedometer reads inaccurately and will not penalise them for this unless there is a significant defect with the reading which would then class the vehicle as not roadworthy (this is something the Observer should pick up prior to the test anyway).

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

Note: *travelling at an indicated road speed of below the speed limit is not displaying Advanced riding/driving and it puts additional pressure on the following Observer/Examiner who has to deal with the following motorists who are travelling at the posted speed limit catching them up.*

6.2 Clarification - Slowing to a lower 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 encouraged where it is practical so as 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 Associate 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 and 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 sign, however where a speed limit sign is obscured, or can only be seen very late, the Examiner should make allowances for the situation as presented.

6.3. Clarification - 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 riders to have to be race - like. This is incorrect. Progressive acceleration should be encouraged but not to the point of simulating a drag race.

“Brisk” instead of fast is a better descriptive word to use, and acceleration needs to be smooth, progressive, and controlled with due regard for the prevailing conditions.

6.4. Clarification - Overtaking speeds.

Any overtake needs to be accomplished safely and without risk of conflict with other road users. If an Associate has to exceed the speed limit to overtake successfully, they should not overtake.

The Riding Standard states “It is important that the Advanced Rider shows the ability to overtake safely with due regard to other road users, while being mindful of the dangers of this particular manoeuvre and being prepared to exercise restraint if necessary”.

SECTION 7. INTERSECTIONS

7.1. Misconception: At STOP lines the rider must place at least one foot onto the road surface.

There is no specific requirement for the rider to do so, but in order to remove all doubt that the machine has come to a complete stop, it is recommended that one foot is placed on the ground.

There is also no requirement to stop exactly at the line. If the machine is brought to a complete standstill and the rider can sufficiently identify traffic hazards, following riders may proceed as the leader departs *once they determine for themselves that it is safe to do so*.

This is particularly important for Observers who are following Associates. When stopped, the Observer should position themselves behind and offset from the Associate and be prepared to move away with minimum delay if it is safe to do so.

7.2. Clarification - Roundabout stalemate.

If an Associate 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 Road 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 etc.) then they should cautiously make the first move and proceed.

Do not wave vehicles on.

7.3. Clarification - Straight lining/Trimming Roundabouts.

The road code states:

"When driving on a laned road, it is important to drive your vehicle within your lane. Where there are two or more lanes on your side of the centre line:

- *keep in the left-hand lane as much as you can;*
- *don't use the lane closest to the centre line if you will hold up other vehicle;*
- *The lane closest to the centre line should only be used when:*
 - *you want to pass another vehicle*
 - *you want to turn right*
 - *the left-hand lane is full with other traffic or is blocked.*

To this end, 'trimming' or 'straight lining' roundabouts over multiple lanes should not be encouraged. If the rider compromises their own or any other road user's safety they will fail the test.

SECTION 8. MISCELLANEOUS

8.1. Misconception - A 'Lifesaver' (Blind Spot Check) must be carried out whenever changing course or speed.

Blind spot checks need not be carried out by routine. They should only be carried out when they 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.

Note that "head/shoulder checks" are an essential part of the information gathering phase, and should be encouraged as much as possible. According to the Riding Standard, *"The Advanced Rider should constantly be mindful of the ever-changing conditions behind. Good use of mirrors and necessary shoulder checks are to be encouraged to achieve this aim"*.

When debriefing, Observers should ask Associates about their riding plan. What would the rider actually do if the lifesaver revealed a vehicle or hazard? What would the best reaction be in specific circumstances?

8.2. Clarification - Indicators must be used whenever one changes lane or carries out a left or right turn:

This is correct. The Road Code states:

You must signal for at least three seconds before you:

- *move towards the left or right (for example, when you pull back into the left lane after passing another vehicle)*
- *stop or slow down*
- *move out from a parking space, to pass another vehicle, or to change lanes.*
- *turn left or right*

8.3. Clarification: 'Off - siding ' – (i.e. crossing of the centreline, or in the absence of such a line, the centre of the carriageway) in order to extend a view.

- Single track (or very narrow) road clarification (unlaned):

The requirement to keep left must always be kept in mind, however this may be required in situations where there is a low possibility of safely encountering an oncoming vehicle due to the width of the road, or there is a need to enable your presence to be seen earlier. Speed must be reduced as appropriate, and it is only acceptable if it is both advantageous and gives no risk of conflict.

- Two - way carriageway clarification (laned):

The requirement to stay in the left hand lane is paramount, and to sacrifice safety over view is unacceptable. The IAM actively discourages this practice and it is therefore not acceptable on test. Do not cross the centre line for the purpose of obtaining a better view.

8.4. Clarification - Set of open bends - straight lining / trimming.

The need to keep left in your **own** lane must always be kept in mind, noting that it is illegal to use the oncoming (opposing) lane unless you are overtaking or turning right. Trimming or straight lining a set of open bends whilst remaining to the left of the centre line 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. Always sacrifice position for safety. Consider taking a central position on a left hand bend in the face of oncoming vehicle(s).

If the Associate compromises their own or any other road user's safety they will fail the test.

8.5. Clarification - Crossing of solid yellow lines/no passing lines.

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

You must not pass another *motor vehicle* or animal drawn vehicle if it means you have to cross over a no-passing line on your side of the centre line.

You must not straddle the line whilst waiting for a gap in oncoming traffic or for your exit to be clear. You must not cross solid yellow lines unless it is necessary to turn right into a side road, premises, drive or other access.

Crossing a solid yellow line under any other circumstances will result in a test failure.

Note - you may pass on broken yellow lines as long as the manoeuvre is completed **before** the lines become solid.

8.6. Clarification - Joining a motorway.

Query - Do I have to initially travel in Lane 1 for a short distance?

The need to keep left must always be kept in mind. Riders must be at motorway speed commensurate with the prevailing traffic flow speed by the time they enter the motorway, and merge safely into motorway traffic.

The road code does not provide guidance on crossing chevrons; however the rider must consider that they may encounter road swept debris if they choose to use this part of the road way. Riders should also think of the chevron areas as a cheap version of a raised traffic island, and if you enter the area and something goes wrong you are more likely to be held accountable.

8.7. Clarification –Turning into a laned intersection.

Riders must complete a turning manoeuvre in the same lane as it starts.

When two vehicles are turning into the same road at an intersection that has more than one marked lane in both directions:

- both vehicles must show they want to turn by signalling for at least three seconds
- both vehicles stay in their own lane throughout the turn

Once the turn is completed, riders must indicate as normal if they wish to change lanes.

