

SEE ENVELOPE FOR ADRESSE

Dear Sir or Madam,

DELIVERING THE NEW MOTORCYCLING TEST

1. In February 2003 the Driver and Vehicle Testing Agency (DVTA) issued a consultation document “Delivering the New Motorcycle Test”. The consultation document sought views on the implementation of new European requirements for the motorcycling test.
2. The summary document (see pages 2 to 5 below) gives details of the responses DVTA received to the consultation exercise and sets out the Agency’s implementation plans.
3. The Agency intends to hold a number of short information seminars. You will be informed at a later date of the location and timing of the seminars.

Yours Sincerely

BRIAN MORRISON

Chief Driving Examiner
DVTA

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION CHANGES TO THE MOTORCYCLE DRIVING TEST

BACKGROUND

- 1 EU Directive 56/2000/EC, introduces new manoeuvres to be assessed as part of the practical motorcycle test, and specifies that the changes must be implemented by October 2008.

DETAIL

- 2 The Directive has differing implications for driver testing in the various member states, depending on the standards they have previously adopted domestically. One of the changes is to the way motorcycle practical driving tests are to be carried out by October 2008, which include the introduction of:
 - at least two manoeuvres executed at slow speed, including a slalom;
 - at least two manoeuvres executed at higher speed, of which one should be in second or third gear at a speed of at least 30 km/h (18.75 mph) and one should involve avoiding an obstacle at a minimum speed of 50 km/h (31.25 mph);
 - at least two braking exercises, including an emergency brake at a minimum speed of 50 km/h (31.25 mph).
- 3 If NI does not comply by October 2008, there would be a danger of infraction proceedings against the UK. In addition, the collision rate for motorcyclists has increased significantly in NI in recent years, so any delay would also have road safety implications. In the circumstances, it is recommended that the new procedures should be implemented at the earliest practicable date.

Document Title: EC 2nd Directive – Off Road Motorcycle Manoeuvres – Response to Consultation and Implementation Plan.

4 In January 2004 DVTA issued a consultation document seeking views on the best way to implement the required changes to the practical driving test for learner motorcyclists. In particular it sought views on:

- whether the manoeuvres should be carried out on-road or off-road;
- whether the test should be carried out by DVTA or by some other body;
- suitable sites for testing;
- whether tests should be carried out as a single test or on two separate occasions.

5 There was a limited response to the consultation paper (five in total). Following consideration and analysis of the responses received, the DVTA project board concluded that the special off-road manoeuvres should be tested as a separate event. The reasons were that:

- the current level of service for the practical on-road element of the motorcycle test (i.e. at all 15 DVTA test centres) would be maintained;
- the set up costs would be kept to an acceptable level;
- only candidates who had demonstrated their ability to carry out the manoeuvres safely would be allowed to progress to the on-road element of the test;
- off-road and on-road elements would have separate fees, which would mean that candidates would not be charged for an element of the test they had not taken, unlike the other options where candidates who failed one part but passed the other would be required to pay again for both parts; and

6 A similar consultation exercise was carried out in GB. The GB proposals for implementation are broadly similar to those recommended by DVTA with one exception: there the intention is

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to deliver the practical motorcycle test as a single event (off-road manoeuvres and then on-road riding). However, candidates exhibiting riding skills at a dangerously incompetent level during the off-road part of the test (e.g., being unable to brake safely) will not be permitted to proceed to the on-road part. This option was rejected by DVTA for a number of reasons including:

- the fact that it would reduce the overall level of service provided to candidates, since only seven of the DVTA testing centres were found to be suitable for conducting the off-road manoeuvres;
- staff would not be fully utilised if candidates were prevented from continuing with the on-road section of the test, or if candidates who had not performed well during the off-road manoeuvres chose not to continue with the on-road element of the test;
- it would offer poor value for money for candidates who failed one part of the test but passed the other - requiring a candidate to pay again for both parts was seen as unfair;
- the off-road element of the test would add approximately 15 minutes to the current 60-minute test slot, reducing the number of tests that could be carried out in a working day, and therefore having significant implications for costs, waiting times, etc.

7 DRD Economics Branch carried out a full economic appraisal of the options for implementing the new test. These were:

- option 1 - status quo;
- option 2 - unitary off-road test using existing sites;
- option 3 – separate off-road test using existing sites;
- option 4 - separate off-road test using new sites – purchased;

- option 5 - separate off-road test using new sites – leased.

8 The appraisal concluded that option 3 was the preferred option.

9 The appraisal also recommended that DVTA should carry out the new tests, on the grounds that it had the necessary experience and expertise and already possessed an appropriate network of existing test centres. The appraisal found that seven of DVTA's 15 test centres could, with varying degrees of work, accommodate the new test.

10 A regulatory impact assessment was carried out in September 2004. It found no significant additional cost to business arising from this project.

11 Based on the time to take the test DVTA concluded that the fee for the new off-road element of the test would be around £20.

12 Work will begin on preparing the first off road manoeuvring area in 2005 with the seventh and final site being completed by the end of 2006.

13 The nature of practical tests is prescribed in the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996. These Regulations will be amended in 2006 with a view to implementing the new procedures by 2007.

Summary

14 The following points summarise the Agency's intentions.

- The changes to the motorcycle practical driving test will be implemented in NI by 2007, under the preferred option of two separate test elements using sites at existing test centres; and

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- **new NI legislation will be introduced to give effect to the requirements of the EC Directive.**