Motorcycle basic handling skills test criteria
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More information

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Wellington 6141

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# Amendments

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1.0 Introduction to the basic handling skills test

Introduction

This booklet provides information about the new motorcycle basic handling skills test (BHST or the test) that comes into effect on 1 November 2012. Motorcycle learner licence applicants must pass the BHST before applying for a Class 6 (motorcycle) learner licence. The BHST is designed to ensure learner riders have basic riding skills before they begin to ride on the road.

Learner riders should practice the basic motorcycle handling skills and manoeuvres described in this booklet off the road, before they take the BHST. Learner riders can either do this on private property or attend training with an approved motorcycle instructor.

The graduated driver licensing system

The New Zealand graduated driver licensing system (GDLS) for motorcyclists consists of three stages:

1. Learner licence (which allows learner riders to ride on the road, but with restrictions).
2. Restricted licence (which has less restrictions than the learner licence).
3. Full licence (no restrictions).

At each stage, motorcyclists must pass a test (theory test and BHST for learners, practical tests for restricted and full) before they earn a new licence with fewer restrictions and more responsibilities.

The new basic handling skills test

In 2010 the New Zealand government announced a package of reforms focused on young drivers and riders, including making the restricted (car) licence tests more difficult by encouraging 120 hours of supervised driving practice. Motorcycling tests have similarly been made more difficult.

The new BHST was developed to provide a standard, comprehensive assessment of the learner rider’s motorcycle handling and safe riding skills.

Test locations and layout

The BHST is undertaken in an off-road test location that meets a set of standard requirements. The layout of the test area must be as illustrated on page 2. This standard test layout ensures that all tests administered are of a nationally consistent standard.

The course will be marked out with a combination of cones, markers or half tennis balls. Permanent testing sites might also have the course marked on the surface.
The NZ Transport Agency’s Basic handling skills test criteria
Effective from 1 November 2012
2.0 Overview of the BHST

The structure of the BHST

**Test duration**
The test takes approximately 30 minutes to administer. This time allows for:
- conducting the pre-ride safety check
- conducting the test
- adding up of the test score sheet
- providing feedback to the rider on their performance at the end of the test.

**Introducing the test**
The BHST is conducted in an off-road, low-risk environment. It is made up of a set of relatively simple, basic motorcycle control skills. It is designed to test the rider’s motorcycle control competencies and determine whether the rider is a sufficiently skilled and safe rider to ride on the road as they work towards gaining their restricted licence.

**Test stages**
The BHST has four stages.
- **Stage 1** – basic turn and stop
- **Stage 2** – figure of eight and park
- **Stage 3** – linking figures of eight
- **Stage 4** – increased speed and emergency stop

**Assessable tasks (riding tasks)**
Each stage is designed to demonstrate different basic riding skills and is broken down into varying combinations of five assessable tasks:
1. Move off
2. Straight ride
3. Corner
4. Stop
5. Park

**Assessable criteria**
During the test the rider will be assessed against three different assessment criteria:
1. **Assessment items** which assess one aspect of riding performance during the execution of each assessable task.
   The eight assessment items are described in section 6.
   A summary of which assessment items are examined for each assessable task is provided in section 7.
2. **Critical errors** which are recorded at any time they occur during the BHST, whether during an assessable task or not.
   The critical error types are described in section 8.
3. **Immediate failure errors** are also recorded at any time they occur and result in the immediate failure of the test. The immediate failure error types are described in section 9.

**Passing the BHST**

To pass the BHST, the rider must demonstrate satisfactory motorcycle control and handling skills throughout the whole test.
# 3.0 Pre-ride checks

## Overview

**Documentation**

Prior to commencing the test the examiner will:

- confirm the rider’s identity and
- if the rider is supplying their own motorcycle for the test, check it to ensure it:
  - is safe to ride, and
  - has Learner Approved Motorcycle Scheme (LAMS) approval and has not been modified – see www.nzta.govt.nz for a full list of LAMS-approved and LAMS-prohibited motorcycles.

If either of these requirements cannot be met, the test will be cancelled.

**Note:** when booking your basic handling skills test appointment please discuss with your examiner the type of identification documentation you are required to bring with you on the day of your test.

**Motorcycle safety checks**

Because the test is conducted in an off-road area, the motorcycle used is not required to have a current warrant of fitness. However, the examiner will check the items listed below to ensure that the motorcycle is safe to ride. Riders will be requested to assist with the pre-drive check.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Condition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Handlebars and levers</td>
<td>secure and straight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspension</td>
<td>secure and not leaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyres</td>
<td>inflated, legal tread depth, no sidewall cracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brakes</td>
<td>adjusted and not leaking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicators</td>
<td>secure and working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foot pegs</td>
<td>secure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chain</td>
<td>lubricated, tension ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brake light</td>
<td>secure and working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headlamp or daylight running lamps</td>
<td>operational</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Driver/rider safety**

Mirrors are checked for position and safety helmets must be in safe and serviceable condition.

The rider must wear:

- a long-sleeved, front-fastening jacket
- long pants
- suitable gloves
- sturdy, covered footwear
- a safety helmet of an approved standard that is securely fastened on the rider’s head.

Information on motorcycle helmets and other recommended safety gear can be found at the Transport Agency’s website www.nzta.govt.nz.
The NZ Transport Agency’s Basic handling skills test criteria
Effective from 1 November 2012
4.0 Stages of the BHST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview of the four stages</th>
<th>Stage 1 – Basic turn and stop</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 2 – Figure of eight and park</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 3 – Linking figures of eight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stage 4 – Increased speed and emergency stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage 1

Basic turn and stop

Purpose

- To demonstrate basic balance and control while moving off and accelerating, riding straight and negotiating a turn.
- To demonstrate basic braking control.
- To demonstrate basic signalling.

Starting point

The motorcycle is parked at a right angle position on the left edge of the course, level with and facing in towards the bottom of circle A. The engine is switched off and the rider is standing by the motorcycle.

The rider will be instructed as follows.

Mount the motorcycle, start the engine and then move as follows:

- Turn left from a standing start.
- Continue ahead accelerating to approximately 20km/h before slowing and turning around circle C.
- Stop at a position, level with the bottom of circle C.
- Turn the engine off and stay on the motorcycle.
- You are required to signal when moving off and when going around circle C.

Note: speed and gear choice will depend on the motorcycle used for the test.
The NZ Transport Agency’s Basic handling skills test criteria
Effective from 1 November 2012
Stage 2

Figure of eight and park

Purpose

- To demonstrate balance, lateral position, steering and speed control of the motorcycle, particularly while cornering.
- To demonstrate more complex signalling.
- To demonstrate the ability to execute a safe parking manoeuvre.

Starting point

The rider is sitting astride the motorcycle with the engine switched off, facing straight down the right side of the course, at a position level with the bottom of circle C.

The rider will be instructed as follows.

Start the engine and then move as follows:

1. Continue ahead and turn around circle A.
2. Turn to the left as you come out of that corner towards the starting position.
3. Continue ahead and make a left turn around circle C.
4. Continue ahead and stop with the motorcycle backed into a right angle park position, between circles A and B.
5. The motorcycle should be positioned in the middle of the course facing the left side of the course, with the centre cone on your left.
6. Turn the motorcycle off, place it on the side stand and dismount. Stay beside the motorcycle.

You are required to signal when going around each circle (A and C) and when parking.
The NZ Transport Agency’s Basic handling skills test criteria
Effective from 1 November 2012
Stage 3
Linking figures of eight

Purpose
- To demonstrate the ability to ride through a series of linking corners (left and right) smoothly, with appropriate speed control.

Starting point
The motorcycle is parked at a right angle position on the edge of the course, level with the top of circle A and facing out towards the left side of the course. The engine is switched off and the rider is standing by the motorcycle.

The rider will be instructed as follows

Mount the motorcycle, start the engine and then move as follows:
1. Turn right from a standing start.
2. Continue ahead and turn around circle C.
3. Complete two figures of eight around circles C and B.
4. After completing a third loop around the top of circle C, continue ahead and stop at the top of circle A.
5. Turn off the engine and stay on the motorcycle.
6. You are only required to signal when moving off.
Stage 4

Increased speed and emergency stop

Purpose

- To demonstrate the ability to ride through a corner at higher speeds.
- To demonstrate the ability to brake quickly and safely.

Starting point

The rider is sitting astride the motorcycle with the engine switched off, and facing down the right side of the course at a position, level with the top of circle A.

The rider will be instructed as follows

Start the engine and then move as follows:

1. Move off and turn around circle A.
2. Continue ahead, increasing your speed to 20km/h and turn around circle C.
3. Continue ahead increasing your speed to 20km/h and come to an emergency stop when I raise my arm.
4. You do not need to signal during this stage.

If the rider is not riding fast enough when coming out of circle C, instead of signalling the stop, the examiner will direct the rider to proceed back around the course and will signal to stop on the second run.

Riding faults noted on both the first and (if necessary) second runs will be recorded.
The NZ Transport Agency’s Basic handling skills test criteria
Effective from 1 November 2012
5.0 Assessable tasks

The stages of the BHST each have varying combinations of five assessable tasks, each of which may occur more than once in each stage. The different assessable tasks are colour-coded on the stage diagrams set out on pages 8 to 15.

**Move off**

The commencement of the stage where the rider gets the motorcycle underway from a standing or parked position.

‘Move off’ is assessed once in each stage. The examiner looks for smooth acceleration as the rider transitions into the straight ride or corner.

**Straight ride**

A section of the stage where the rider is required to travel in a straight line on the outsides of the course (rather than diagonally between the circles).

The examiner looks for a brisk and smooth acceleration to a reasonable speed that is sufficient to travel around the corner smoothly. Riders should accelerate to about 20km/h before slowing down for corners.

*Note: There is no specified gear selection as this depends on the motorcycle.*

**Corner**

A section of the stage where the rider is required to travel around a curve or circle. Corners include the transition between straight rides and the corner and diagonal rides between the circles.

**Stop**

The end of the stage where the rider brings the motorcycle to a complete stop and turns off the engine. The stop will be a normal stop or an emergency stop (as indicated by the examiner).

The task may require the motorcycle to be parked and/or the rider to dismount the motorcycle.

**Park**

The area where the rider is required to park the motorcycle.
6.0 Assessment items

In performing each assessable task, the rider’s motorcycle control and riding ability will be assessed against a combination of the following assessable items:

- Looking
- Signal
- Lateral position
- Control
- Head check
- Speed
- Parking observation
- Parking movement

As the test progresses any faults and critical or immediate failure errors, observed by the examiner are recorded on the test score sheet at the completion of each stage.

An explanation of each assessment item is set out below.

**Looking**

**Explanation**

Safe, effective riding is achieved when riders observe and assess the ever changing riding environment in front of, to both sides and to the rear of their motorcycles. Throughout the test the rider must demonstrate thorough observation skills.

**Requirements**

- Maintains a ‘heads up’ looking ahead position, keeping head and eyes up when riding straight, braking and operating motorcycle controls.
- Maintains a continuous lookout ahead of the motorcycle, except when making brief checks of the relevant mirrors and other directions.
- When turning or riding a corner, looks in the planned direction of travel (ie in the direction of the turn, or ‘through the curve’).

**Signal**

**Explanation**

Communication with other road users is an important aspect of safely sharing the road. A motorcycle’s indicators provide the main means of communicating a rider’s intention to change direction. The rider needs to demonstrate their ability to apply the appropriate signals.

The examiner will instruct the rider what signals are required for each stage of the test.

**Requirements**

- Activates the correct signal as instructed by the examiner.
- Cancels the signal.

The rider should be signalling where indicated in orange on the stage diagrams.
The NZ Transport Agency’s Basic handling skills test criteria
Effective from 1 November 2012

Lateral position

**Explanation**
The rider must position the motorcycle in a suitable position in the lane throughout the test.

**Requirements**
- Keeps to the centre of the path when moving off, on straight rides and stopping.
- When entering a corner, moves to the left/right (as appropriate for the corner).
- Turns in a smooth arc.
- Remains in close to the curve on exiting the corner.

Control

**Explanation**
The rider must demonstrate safe and effective control of the motorcycle at all times throughout the test.

**Requirements**

When moving off:
- once the motorcycle is upright, both feet are up
- does not stall the motorcycle
- maintains the rear wheel grip (without unnecessary skidding or sliding)
- the motorcycle remains stable.

When riding straight or through a corner:
- revs the engine at the appropriate level (does not stall the motorcycle)
- selects an appropriate gear (does not coast)
- the motorcycle remains stable (no wobbles, weaves or putting a foot to the ground)
- rides with smooth movements and takes a smooth course
- avoids all markers
- does not stall the motorcycle
- feet remain on the foot pedals
- maintains the rear wheel grip (without unnecessary skidding or sliding).

When stopping:
- uses both brakes when stopping
- puts a foot to the ground only after the motorcycle has stopped
- commences braking at a suitable point (does not take an excessive distance to stop)
- does not cause the motorcycle to coast unnecessarily or stall
- stops by the stopping point indicated, and
- executes a smooth, progressive stop.
### Head check

**Explanation**
It is important for motorcyclist to routinely do a head check before moving off, diverging or making any turn that requires a signal.

**Requirements**
Performs a head check (as the last check):

- after signalling and before moving off
- prior to diverging to the left or right
- immediately before making a turn that requires a signal (left or right) (indicated in orange on the stage diagram).

### Speed

**Explanation**
The rider must demonstrate that they are able to select an appropriate speed for the nature of the manoeuvre they are undertaking, and the nature of the BHST. Generally the rider will not ride faster than 20km/h for the purposes of the BHST.

**Requirements**
- Accelerates briskly and smoothly when moving off.
- Travels at a speed suitable for the size of the course and the tasks being performed.

A 'suitable speed' is one that enables the task to be assessed and, depending on the motorcycle used, will be approximately 20km/h on straight rides, before slowing down for corners.

### Parking observation

**Explanation**
Maintaining observation while reversing and manoeuvring the motorcycle into a parked position is a necessary riding skill which will be tested during the test.

**Requirements**
- The rider maintains observation (checking mirrors or looking behind) while manoeuvring the motorcycle into a parked position.

### Parking movement

**Explanation**
The rider must be able to satisfactorily manoeuvre the motorcycle when completing a reverse park.

**Requirements**
- Stops parallel (in line with direction of travel) and backs into the space indicated in accordance with the examiner’s instructions.
- Maintains control of the motorcycle throughout the manoeuvre.
- Completes the reserve park in no more than:
  - two movements, and
  - 30 seconds.
### 7.0 Summary of assessable tasks and assessment items

The following table illustrates for each of the four test stages, which assessment items are examined in relation to each of the five assessable tasks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LHS (left hand side)</th>
<th>Looking</th>
<th>Signal</th>
<th>Head check</th>
<th>Lateral position</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Parking observation</th>
<th>Parking movement</th>
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#### Stage 1 – Basic turn and stop

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Looking</th>
<th>Signal</th>
<th>Head check</th>
<th>Lateral position</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Parking observation</th>
<th>Parking movement</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Corner (Circle C)</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop</td>
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#### Stage 2 – Figure of eight and park

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<th>Parking observation</th>
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<tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 4 – Increased speed and emergency stop</th>
<th>LHS</th>
<th>Looking</th>
<th>Signal</th>
<th>Head check</th>
<th>Lateral position</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Speed</th>
<th>Parking observation</th>
<th>Parking movement</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Corner (Circle A)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight ride (LHS)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corner (Circle C)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straight ride (RHS)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency stop</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Critical errors

A critical error is a serious riding error that does not meet the threshold for an immediate failure error. Critical errors are recorded at any time they occur during the test, whether or not the rider was undertaking an assessable task at the time or the error. Critical errors are more important than the errors assessed by task assessment items, so critical errors have a greater influence on the outcome of the test.

The rider commits a critical error if they do any of the following:

• leaves the designated lane (i.e., rides into the safety buffer area)
• has a significant loss of control
• fails to keep both wheels in contact with the ground at all times.

Immediate failure errors

An immediate failure error is a riding error that has the potential to cause harm to the rider, the examiner or others. The rider commits an immediate failure error if they do any of the following:

• rides outside the course (i.e., beyond the safety buffer area)
• falls off the motorcycle (including in the process of getting on and off)
• fails to carry out the examiner’s instructions
• requires the examiner’s intervention.
If you have further queries, call our contact centre on 0800 699 000 or write to us:
NZ Transport Agency
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This publication is available on NZ Transport Agency’s website at www.nzta.govt.nz

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