

Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy for New Drivers

Supervised Driving Practice – In Car Lesson 2

Completion of Pre-planning Checklist

Your vehicle should be in good mechanical condition with all safety equipment in working order. You should have the proper insurance coverage on your vehicle. Here is a link to information from ICBC:

<https://www.icbc.com/insurance/costs/drivers-experience-crash-history/Pages/learner.aspx>

Make sure your new driver “L” or “N” sign is displayed. Before each lesson, the supervisor needs decide on the focus of the practice session and know where to find a suitable area for driving where the new driver can learn safely. Spend some time thinking about what type of area is suitable for the driver’s skill level. This is a key aspect to ensuring the safety of yourself and your new driver. Conducting a practice session in an area where traffic is too heavy, intersections are complicated, speeds are too high, etc. will be dangerous and extremely stressful for both of you. You may have to drive to a suitable area before handing control over to your student. That time is not wasted - it can be used productively by alternating running commentary, reading off road signs, or calling out hazards, for example.

Remember that learner drivers must have zero blood-alcohol content and are not permitted to use electronic devices at all – not even hands-free. Supervisors also must not use hand-held electronic devices and may not be impaired by alcohol or drugs.

For Lesson 2, the ideal place is a quiet residential neighbourhood with little traffic. We will be continuing with right turns and introducing left turns and reversing. Students will be asked to consider some right-of-way scenarios and we will cover some teaching tips and coaching strategies for co-drivers.

Google Maps satellite view is a good way to identify potential training areas. If there is no suitable area right where you live, it is worth your while to have the co-driver drive to a safe area and begin the practice from there. Remember how important the choice of practice location is to the safety and success of your practice sessions. It is never a good idea to have your student driving in an environment beyond their skill level and experience.

Reference Material – TUF D Chapters 3,4,5 – pgs. 23-37 – Road Sign review – LTDS, pgs. 29-36

ICBC’s Learn to Drive Smart (LTDS) and “Tuning Up for Drivers (TUF D) booklets have plenty of good information. Tuning Up for Drivers is intended to be used during in-car practice sessions. We recommend having a copy of both documents in the vehicle for reference during all supervised practice sessions. There is a wealth of good information that will help answer questions that will arise during the practice sessions.

If you don’t already have these documents, they are available at ICBC Driver Services Centres at no charge, and you can view or download them here: <https://www.icbc.com/driver-licensing/driving-guides/Pages/default.aspx>

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Driver's License and Logbook

Both the student driver and supervisor must have their original copy BC Driver's Licences during supervised practice. MBDA GLP students have been provided a logbook which should be brought along on practice sessions to keep track of progress.

Head Check

At the very start of each lesson, the Head Check procedure should be followed. Even if you have been at home with your driver that day, it is good to follow the procedure to establish the routine. The goal is to have the driver get used to going through a mental checklist, identifying any influences that might affect their fitness to drive – every time they get behind the wheel - for as long as they are driving. For tips on conducting an effective Head Check, see the notes in Supervised Practice: Part 2.

Seating and Mirrors: With the student seated in the driver's seat, adjust the seat, steering wheel and mirrors. Refer to Supervised Practice: Part 2 for full details on these adjustments and finding the proper seating and mirror position.

Right Turns: To begin this lesson, students will continue doing some right turns. Continue working on vision through turns, stop position and right-of-way at uncontrolled intersections. Review the steps the student needs to follow to make safe right turns using the whiteboard (or whiteboard app) to list steps to take when approaching stop signs and intersections. Follow the instructions you used in Lesson 1 to pick up where you left off.

By now, your driver should be making few of these common mistakes – driving too close to parked vehicles, improper lane position, turning too wide or too sharp or making constant steering corrections related to vision. Watch to make sure all the steps are done in the correct order – mirror, signal, shoulder check – lane position, stop position. Evaluate the student's smooth use of the controls, steering, brakes and accelerator, correct mistakes as you identify them. Drivers need to achieve competence within this level before moving on. It is a bad idea to introduce more complex skills and decision making if they are not yet exhibiting competency within their current level. That's not to say they can't make any mistakes (they are learning – they will make occasional mistakes!) but they should display consistent competency.

Ready to move on? Take a break to let the student relax, to discuss progress, and plan for making left turns. Remember the steps - pulling over to the curb needs to be done slowly and carefully to avoid touching the curb and damaging the wheels. Check mirrors, signal right, shoulder check right, steer gently towards the curb, applying the brakes to bring the car to a smooth controlled stop. If there is a car parked up ahead, line up the center of the parked car and park in line behind them. If there is no car, ask them to imagine one being there. Don't look at the curb – remember, you steer wherever you look. Shut the engine off, if you are taking a break, and plan to be parked for a while.

Left Turns: The next skill to introduce is a left turn, using the same area where you have been practicing. You can simply go the opposite way to make all left turns instead of right. Many of the skills are the same with a couple of important additions – oncoming traffic and turning around the near lane and into the proper lane. There will be more to learn about left turns when we progress to busier intersections, but for now, we will only concern ourselves with the basics. Give the whiteboard to your driver and ask them to

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make a list of things they need to do when making safe left turns. Once you have all the items listed you can number them in order. Once you have thought of all the steps, the list should look something like this:

- Look ahead for oncoming traffic and other road users.
- Reduce speed
- Check your mirrors first, then signal left.
- Keep your vehicle towards the left side of your lane
- If there is a stop sign, or if there is oncoming traffic, stop.
- Keep your wheels straight while waiting to turn
- Scan the intersection – left, center, right and left again to make sure it is clear.
- Shoulder check to your left just before you turn
- Check for pedestrians
- Begin the turn. Look where you want to go. Don't cut the corner or turn too wide.
- Gradually accelerate as you finish the turn and straighten your wheels.
- Once you have completed the turn, check your mirrors, make sure your signal is off and return to normal speed.

Common mistakes: As a supervisor, be on the lookout for mistakes in the path the driver chooses when making turns. Your steering determines how your car ends up positioned in the lane when you complete the turn. If you start steering too fast or too early, there is a good chance you will run wide at the end of the turn. If you start steering too late, you will have to turn the wheel a lot more to turn sharply enough to stay in the proper lane. Proper vision is important as is technique and timing.

Suddenly, the driver may find there is a lot going on here! It is more complicated than right turns, with potentially higher risk because of oncoming traffic. Have your student use running commentary to help them commit the steps to memory and to communicate what they understand about the maneuver.

Continue to practice: Practice multiple left turns. You can alternate between left and right turns for variety, however, make sure they practice primarily the new skills. Don't forget to pull over and take a break from time to time. If you notice your student making a mistake you want to help them correct, it is best to have that conversation while they car is parked so they can devote their full attention to the conversation.

It is very difficult for new drivers to absorb your suggestions and coaching in the moment, while their minds are focussed on the act of driving. They cannot drive and process effectively yet. This is a good time to do some scaling. When parked, ask them, "On a scale of 1 to 10, how do you think those last few left turns went?". Find out their answer, compare it to yours, and together determine what you could work on to get those left turns to rate a 9 or 10.

Remember the goal of "Perfect Practice Makes Perfect"! Don't let your student repeat turn after turn where errors are consistently being made. Pause the lesson, identify the error, and determine a fix. If you identify more than one problem, fix the problems one at a time. Focus on safety issues first, then move on to others. Patience and repetition will pay off. If frustration sets in, take a break or end the lesson and pick up where you left off next time.

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Variations: You can change up the activities to keep things more interesting. Proceed straight through at some intersections, instead of turning. Remember to scan left, center, and right as you approach every intersection, all the time. Don't let up on this. This is one (like mirror checking and shoulder checking and using signals) that needs to be fully embedded into the driver's subconscious through relentless, correct repetition. These are subtle safety practices that could save their life one day. Repeat them often enough that these simple routine tasks no longer require any conscious thought on the part of the driver.

You can make a game of it – the student starts with 10 points. They get a point taken away each time the supervisor catches the driver missing a shoulder check (for example). You can determine the prize if they keep all their points, only lose 5 or what the consequences are if they lose all 10! Have some fun with it!

See, Think, Do: ICBC uses this term to describe the process of the driver observing hazards, thinking about what might happen, planning a response, and then executing that response. At some point, when you are parked at the side of the road, get the driver to look at the surroundings and identify hazards. Use the whiteboard to write them down. Once they have identified all they can think of, have them describe what they would do as a driver to reduce the risk and stay safe. There are two categories of hazards - moving and static. When they are driving, they can use running commentary to call out moving hazards as they identify them.

Don't know? Don't go. If the driver is unsure about whether it is safe to go when they are at an intersection or waiting to make a left turn?

"If You Don't Know, Don't Go."

If they have stopped at an intersection and can't see far enough down the road to determine if traffic is clear, creep slowly forward until they can see enough to make a decision. If they are waiting to turn left and can't decide if the gap is sufficient to turn left safely? Simply, don't go.

As they practice, they will gain experience in two important areas: being able to complete left turns confidently in less time and, also, judging the closing rate of oncoming traffic. There is no substitute for practice and acquired experience here. Let the students take responsibility for these decisions, unless you have to intervene for safety reasons. Be patient if your student driver hesitates to go in situations where you, yourself, would be comfortable proceeding. The goal is to guide students with making their own decisions now, so they are fully equipped for the responsibility, when no longer supervised.

Reversing: The next new skill to practice is reversing in a straight line. This can be introduced at any time during this session. It is good to introduce this after you have worked on multiple left and right turns -just to break things up a bit.

Here is the procedure - directed to the student driver:

If your car has been parked for a while, take a walk around to make sure there is nothing around your vehicle that could be a hazard when you start to drive. Start the 360-degree check on the left side – do a left shoulder check, then check your left side mirror. Start scanning towards the right, through the left side window, front through the windshield, checking the rearview mirror on the way, continue to the right side, checking the right side mirror and then shoulder checking to the right. Finish the 360-degree check by turning and looking backwards through the rear window.

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Adjust your seating position so you are turned to the right and, instead of twisting the back, sit on your right hip. Place your left hand at 12 o'clock on the wheel and your right arm rests on the top of the passenger seat or head restraint. Apply the brake, shift the transmission to reverse and release the brake. Reverse slowly in a straight line. Look out the centre of the back window like it was your windshield. Look far down the road, as that will help you keep the vehicle going in a straight line.

Steering tips: The less you steer, the better! The more steering you apply in one direction, the more steering you will have to apply in the other direction to counteract and keep the car reversing in a straight line. Focus on keeping your vision far past the back of the vehicle for smoother inputs.

If you begin to get confused, stop. If the car starts to veer off to the left or right, stop, pull forward to straighten out, and then resume reversing. Vision is the key to steering in reverse – steer in the direction you want the car to go. Practice as much as comfortable - you can come back to this as often as you like when pulled over for scaling or breaks during practice.

Practice this skill for hours. Perfection at this stage will make so much of the more complex (and potentially stressful) much easier for the student and the co-driver. The skills and routines practiced, as well as the mental programming achieved are all linked to more complex driving situations like lane changes, merging and complex intersections. Practicing this skill to perfection enables a much better transition to the next steps.

Congratulations for making it this far – you have both accomplished a lot. Your driver won't get all the practice they need to be proficient at these skills in one session. If they are new to driving, they will want to spend several hours working on this level alone, but we suggest keeping the lessons to no more than 90 minutes to maintain concentration and reduce the chance of frustration. If either one of you feel frustrated, simply wrap-up early and continue at the next session. Tired and frustrated drivers and/or supervisors do not have productive and enjoyable driving lessons. It is much better to save it for another day.

Before you wrap-up: Record your driver's progress in their logbook. Use scaling to decide on how your driver is doing. Decide, together, what they can do to get these skills to "a 9 or 10" on the scale. Wrap up, decide on the next session timing as well as what new skills you will work on together. It is recommended to set electronic reminders for both yourself and your driver, to prioritize the training session.