

Show Me, Tell Me — All 21 Official Questions & Answers

The complete DVSA 'show me, tell me' vehicle safety question bank, grouped into 6 checks, with H&E Driving School's model answers and notes. Source: GOV.UK, "Car 'show me, tell me' vehicle safety questions" (DVSA).

1. Fluid Checks

#1 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Open the bonnet and tell me how you'd check that the engine has sufficient oil.”

MODEL ANSWER

(Open the bonnet and identify the dipstick.) I'd pull it out, wipe it clean with a cloth, put it back in fully, then pull it out again to check the oil level sits between the MIN and MAX markers.

#2 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Open the bonnet and tell me how you'd check that the engine has sufficient engine coolant.”

MODEL ANSWER

(Open the bonnet and identify the coolant reservoir.) I'd check the level from the side, making sure it sits between the MIN and MAX lines. I wouldn't open the cap while it's hot.

#3 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Open the bonnet and tell me how you'd check that you have a safe level of hydraulic brake fluid.”

MODEL ANSWER

(Open the bonnet and identify the brake fluid reservoir.) I'd check the level sits between the MIN and MAX markers.

2. Light Checks

#4 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd check that the headlights and tail lights are working. You don't need to exit the vehicle.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd turn on the ignition, switch on the lights, then walk round the car to check each headlight and tail light's working.

#5 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd check the direction indicators are working. You don't need to exit the vehicle.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd turn on the ignition, press the hazard warning light switch, then walk around the vehicle to check all the indicator lights are flashing properly.

#6 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd check the brake lights are working on this car.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd press the brake pedal and check the reflection in windows or doors, or ask someone to check for me.

#7 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd switch on the rear fog light(s) and explain when you'd use it/them. You don't need to exit the vehicle.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd turn on the ignition and dipped headlights, then operate the fog light switch. I'd only use them when visibility drops below about 100 metres, and switch them off again once it clears.

#8 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you switch your headlight from dipped to main beam and explain how you'd know the main beam is on.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd turn on the ignition, switch on the dipped headlights, then switch to main beam — I'd check the blue warning light comes on the dashboard to confirm it's switched over.

#9 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd switch on your dipped headlights?”

MODEL ANSWER

Operate the correct switch or stalk to turn on dipped headlights — the green headlight icon appears on the dashboard.

3. Vehicle Controls

#10 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd check that the brakes are working before starting a journey.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd check the brakes as I set off — they shouldn't feel spongy or slack, and the car shouldn't pull to one side.

#11 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd know if there was a problem with your anti-lock braking system.”

MODEL ANSWER

I'd check the ABS warning light when the vehicle is started — it comes on briefly, then goes off; it would stay on if there's a fault with the anti-lock braking system.

#12 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you'd check the power-assisted steering is working before starting a journey.”

MODEL ANSWER

The steering shouldn't feel heavy. I'd check it by giving gentle pressure on the wheel as I start the engine — it should move easily. Alternatively, turning the wheel just after moving off gives an immediate indication the power assistance is working.

#13 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd operate the horn?”

MODEL ANSWER

When it's safe, press the horn.

#14 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it’s safe to do so, can you show me how you’d open and close the side window?”

MODEL ANSWER

Open the window using the control, then close it again.

4. Tyres

#15 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you’d check the tyres to ensure that they have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe to use on the road.”

MODEL ANSWER

I’d check there are no cuts or bulges on the tyres. The legal minimum tread depth is 1.6mm across the central three-quarters of the tyre, and around its entire outer circumference.

#16 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me where you’d find the information for the recommended tyre pressures for this car and how tyre pressures should be checked.”

MODEL ANSWER

I’d find the recommended pressures in the manufacturer’s guide, often on a sticker inside the driver’s door sill, and check them with a reliable gauge when the tyres are cold, including the spare if there is one, then refit the valve caps.

5. Head Restraint

#17 TELL ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“Tell me how you make sure your head restraint is correctly adjusted so it provides the best protection in the event of a crash.”

MODEL ANSWER

The head restraint should be adjusted so the rigid part is at least as high as the eyes or top of the ears, and as close to the back of the head as is comfortable. Some head restraints aren’t adjustable.

6. Visibility

#18 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it’s safe to do so, can you show me how you wash and clean the front windscreen?”

MODEL ANSWER

Operate the washers and wipers for the front windscreen.

#19 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it’s safe to do so, can you show me how you wash and clean the rear windscreen?”

MODEL ANSWER

Operate the washer and wiper for the rear windscreen.

#20 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd demist the front windscreen?”

MODEL ANSWER

Operate the controls to demist the front windscreen, using the air conditioning or heater if fitted.

#21 SHOW ME

OFFICIAL QUESTION

“When it's safe to do so, can you show me how you'd set the rear demister?”

MODEL ANSWER

Switch on the heated rear windscreen.

Electric Cars & This Question List

DVSA has not published an electric-vehicle version of this list — the official GOV.UK page is unchanged since December 2017 and doesn't mention EVs. If your test car is fully electric, the engine oil question (Q1) has no direct equivalent, as an EV has no engine or dipstick. Focus on what you can actually check on your car — brake fluid, tyres, lights, washers and demisters.

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Source: DVSA, GOV.UK — “Car 'show me, tell me' vehicle safety questions”. This document is for revision use; always check GOV.UK for the current official list.