



Tips for Taking the Colorado Drive Test

Posted By : [Whitney Wogan](#)

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It's time to take your Colorado Drive Test! No matter how old you are or how long you've been driving, everyone is understandably nervous on test day. Here are ten tips from Learn to Drive to help you make test day less stressful and make you a better driver at the same time!

1. STOP

Come to a complete stop at both stop signs and right turns on a red light. Rolling or incomplete stops are a traffic violation. Three traffic violations is an automatic fail. You'll know you've fully stopped when your wheels stop moving. It's amazing how slow you can go and NOT stop. If you have a tendency to make a "California Stop", try the following: Count to three after you think you've stopped just to make sure you have actually stopped. This is a very common mistake people make on the test and is the quickest way to fail the test!

2. DON'T SPEED

It seems obvious but you'd be amazed at how many people go over the speed limit while taking the test. Don't go above the posted speed limit. Be especially careful in neighborhoods, school zones and construction zones. Be on the alert for the flashing yellow school zone signs in the morning and after school.

3. SEARCH

Look BOTH left and right at intersections. Check your rear view or one of your side view mirrors for traffic behind you after you've turned or changed lanes. A good habit is to check one of your rear view mirrors every five to eight seconds.

4. USE CORRECT STEERING TECHNIQUE

In Colorado, the two accepted hand positions on your steering wheel are 10 and 2 and 9 and 3—required if you have air bags. Don't steer with one hand. Hand-over-hand and/or shuffle steering are both accepted techniques.

5. USE YOUR TURN SIGNAL

Turn on your turn signal at least 3 seconds before turns, lane changes and merging. After the turn, don't forget to turn it off manually if it hasn't done so automatically.

6. WATCH THE GAP

Maintain a minimum of a three second gap between your car and the car in front of you. It's good to maintain at least a 3-second following distance. If you don't understand the 3-Second Rule, the short, one-minute YouTube video entitled: Drive Safe: The 3 Second Rule That Could Save Your Life does a great job explaining it. At stop signs and stop lights, you should be able to see the rear wheels of the car in front of you touching the ground. If you get hit, you might be able to avoid the car in front of you because you had this extra cushion of space.

7. STAY IN YOUR LANE



Keep in your lane during turns; turn into the same lane from which you started. Don't cross over solid white lines, double yellow lines and stay in the center of your lane throughout the turn.

8. YIELD THE RIGHT OF WAY BEFORE TURNING ON AN UNPROTECTED LEFT TURN

Many people are confused about what to do when making a left turn when you don't have a green arrow (which is a protected left turn). When you *only* have a green light and no arrow (which is an unprotected left turn), you must make sure to yield to oncoming traffic before turning.

9. UNDERSTAND ROUNDABOUTS

With many new roundabouts (also called traffic circles) popping up in and around the Denver Metro area every year, it's important to understand them since they may show up on your test. Remember and practice these two points: 1. Yield to traffic already in the roundabout. 2) Signal out of the roundabout. Failure to use your signal *out* of the roundabout is a traffic violation.

10. YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE TEST IF YOU...

Have an accident, endanger another person or vehicle, engage in reckless driving or excessive speeding, follow another car too closely, turn the wrong way onto a one way street, lose control of your car, run a red light or stop sign, fail to stop for a school bus or emergency vehicle or if the examiner takes physical or verbal control of the car.

11. BONUS TIP: TAKE A FEW DEEP BREATHS

Science has proven that a few deep breaths will slow the fight or flight response which is activated when you're stressed. This will help you relax a little giving you a better test result.

Lastly, let's put failing the drive test into perspective. If you fail the test, it's not the end of the world. You can retest on another day. The biggest mistake people make when they fail the drive test is not paying attention to the feedback from their examiner. They're giving you real time tips that, if you take them to heart and implement them, will help you pass next time. More importantly, you may learn something that will save your life down the road.

Good luck with your test and see you on the road !