

Masters Tips (Car) and Mnemonics by Sam Quigley

I was very fortunate to have Chris Hudson for my IAM Car Associate training, and through his mentoring I achieved a pass at First standard. I wished to progress my driver training to Masters standard, and Robin Bell was recommended. Robin mentored me; using this mentoring and what Chris had taught me, I managed to achieve a Masters with Distinction on test.



To prepare for the Masters test, I wrote the following aide memoire based largely on Chris Hudson's doctrines & principles. Chris has decades of experience in training Police drivers to the very highest standard, and I believe his ability to apply continuous spoken thought to his driving, from strapping in, to turning the key off, something which I tried to copy verbatim, was instrumental in my achieving the grade.

I post it here with gratitude to Chris & Robin, in the hope that, suitably modified for your needs, it may do you some good in your quest to better your driving abilities.

On test day, with pleasantries exchanged and the Examiner sitting beside me, I began:

I am fit to drive in accordance with Highway Code Rule 90 & I am wearing corrective vision in accordance with Highway Code Rule 92 & I am familiar with all controls on the vehicle.

The vehicle I am driving today is a BMW 330d Touring.

The vehicle has a 3.0 litre diesel engine & an automatic gearbox with Sports mode.

I intend to drive this vehicle in accordance with the SYSTEM of car control; the purpose of which is to prevent accidents.

The SYSTEM provides an approach to hazards that is safe, systematic, simple & applicable in all circumstances.

It is also a way of approaching hazards that is safe & leaves nothing to chance; it gives that essential aspect of safe driving.....time to react.

A hazard in this case, is anything that contains an element of actual or potential danger.

I now intend to carry out an interior check of the vehicle; the handbrake is on, doors are closed, Steering wheel, seat & mirrors are adjusted, seatbelts are fitted, and the inertial lock is operating correctly.

The vehicle complies with the Road Vehicle Construction and Use Regulations and the Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations in accordance with Highway Code Rule 89.

Foot on the brake, key in the ignition & observe warning lights & indications; Park Brake warning light is showing & I can see that we have sufficient fuel for the journey.

Push the start button & I can feel the servo take away the brake pressure, which will act as a static brake check.

Moving the steering wheel confirms that the power steering is working.

Check mirrors, 1, 2, 3, release the parking brake, park brake warning light is extinguished.

Over shoulder check & move off.

It is my intention to carry out a moving brake check, I'm going to increase the speed of the vehicle to 30mph, then by use of the brakes, reduce the speed by 10mph, this will be dependent on prevailing road conditions.

Check mirrors 1, 2, 3, standby for moving brake check, apply brakes & note that the car slows, brakes are working efficiently on all 4 wheels & it's safe to continue.

I shall be complying with all speed limit in accordance with Highway Code Rule 124, remembering that Rule 125 advises that this is not necessarily the safest speed.

Thereafter, drive the way you have been taught, continuing the spoken thought, and make use of the following little reminders:

PC's, PC's I.E.

- Parked vehicles and Concealed entrances
- Pedestrians and Children

Check mirrors before any change in speed, position or direction.

Purpose of SYSTEM is to promote safety & prevent collisions by encouraging drivers to adopt a systematic approach to any hazard.

It involves O, A, P;

Careful Observation, early Anticipation & Planning & a systematic use of the controls to maintain your vehicle's stability in all situations.

A driving plan is made using the 5 W's:

- What I can see.
- What I cannot see.
- What I can reasonably expect to develop.
- What hazards present the greatest threat, and....
- What I'll do if things turn out differently.

To do this I need to be scanning constantly; far distance, middle distance, near distance, sides & rear.

Following position is a position that is safe to follow vehicles in front.

The distance varies according to circumstances, but it gives 4 distinct advantages:

- I can maintain a good view of the road ahead & can increase that view by very slight deviations to the near or the offside.
- I can check my mirrors & stop the vehicle safely if the driver in front brakes firmly without warning.
- I'll be able to check mirrors & extend the braking distance giving the driver following more time to react.
- Finally, I'll be able to see when it is safe to move up to an overtaking position, which is closer than the following position & therefore reduces your time to react.

Overtaking; check shadows between vehicles to assess distance between them.

3 stage overtake:

- Stage 1: adopt the Following Position;
- Stage 2: adopt the Overtaking Position;
- Stage 3: move out towards the offside. If the overtake is 'on' allow a safe gap between yourself and the vehicle / vehicles being overtaken and on completion, move into the chosen 'safe return gap'.

Overtaking musts:

- Can I see far enough to ensure it is safe to overtake.
- Can I return to the near side in plenty of time.
- Do not overtake where you could come into conflict with other road users.
- Avoid 3 vehicles abreast wherever possible.
- Never cause any vehicle whether approaching or overtaken to alter speed or position, and....
- Always be prepared to abandon an overtake if another hazard comes into view.

TUG

We take, use & give information

SPEED

Correct speed is the speed required to negotiate the hazard safely.

HUMAN FACTORS

- Self
- Vehicle
- Journey
- Wider world

Acceleration sense is the ability to vary vehicle speed by accurate use of the accelerator to meet changing road & traffic conditions.

Braking sense is the ability to appreciate the situation correctly, to apply the brakes in a timely & gradual manner, other than emergency, when this cannot be achieved by deceleration in the time & distance available to the driver.

Stopping distance as defined in Highway Code Rule 126, I must be always able to stop the vehicle safely in the distance I can see to be clear, on my own side of the road.

Tyre grip trade off is the grip of the tyres on the road & is shared between 3 things; the more you have of one, the less you have of the others.

- Acceleration.
- Braking.
- Steering.

Concentration is the full application of mind & body to a particular endeavour, to the complete exclusion of everything not related to that endeavour.

Traffic lights on green mean proceed only if the way ahead is clear.

Hazards - 3 main types:

- Physical features; roundabouts, junctions, bends & hill crests i.e. things that don't move, or you move towards them.
- Movement or position of other road users, including pedestrians, cyclists
- Variations in weather, road surface & visibility.

Brakes to slow
Gears to go

Traffic lights: Plan to stop, look to go

Schools: Time of the day, day of the week.

O - observation
A - anticipation
P - planning

IPSGA

- Information
- Position
- Speed
- Gear
- Acceleration

Parallel parking - LRR

- Level
- Rotation
- Rotation