

1) Can you tell me whether any examiners, or test centres, have flagged up the problem that the paperwork sent to car and trailer practical test candidates is not explicit enough about the need for additional mirrors on the vehicle?

We have approached our technical support team, operational delivery management team and operations team to see if they hold recorded information from examiners, or test centres, on the paperwork sent to car and trailer candidates not being explicit enough about the need for additional mirrors on the vehicle. These are the teams that are most likely to hold this information.

These teams have confirmed that they do not hold any recorded information from examiners, or test centres, flagging up the problem that paperwork sent to car and trailer practical test candidates is not explicit enough about the need for additional mirrors fitted to the vehicle.

We would, however, need to contact each test centre to confirm that they do not hold any information that states they have flagged up the paperwork sent to car and trailer practical test candidates not being explicit enough on the need for additional mirrors on the vehicle. To compile this information would involve checking with around 300 test centres. This information is exempt from release under section 12 (1) (cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit) of the FoIA. A full breakdown of this exemption can be found at Annex D.

The appropriate limit, as prescribed by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004, is £600 for Central Government and £450 for other public authorities, with staff costs calculated at a rate of £25 per hour. When calculating whether the appropriate limit is exceeded, authorities can take account of the costs of determining whether the information is held, locating and retrieving the information, and extracting the information from other documents. They cannot take account of the costs involved with considering whether information is exempt under the Act.

2) The number of candidates that have been refused to take their car and trailer practical test because the vehicle was not fitted with externally mounted, nearside and offside mirrors for the use by the examiner, or any person, supervising the test. I would like this information from when the text appeared on your website.

The need for additional mirrors to be fitted to a vehicle presented for the car and trailer test came into force on 1 April 2006. We do not hold information as to when the text for this requirement first appeared on our website.

If a candidate arrived for a car and trailer test, from 1 April 2006, without the additional mirrors the test may not go ahead. If the test did not go ahead because the vehicle was not fitted with the additional mirrors, it would be recorded on the driving test report form (DL25) as a code 21 non-test activity.

The code 21 refers to the vehicle not being suitable for test or no vehicle for test. Therefore, if a candidate arrived for the car and trailer test without a vehicle or they didn't meet all of the vehicle requirements it will also be recorded on the DL25 as a code 21 non-test activity. You can find the vehicle requirements for a car and trailer test at

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/DriverLicensing/CaravansTrailersCommercialVehicles/DG_4022521

In the table below, you can find the number of candidates where a code 21 non-test activity was recorded on the DL25 for their car and trailer practical test. This information is provided for each financial year from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2011.

Financial year	Number of candidates where a code 21 non-test activity was recorded on the DL25 for the car and trailer practical test
2006/7	275
2007/8	292
2008/9	231
2009/10	139
2010/11	143

We do not hold, in a central record, the number of car and trailer practical tests that didn't go ahead because the vehicle presented was not fitted with the additional mirrors. To compile this information would require us to manually review each DL25 associated with each test where a code 21 non-test activity was recorded.

This information is exempt from release under section 12 (1) (cost of compliance exceeds appropriate limit) of the FoIA. A full breakdown of this exemption can be found at Annex B.

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We have estimated that to review one DL25 would take two minutes; therefore to review all 1,080 forms would take 36 hours, which would exceed the 24 working hour limit prescribed.

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