

My FOI requests concern the Hazard Perception Test part of the DSA Motorcycle Theory test and apply for the period 1 January 2010 to date.

1. I would like to know how many people have rated themselves as being 'dissatisfied or 'extremely dissatisfied' with the Hazard Perception Test (Motorcycle) in the feedback. I should also like percentage of those who have completed the feedback.

Attached at Annex B, is a table showing details of candidates who have rated in their feedback that they are either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the hazard perception test (HPT) element of their motorcycle theory test. Please note that during July and August 2010, the survey was suspended during a trial of animated HPT clips so this information is not held for this period.

2. I would like to know how many direct complaints have been registered regarding the process of this test.

3. I would like to know how many of those complaints have specifically addressed the manner in which the test is demonstrated.

Between 1 January 2010 and 30 June 2011, Pearson (our theory test provider) has dealt with 217 complaints about the HPT and DSA has received a total of 39 complaints. We categorise complaints by their main topic (such as question bank, about the test) and do not have a specific code for test demonstration.

To establish how many complaints have been received about how the test is demonstrated would involve reviewing all 256 complaints. We have estimated that it would take in excess of 24 working hours to compile this information so 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 C.

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.

4. I would like to know what action has been taken, if any, to address any concerns raised regarding the process of the Hazard Perception Test or the manner in which it is demonstrated during the test.

We have tried to make the information as widely available as possible. Besides the information given in our publications, there are video clips on the YouTube website.

5. I would like to know if the DSA has made or received any study regarding a correlation between the Hazard Perception Test and the actual ability of drivers on the road.

DSA commissioned a report called the Cohort II: A study of learner and new drivers (Wells et al, 2008) which identified that HPT has brought about reductions in casualties of at least 3% for some specific driving situations. This report further identified that those candidates who scored highly on the HPT tended to have a lower accident liability than those who passed with a lower score. A copy of this report can be found at: <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme2/cohort2/index.html>

6. I would like to know if any study has been done to ascertain whether people who have failed the test have failed to perceive a hazard or have failed to understand when they are supposed to click the mouse.

Candidate scores are monitored and do not show candidates scoring zero, which would be an indication of their not knowing how to respond. We have not conducted any research into whether candidates who fail their test have failed to understand when they are supposed to click the mouse. Tests were rigorously trialled before they were introduced to ensure that they were a true test of candidates' hazard perception skills. The test was introduced after extensive research indicated that:

- Recognising developing hazards was a safety critical skill
- Compared to more experienced drivers, learners' hazard recognition skills were weak; and
- Hazard perception was a skill which could be reliably assessed using a computer-based performance test

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