

UNCOUPLING AND RE-COUPLING OF CAR & TRAILER (B+E)

1. Q What factors should be taken into consideration in selecting a suitable place to leave an uncoupled trailer?

A Select a position where the trailer will not cause danger or inconvenience to any other road user.

2. Q What are the important factors in selecting a suitable surface for uncoupling?

A Select a firm hard surface on level ground. This reduces risk of movement and prevents strain on brakes and/or suspension.

3. Q In what order would you carry out the operations necessary to uncouple.

Answer:

- a. Secure trailer brake in 'on' position
- b. Lower jockey wheel and lock in position
- c. Release the electrical connections
- d. Disconnect safety cable/chain (if fitted) and release coupling
- e. Drive car slowly away.

4. Q What should always be the first action in uncoupling?

A Apply trailer brake.

5. Q When uncoupling/re-coupling how should the car be driven?

A Slowly and smoothly.

6. Q On re-coupling what safety check should be made to ensure that the car and trailer are securely coupled?

A Attempt to drive forward with trailer parking brake applied.

7. Q Having re-coupled what is your last action before moving off?

A Release trailer parking brake.

8. Q What is the correct order in which the re-coupling drill should be carried out?

Answer:

- a. Check that the trailer parking brake is applied
- b. Reverse car slowly into coupled position

- c. Ensure vehicle is securely coupled by attempting to move forward with trailer parking brake applied
- d. Connect electrical connections (and the safety chain, if fitted)
- e. Secure jockey wheel in 'up' position
- f. Release trailer parking brake.

Note B+E only: After reversing the towing vehicle up to the trailer, it is not a fault if the candidate physically moves the trailer to line it up and re-couple. A special needs candidate who is unable to physically un-couple or re-couple the trailer should be asked questions (specimen questions below) on un-coupling and re-coupling at the end of the test.

Safety Check Questions (Car and Trailer test (B+E))

Q1: Open the bonnet, identify where the brake fluid reservoir is and tell me how you would check that you have a safe level of hydraulic brake fluid.

Identify reservoir, check level against high/low markings.

Q2: Show me how you would check that the direction indicators are working.

Applying the indicators or hazard warning switch and checking functioning of all indicators.

Q3: Tell me the main safety factors involved in loading this vehicle.

The load should be distributed evenly throughout the trailer. Heavy items should be loaded as low as possible so that they are mainly over the axle(s). Bulkier, lighter items should be distributed to give a suitable 'nose weight' at the towing coupling. The nose weight should never exceed the vehicle manufacturer's specifications.

Q4: Tell me the main safety factors involved in securing a load on this vehicle.

Any load must be carried so that it does not endanger other road users. It must be securely stowed within the size and weight limits for the vehicle. The load needs to be secure so that it cannot move or fall from the vehicle when cornering or braking.

Q5: Show me how you would check that your vehicle & trailer doors are secure

Physical checks should be made to ensure that windows, roof light and all doors, including cargo doors, are properly closed.

Q6: Tell me how you would check the tyres to ensure that they have sufficient tread depth and that their general condition is safe to use on the road.

No cuts and bulges, 1.6mm of tread depth across the central $\frac{3}{4}$ of the breadth of the tyre and around the entire outer circumference.

Q7: Show me how you would check that the horn is working (off road only).

Check is carried out by using control (turn on ignition if necessary).

Q8: Open the bonnet, identify where you would check the engine coolant level and tell me how you would check that the engine has the correct level.

Identify high/low level markings on header tank where fitted or radiator filler cap, and describe how to top up to correct level.

Q9: Show me how you would check the parking brake for excessive wear.

Demonstrate by applying parking brake that when it is fully applied it secures itself, and is not at the end of the working travel.

Q10: Show me how you would clean the windscreen using the windscreen washer and wipers.

Operate control to wash and wipe windscreen (turn ignition on if necessary).

Q11: Show me how you would set the demister controls to clear all the windows effectively, this should include both front and rear screens.

Set all relevant controls including; fan, temperature, air direction / source and heated screen to clear windscreen and windows. Engine does not have to be started for this demonstration

Q12: Show me how you would switch on the rear fog light(s) and explain when you would use it/them. (No need to exit vehicle)

Operate switch (turn on dipped headlights and ignition if necessary). Check warning light is on.

Explain use.

Q13: Show me how you switch your headlight from dipped to main beam and explain how you would know the main beam is on whilst inside the car.

Operate switch (with ignition or engine on if necessary), check with main beam warning light.

Q14: Show me how you would check that the brake lights are working on this vehicle. (I can assist

you, if you need to switch the ignition on, please don't start the engine).

Operate brake pedal, make use of reflections in windows, garage doors, etc, or ask someone to help.

Q15: Tell me how you make sure your head restraint is correctly adjusted so it provides the best protection in the event of a crash.

The head restraint should be adjusted so the rigid part of the head restraint is at least as high as the eye or top of the ears, and as close to the back of the head as is comfortable. N.B. Some restraints might not be adjustable.

VEHICLE CHECKS - Expected outcome / competence

Display a basic knowledge of the fundamental safety checks applicable to the vehicle. For example safe fluid levels, lighting and tyre checks.

Assessment Criteria - (examples) - Driving Fault