

Illinois SOS

Permit Practice Test 2026

35-question test with answer key · permitpractice.us

Illinois permit test: quick facts

Questions on the real test	35
Passing score	80% (28 of 35 correct)
Wrong answers allowed	7
Minimum age	15
Testing agency	Secretary of State (SOS)
Official permit name	Instruction Permit
Permit fee	\$20
Online testing	No - the knowledge test must be taken in person.
Driver's education	Required for applicants under 18.
Supervised practice	50 hours incl. 10 at night
Permit holding period	9 months (under 18)
Under-21 alcohol limit	Zero tolerance (any measurable amount)

How to use this PDF

1. This test has 35 questions, the same number as the real Illinois SOS knowledge test.
2. Answer every question before you look at the answer key. To pass you need 80% (28 of 35 correct).
3. Time: We found no published time limit for the Illinois knowledge test.
4. Take it online, with every answer explained, at <https://permitpractice.us/illinois/> - the mock test there marks your answers only at the end, like the real test.

Questions are original study questions written from the Illinois driver's handbook and general traffic law. They are not copies of actual SOS exam questions. State facts last reviewed 2026-09-28. Free for personal study; do not resell. © 2026 permitpractice.us

Illinois Permit Practice Test: 35 Questions

Circle your answer. Answer key with explanations starts on the last pages.

1. A center lane has a solid yellow line and a broken yellow line on each side, plus two-way turn arrows. Who may use it?

- A) Drivers from either direction about to turn left
- B) Drivers waiting to merge into the right lane
- C) Drivers who need to pass a slow vehicle ahead
- D) Only buses and cars carrying two or more people

2. If your right wheels drift off the pavement onto the shoulder, you should:

- A) Ease off the gas and steer back gently
- B) Jerk the wheel left to get back at once
- C) Speed up and steer back on right away
- D) Brake hard and steer back onto the road

3. If your vehicle's engine catches fire, you should:

- A) Open the hood to reach the fire quickly
- B) Stop, shut off the engine, and get everyone away
- C) Drive on to the nearest fire station
- D) Stay in the car with the windows up until help comes

4. A yellow sign with two arrows pointing in opposite directions (one up, one down) means:

- A) Passing lane ahead
- B) Divided highway begins
- C) One-way traffic ahead
- D) Two-way traffic ahead

5. What is the only real cure for drowsiness while driving?

- A) Turning the radio up loud
- B) Drinking strong coffee
- C) Getting sleep or rest
- D) Opening a window for cold air

6. A sign reading 'SPEED LIMIT 55' is what type of sign?

- A) Informational
- B) Warning
- C) Regulatory
- D) Guide

7. When should you check your tire pressure?

- A) Once a year at your oil change or state inspection
- B) After driving a while, when tires are warm
- C) Monthly and before long trips, with cold tires
- D) Only when the warning light comes on

8. When should you use your vehicle's emergency hazard lights?

- A) When you plan to change lanes or make a turn
- B) To thank a driver who let you merge
- C) When your car is disabled on or near the road
- D) When parking briefly in a no-parking zone

9. A yellow diamond sign showing a deer means:

- A) A wildlife park entrance
- B) A nature trail crossing
- C) Deer may cross the road
- D) Hunting is allowed nearby

10. A deer runs across the road ahead of you and disappears into the trees. What should you expect next?

- A) More deer may follow close behind
- B) Deer never cross the same road twice
- C) The road is now clear of animals
- D) The deer will turn back toward you

11. Your regular brakes have failed and pumping did not help. How should you use the parking (emergency) brake?

- A) Only after the car has stopped
- B) Apply it and release it rapidly
- C) Apply it slowly and gradually
- D) Pull it on as hard as you can

12. If you begin to skid on ice or a slippery surface, you should:

- A) Turn the wheel sharply in the opposite direction
- B) Brake firmly and hold the wheel straight
- C) Shift to neutral and pull the parking brake
- D) Ease off the gas and steer where you want to go

13. A solid white line between lanes of traffic going the same direction means:

- A) The road is one-way
- B) Lane changes are allowed when safe
- C) Lane changes are discouraged
- D) Traffic moves in opposite directions

14. What does the Move Over Law require?

- A) Keep your lane and speed, but use flashers
- B) Stop your vehicle when you see emergency lights
- C) Move over a lane, or slow down if you cannot
- D) Move over only if a police car is stopped

15. Who must yield when a pedestrian is crossing at a marked crosswalk?

- A) The pedestrian, since cars cannot stop quickly
- B) The driver must yield to the pedestrian
- C) The driver, but only at a traffic signal
- D) Whoever reached the crosswalk first

16. What does a downward-pointing triangle sign mean?

- A) Merge
- B) Do not enter
- C) Yield
- D) Stop ahead

17. A flashing yellow arrow on a traffic signal means:

- A) Turn freely - oncoming traffic is stopped
- B) Wait - the arrow is about to turn red
- C) Stop fully, then turn ahead of the oncoming cars
- D) Turn after yielding to traffic and pedestrians

18. What does a railroad advance warning sign look like?

- A) A round yellow sign with an X and RR
- B) A white X-shaped sign reading RAILROAD CROSSING
- C) A red and white triangle reading RR
- D) A yellow pentagon showing a train

19. Green traffic signs provide:

- A) Guide information (directions)
- B) Warning information (hazards)
- C) Service information (gas, food)
- D) Regulatory information (laws)

20. You are behind a school bus on a four-lane highway with a raised median. The bus stops with red lights flashing and its stop arm out. What must you do?

- A) Stop only if you see children outside
- B) Pass slowly in the left lane
- C) Keep going because the road is divided
- D) Stop - traffic behind the bus must stop

21. How much of a traffic lane is a motorcycle entitled to?

- A) Only the right third of the lane
- B) Whatever space other traffic leaves
- C) Half a lane, so a car may share it
- D) A full lane, the same as a car

22. What does 'covering the brake' mean?

- A) Pressing the brake and gas at the same time
- B) Pumping the brake to warn the drivers behind you
- C) Resting your left foot on the brake pedal
- D) Holding your foot over the brake, ready to stop

23. The single most effective way to avoid an alcohol-related crash is to:

- A) Not drive at all after drinking any alcohol
- B) Drink coffee and wait 30 minutes before driving
- C) Stay under 0.08% by counting your drinks
- D) Drive slowly and stay in the right lane

24. What does a 'MERGE' warning sign (two lines coming together) mean?

- A) Your lane ends - you must merge
- B) Traffic will merge into your lane
- C) The road divides into two routes
- D) Two roads cross just ahead

25. A yellow diamond sign showing arrows that curve around in a circle indicates:

- A) A roundabout ahead
- B) A detour loop ahead
- C) A U-turn area ahead
- D) A dead-end turnaround

26. If a tire blows out while you are driving, the first thing you should do is:

- A) Steer hard toward the shoulder right away
- B) Brake hard to stop as quickly as you can
- C) Turn on hazard lights and stop in the lane
- D) Hold the wheel firmly and ease off the gas

27. Your brake pedal suddenly sinks to the floor. Which action may build up brake pressure again?

- A) Turning the engine off at once
- B) Pumping the brake pedal quickly
- C) Shifting the car into neutral
- D) Holding the pedal on the floor

28. Alcohol affects driving by:

- A) Mainly causing drowsiness, which coffee can fix
- B) Slowing reactions only once you reach 0.08%
- C) Affecting judgment, but not reaction time
- D) Impairing reaction time, judgment, and vision

29. A freeway lane is marked with a white diamond symbol and HOV signs. Who may drive in it?

- A) Vehicles carrying the posted number of people
- B) Only police and emergency vehicles on a call
- C) Any driver who wants to pass slow traffic
- D) Only trucks and other large commercial vehicles

30. What is the purpose of an anti-lock braking system (ABS)?

- A) To let you pump the brakes faster in a skid
- B) To brake for you when a car ahead stops
- C) To keep wheels from locking so you can steer
- D) To stop your vehicle faster by automatically pumping brakes

31. A round (circular) sign indicates:

- A) A stop ahead
- B) A one-way street
- C) A speed limit change
- D) A railroad crossing

32. Which of the following is NOT a legal reason to use your horn?

- A) To warn a driver drifting into your lane
- B) To warn others on a blind mountain curve
- C) To alert a child about to run into the road
- D) To express frustration at another driver

33. Total stopping distance is made up of:

- A) Perception, reaction, and braking distance
- B) Braking distance plus one car length
- C) Reaction distance and braking distance only
- D) Perception distance and braking distance

34. What does a green light on a traffic signal that is shaped like an arrow mean?

- A) A protected move in the arrow's direction
- B) The turn is allowed only after stopping
- C) Go that way, but yield to oncoming traffic
- D) The signal is about to turn red

35. Traffic ahead of you is moving slowly. May you use the shared center left-turn lane to drive around it?

- A) No - the lane is only for vehicles turning left
- B) Yes, if no oncoming vehicle is using it
- C) Yes, as long as you signal left first
- D) Yes, but only for a distance of one block

Answer Key & Explanations

1. A - Drivers from either direction about to turn left

This is a two-way left-turn lane. Drivers from both directions share it, entering it only just before they turn left. It is not a travel or passing lane.

Source: publicsafety.ohio.gov - Section 4 - Rules of the Road, Two-way Left Turn Only Lane

2. A - Ease off the gas and steer back gently

If your wheels drift onto the shoulder, do not brake hard or jerk the wheel. Ease off the accelerator, keep a firm grip, and steer back onto the pavement gently once your speed has decreased - this prevents loss of control.

Source: ksrevenue.gov - KS handbook - Vehicle leaves the pavement

3. B - Stop, shut off the engine, and get everyone away

If your engine catches fire, pull off the road, shut off the engine, and get all occupants out and well away from the vehicle. Do NOT open the hood - adding oxygen can intensify the fire. Call 911.

Source: nj.gov - NJ handbook - Car Fires

4. D - Two-way traffic ahead

This sign warns that you are leaving a divided roadway and entering a two-way road. Oncoming traffic will now be present - keep right and do not pass unless permitted.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.51

5. C - Getting sleep or rest

Coffee, cold air and loud music may help for a short time, but they do not last. Only sleep or rest fixes fatigue, so stop and rest when you are tired.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - p.91 (PDF p.94), Drugs and fatigue

6. C - Regulatory

Speed limit signs are regulatory - they state the maximum legal speed under ideal conditions, which you are legally required to obey.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2B.21 Paragraph 13

7. C - Monthly and before long trips, with cold tires

Check tire pressure monthly and before long trips, using a gauge when tires are cold (not recently driven). Proper inflation improves fuel economy, tire life, and braking performance.

Source: sd.gov - SD handbook - Vehicle maintenance

8. C - When your car is disabled on or near the road

Hazard lights warn others that your vehicle is stopped, disabled or a hazard. Rules for using them while moving (for example in heavy rain) differ between states, so follow your state handbook.

Source: dmv.ca.gov - CA handbook - Using Your Emergency Flashers

9. C - Deer may cross the road

A deer symbol warns that animals frequently cross this stretch of road. Be especially alert at dawn and dusk, scan the roadsides, and slow down.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.55

10. A - More deer may follow close behind

Deer usually travel in groups, so one deer crossing often means others are close behind. Slow down and be ready to stop.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - p.84 (PDF p.87), Watch out for deer

11. C - Apply it slowly and gradually

Setting the parking brake too hard or too fast can lock the wheels and throw the car into a skid. Apply it slowly while you steer to a safe place.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - p.84 (PDF p.87), Brake failure

12. D - Ease off the gas and steer where you want to go

In a skid, take your foot off the gas (do not brake hard) and gently steer in the direction you want the front of the car to go. Smooth inputs are key - sudden movements worsen the skid.

Source: dmv.ny.gov - NY handbook - Skids

13. C - Lane changes are discouraged

A solid white line discourages or prohibits lane changes. A broken (dashed) white line means lane changes are permitted when safe. White lines separate traffic moving in the same direction.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Pavement markings

14. C - Move over a lane, or slow down if you cannot

All 50 states have Move Over laws requiring drivers to move over at least one lane away from stopped emergency, police, and maintenance vehicles. If changing lanes is unsafe, slow to well below the speed limit.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Move Over Law

15. B - The driver must yield to the pedestrian

Drivers must always yield to pedestrians who are crossing in a marked or unmarked crosswalk. Pedestrian safety is the highest priority.

Source: dmv.ca.gov - CA handbook - Pedestrians / Crosswalks

16. C - Yield

An inverted (downward-pointing) triangle is always a YIELD sign. Slow down, be ready to stop, and give the right of way to traffic and pedestrians.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2A.05, Table 2A-1 Use of Sign Shapes

17. D - Turn after yielding to traffic and pedestrians

A flashing yellow arrow means you may turn in that direction after yielding to oncoming traffic and pedestrians. It is an unprotected turn - proceed only when safe.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 4A.04 Paragraph 01 B.2

18. A - A round yellow sign with an X and RR

The round yellow sign with an X and "RR" is the railroad advance warning sign, usually the first sign you see before a highway-rail crossing. At the tracks you will see the white X-shaped crossbuck, which means yield to trains.

Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Chapter 5, Table 17: Signs by Shape

19. A - Guide information (directions)

Green signs provide guidance information such as highway route numbers, exit numbers, destinations, distances, and directions. They help drivers navigate.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - MN handbook - Chapter 5, sign colors

20. D - Stop - traffic behind the bus must stop

A divided highway may excuse traffic on the opposite side, but never drivers going the same way as the bus. Stay stopped until the red lights stop flashing and the stop arm is pulled in.

Source: dol.wa.gov - (PDF p.95), Sharing with school buses - When you are behind the bus

21. D - A full lane, the same as a car

A motorcycle has the right to use a full lane. Never drive alongside a motorcycle in the same lane, even if the rider is far to one side.

Source: alea.gov - p.26 (PDF p.28), Sharing the road with motorcycles

22. D - Holding your foot over the brake, ready to stop

Covering the brake means moving your foot from the accelerator to a position over, or lightly on, the brake pedal when you see a possible hazard, so you can brake with less reaction time.

Source: tn.gov - TN handbook - Covering the brake

23. A - Not drive at all after drinking any alcohol

There is no safe way to drive after drinking. The only sure prevention is to not drive at all after consuming alcohol - arrange a designated sober driver, taxi, or rideshare instead.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Alcohol

24. B - Traffic will merge into your lane

A Merge sign warns that traffic from another roadway (such as an entrance ramp) will be joining your lane ahead. Watch for merging vehicles and adjust your speed and position so they can blend in smoothly. A lane that is ending has its own 'Lane Ends' sign.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.45 Paragraph 01

25. A - A roundabout ahead

The Circular Intersection sign (a yellow diamond showing arrows curving counterclockwise in a circle) warns of a roundabout ahead. Slow down, yield to traffic already in the circle, and enter when there is a safe gap. Round signs are used only for railroad crossing advance warnings.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) Section 2A.05, Table 2A-1 and Section 2C.02

26. D - Hold the wheel firmly and ease off the gas

During a blowout, hold the steering wheel firmly to keep the vehicle straight, ease your foot off the accelerator, and let the car slow gradually. Hard braking can cause a spin. Pull off the road only after you have control.

Source: ksrevenue.gov - KS handbook - Tire blowout

27. B - Pumping the brake pedal quickly

Pumping the pedal can restore enough pressure for the brakes to work. If it does not, shift to a lower gear and apply the parking brake slowly.

Source: oregon.gov - p.85 (PDF p.93), Brakes Fail

28. D - Impairing reaction time, judgment, and vision

Alcohol impairs all the skills needed to drive safely: reaction time slows, judgment and decision-making deteriorate, coordination suffers, and vision (especially peripheral) is reduced.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Alcohol

29. A - Vehicles carrying the posted number of people

The diamond marks a high-occupancy vehicle (carpool) lane. The signs show how many people must be in the vehicle and when the rule applies.

Source: dol.wa.gov - (PDF p.134), Lanes - HOV / carpool

30. C - To keep wheels from locking so you can steer

ABS prevents wheels from locking during hard braking, allowing you to maintain steering control. When ABS activates, you may feel pulsing in the brake pedal - this is normal. Press firmly and steer.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - MN handbook - Anti-lock brakes

31. D - A railroad crossing

A round, yellow sign with a black X and two R's warns of a railroad crossing ahead. The circular shape is used exclusively for railroad advance-warning signs.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) Section 2A.05 and Table 2A-1 (W10-1)

32. D - To express frustration at another driver

Horns are safety devices used to warn others of danger. Using your horn out of frustration or anger is not a legal use and can be considered aggressive driving in many states.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - MN handbook - Horn

33. A - Perception, reaction, and braking distance

Total stopping distance = perception distance (seeing the hazard) + reaction distance (moving your foot to the brake) + braking distance (the vehicle physically stopping). All three increase with speed, which is why higher speeds are far more dangerous.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Total Stopping Distance

34. A - A protected move in the arrow's direction

A green arrow gives a protected movement: you may go in the direction of the arrow while conflicting traffic is stopped by a red signal. You must still yield to pedestrians lawfully in the crosswalk and to vehicles still lawfully in the intersection.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 4A.03 Paragraph 01 A.2

35. A - No - the lane is only for vehicles turning left

A shared center lane is reserved for left turns by traffic from both directions. Using it for through travel or to pass other vehicles is not allowed.

Source: dol.wa.gov - (PDF p.116), Signs - Shared center lane left turn only

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<https://permitpractice.us/illinois/>

Official SOS website: <https://www.ilsos.gov/>

Official Illinois driver's handbook: https://www.ilsos.gov/content/dam/publications/pdf_publications/dsd_a112.pdf

