

Iowa DOT

Permit Practice Test 2026

35-question test with answer key · permitpractice.us

Iowa permit test: quick facts

Questions on the real test	Not published by the DOT
Passing score	Not published by the DOT (our practice tests use 80%)
Wrong answers allowed	Depends on test length (not published)
Minimum age	14
Testing agency	Department of Transportation (DOT)
Official permit name	Instruction Permit
Permit fee	\$6
If you fail	At least one business day (cannot repeat the same day; at examiner's discretion)
Online testing	Partially - online testing is available only in some cases (see the official site).
Driver's education	No - driver education is not required for the learner permit.
Supervised practice	20 hours incl. 2 between sunset and sunrise (for the intermediate license)
Permit holding period	12 months total with a clean record for the 6 consecutive months before applying for the intermediate license
Under-21 alcohol limit	0.02% BAC or higher

How to use this PDF

1. The DOT does not publish how many questions the real test has. This test uses 35 questions, the length of our online mock test.
2. Answer every question before you look at the answer key. To pass you need Not published by the DOT (our practice tests use 80%).
3. Time: We found no published time limit for the Iowa knowledge test.
4. Take it online, with every answer explained, at <https://permitpractice.us/iowa/> - the mock test there marks your answers only at the end, like the real test.

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

Iowa Permit Practice Test: 35 Questions

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

1. On an Iowa road with a speed limit above 45 mph, you must start signaling a turn at least:

- A) 500 feet before it
- B) 300 feet before it
- C) 100 feet before it
- D) 200 feet before it

2. For the first 6 months with an Iowa intermediate license (with a passenger restriction), you may carry no more than:

- A) One unrelated minor passenger
- B) Three unrelated minor passengers
- C) Two unrelated minor passengers
- D) No passengers at all

3. When you parallel park next to a curb, where should your car end up?

- A) Parallel to the curb and as close as practical
- B) With front wheels turned in toward the curb
- C) About three feet from the curb so passengers can get out
- D) Angled with the back wheel touching the curb

4. 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

5. Green guide signs are used to show:

- A) Hazards on the road ahead
- B) Locations of gas and food
- C) Directions and distances
- D) Parks and historic sites

6. What should you do before opening your car door after parking on a street?

- A) Open it fully so passing drivers will steer around
- B) Check mirrors and look for traffic and cyclists
- C) Open it slowly so others can see it move
- D) Check only the side mirror, then open

7. What is the difference between a black-on-white speed sign and a yellow speed sign below a warning sign?

- A) White is for trucks; yellow is for cars
- B) Yellow is the legal limit; white is advisory
- C) White is the legal limit; yellow is advisory
- D) They mean the same - both are legal limits

8. 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

9. The maximum speed limit on Iowa's rural interstate highways is:

- A) 65 mph
- B) 75 mph
- C) 80 mph
- D) 70 mph

10. A warning sign showing a truck on a downgrade indicates:

- A) A steep downhill grade ahead
- B) A runaway truck ramp ahead
- C) A truck weigh station ahead
- D) A truck crossing ahead

11. A motorcycle coming toward an intersection has its turn signal blinking. What should you do before pulling out in front of it?

- A) Go - a blinking signal means it will turn
- B) Flash your headlights and then pull out
- C) Wait until you are sure it is really turning
- D) Pull out quickly before it reaches you

12. What does a flashing red light mean?

- A) Stop, then go when it is safe
- B) Stop and wait for the light to turn green
- C) Yield, but stop only if cars are coming
- D) Slow down and proceed with caution

13. When entering a highway from an on-ramp, who has the right of way?

- A) The larger vehicle, such as a truck
- B) The merging vehicle
- C) Whoever reaches the merge point first
- D) Traffic already on the highway

14. 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

15. At about what speed do snowplows on Iowa roads usually operate?

- A) 10-15 mph
- B) 25-35 mph
- C) 45-55 mph
- D) 55-65 mph

16. In Iowa, you may not park any closer to a fire hydrant than:

- A) 5 feet
- B) 10 feet
- C) 20 feet
- D) 15 feet

17. When parking uphill with a curb, which direction do you turn your front wheels?

- A) Straight ahead, parallel to the curb
- B) Either way, if the parking brake is set
- C) Toward the curb (right)
- D) Away from the curb (left)

18. A pentagon (5-sided) shaped sign is associated with:

- A) Hospital zones
- B) Construction areas
- C) No-passing zones
- D) School zones

19. A black-and-white rectangular sign reading 'NO TURN ON RED' means:

- A) Turn on red only if no cars are coming
- B) Turns are never allowed here
- C) Only left turns on red are banned here
- D) No turning on red, even after stopping

20. When you park on an Iowa street that has a curb, your vehicle should be no farther from the curb than:

- A) 24 inches
- B) 6 inches
- C) 12 inches
- D) 18 inches

21. When turning left at a green light (not a green arrow), you must:

- A) Turn first - oncoming traffic must yield to you
- B) Wait for oncoming traffic to stop
- C) Yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians
- D) Turn immediately - green means go

22. A small sign below a railroad crossbuck shows the number 2. What does it tell you?

- A) Trains come through here about twice a day
- B) Stop at least two car lengths from the rails
- C) There are two sets of tracks at the crossing
- D) The crossing is two miles down the road

23. When approaching a stopped vehicle displaying a blue and red flashing light on the roadside, the safest and often legally required action is to:

- A) Speed up to pass the scene as fast as possible
- B) Change lanes away if safe, or else slow down
- C) Keep your speed and stay in your lane
- D) Stop in your lane until the vehicle leaves

24. You are on a freeway on-ramp and the ramp meter signal shows red. What should you do?

- A) Merge carefully if the freeway looks clear
- B) Use the shoulder to go around the signal
- C) Slow down but keep rolling onto the freeway
- D) Stop at the line and wait for green

25. Your car stalls on railroad tracks as a train approaches. After everyone gets out, which way should you move?

- A) Along the tracks in the same direction as the train
- B) Away from the tracks at an angle toward the train
- C) Straight down the tracks, away from the train
- D) Straight off the tracks at a right angle

26. When may a driver enter or cross a bike lane?

- A) To turn or cross to parking, yielding to cyclists
- B) To wait in it while the car ahead of you turns
- C) Never, under any circumstances
- D) To pass slower cars when traffic is heavy

27. At an uncontrolled T-intersection, vehicles on the through road have right of way over:

- A) Pedestrians in a marked crosswalk
- B) Vehicles on the terminating road
- C) Emergency vehicles using sirens
- D) Vehicles already in the intersection

28. When you reach an intersection with a flashing red light in your direction and a flashing yellow in the cross direction, you must:

- A) Stop, then go first - cross traffic must yield
- B) Stop, then go when safe - cross traffic won't stop
- C) Slow down and go - the cross traffic has to stop
- D) Stop and wait until your light turns solid green

29. 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

30. When are you required to use headlights?

- A) Only at night on roads without streetlights
- B) At night and when visibility is reduced
- C) Only on highways at night, not on city streets
- D) Only when it is fully dark, not in bad weather

31. Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down Law applies when you approach which of these stopped vehicles?

- A) A passenger car with its hazard lights on
- B) A delivery van parked in a side lot
- C) A car stopped at a red traffic signal
- D) A parked car with no lights on at all

32. At what times are deer and other wildlife most active near roads?

- A) Around midday
- B) During the late morning
- C) Around dawn and dusk
- D) In the early afternoon

33. At a 4-way stop sign, two cars arrive at exactly the same time. Who goes first?

- A) The car going straight
- B) The car on the left
- C) The car that signals first
- D) The car on the right

34. Brown signs are used to mark:

- A) Parks and historic sites
- B) Detours
- C) Toll roads and express lanes
- D) Hospitals and gas stations

35. 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

Answer Key & Explanations

1. B - 300 feet before it

Iowa law requires a turn signal at least 100 feet ahead when the limit is 45 mph or less, and at least 300 feet ahead when the limit is higher than 45 mph.

Source: iowadot.gov - p.43 (PDF p.43), 4.8 Turn Signals

2. A - One unrelated minor passenger

For the first six months, an Iowa intermediate driver with a passenger restriction may carry only one unrelated minor passenger while driving without adult supervision.

Source: legis.iowa.gov - Iowa Code 321.180B(2)(a)

3. A - Parallel to the curb and as close as practical

Park parallel to and close to the curb. States set different maximum distances - for example 18 inches in California and Texas, 12 inches in Florida, Michigan and Washington, and 6 inches in New Jersey - so learn your state's limit.

Source: nj.gov - NJ handbook - Parking

4. 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

5. C - Directions and distances

Green signs provide guidance: route numbers, directions, distances, and destination names. They help you navigate to where you are going.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 1D.05 Color Code

6. B - Check mirrors and look for traffic and cyclists

Before opening your door into traffic, check your mirrors and look over your shoulder for approaching vehicles and cyclists. 'Dooring' a passing cyclist is dangerous and illegal in many states.

Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Parking

7. C - White is the legal limit; yellow is advisory

A black-on-white speed sign is the legal speed limit. A yellow speed plate below a warning sign (e.g., on a curve) is an advisory speed - the safe recommended speed for that hazard.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.59

8. 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

9. D - 70 mph

Iowa's maximum speed limit is 70 mph on rural interstate highways. Urban interstates have lower limits, and you must always obey a lower posted limit.

Source: iowadot.gov - PDF p.42, speed limits list

10. A - A steep downhill grade ahead

A sign showing a truck on a slope warns of a steep downhill grade. Trucks should use a lower gear; all drivers should check brakes and control speed.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.14

11. C - Wait until you are sure it is really turning

Many motorcycle turn signals do not cancel by themselves, so a rider may have forgotten one. Wait until the motorcycle actually starts to turn.

Source: publicsafety.ohio.gov - Section 9 - Sharing the Road, Motorcyclists

12. A - Stop, then go when it is safe

A flashing red light must be treated exactly like a stop sign. Come to a complete stop, check for traffic and pedestrians, then proceed when safe.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Flashing Red Light

13. D - Traffic already on the highway

Traffic already on the highway has the right of way. The merging driver must adjust speed to safely enter the flow of traffic - do not force other drivers to slow down.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Entering a limited-access highway

14. 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

15. B - 25-35 mph

Snowplows usually work at 25-35 mph, and many drivers hit them from behind because they close in too fast. Never pass a plow on its shoulder side.

Source: [iowadot.gov](#) - p.61 (PDF p.61), 5.13 Sharing the Road with Snowplows

16. A - 5 feet

The Iowa manual bans parking closer than five feet from a fire hydrant or inside a marked hydrant red zone. Many other states use 15 feet, so learn the Iowa number.

Source: [iowadot.gov](#) - p.21 (PDF p.21), 2.26 Parking Not Allowed

17. D - Away from the curb (left)

When parking uphill with a curb, turn your wheels away from the curb (left). If the car rolls backward, it hits the curb and stops. Downhill: turn toward the curb.

Source: [dmv.ca.gov](#) - CA handbook - Parking on a hill

18. D - School zones

Pentagon-shaped signs (pointing up or down) are used for school zones and school crossings. They are yellow-green in color and alert drivers that children may be present.

Source: [dps.texas.gov](#) - TX handbook - Chapter 5, Table 17: Signs by Shape

19. D - No turning on red, even after stopping

A 'No Turn on Red' sign prohibits turning while the signal is red, even after a complete stop. You must wait for a green light to turn.

Source: [mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov](#) - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2B.60

20. D - 18 inches

If you must park on a roadway, keep your vehicle as far from traffic as possible. Where there is a curb, park within 18 inches of it.

Source: [iowadot.gov](#) - p.21 (PDF p.21), 2.25 Parking

21. C - Yield to oncoming traffic and pedestrians

A green ball (not arrow) allows a left turn only after yielding to oncoming traffic and pedestrians. A green arrow means you have a protected turn and oncoming traffic is stopped.

Source: [dmv.ca.gov](#) - CA handbook - Flashing Yellow Arrow / left turns

22. C - There are two sets of tracks at the crossing

When a crossing has more than one track, a sign under the crossbuck shows how many tracks there are. Be ready for a train on any of them.

Source: [alea.gov](#) - p.39 (PDF p.41), Railroad Crossbuck

23. B - Change lanes away if safe, or else slow down

Move Over laws require drivers to change lanes away from stopped emergency and service vehicles when safe. If you cannot move over, slow down well below the speed limit and pass with extreme caution.

Source: [dmv.ca.gov](#) - CA handbook - Emergency vehicles

24. D - Stop at the line and wait for green

A ramp meter works like a traffic light. Stop at the stop line on red and go when it turns green, then speed up to merge.

Source: [dol.wa.gov](#) - (PDF p.113), Freeway ramp meters

25. B - Away from the tracks at an angle toward the train

Get everyone out right away and move off the tracks at a 45-degree angle, in the direction the train is coming from.

Source: [iowadot.gov](#) - p.12 (PDF p.12), 2.10 Railroad Crossings - If Your Vehicle Stalls

26. A - To turn or cross to parking, yielding to cyclists

Bike lanes are for bicyclists. You may enter or cross one only when needed to turn, enter or leave a driveway or alley, or park where allowed, and you must yield to bicyclists first. States differ on details: California lets you merge into the bike lane before a turn, while Connecticut and Hawaii only let you cross it.

Source: [portal.ct.gov](#) - CT handbook - Bicyclists

27. B - Vehicles on the terminating road

At a T-intersection (where one road ends and meets another), vehicles on the through road (the top of the T) have the right of way over vehicles on the terminating road (the bottom of the T).

Source: dmv.ca.gov - CA handbook - Right-of-way rules

28. B - Stop, then go when safe - cross traffic won't stop

A flashing red light works like a stop sign: stop completely, then go when safe. The cross traffic with a flashing yellow only needs to slow and proceed with caution - they do not stop, so you must yield to them.

Source: dmv.ca.gov - CA handbook - Flashing lights

29. 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

30. B - At night and when visibility is reduced

Every state requires headlights at night and when visibility is reduced. The exact period varies: some states say sunset to sunrise, many say 30 minutes after sunset to 30 minutes before sunrise. Many states also require headlights whenever your wipers are on or you cannot see a set distance (often 500 or 1,000 feet) ahead.

Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Chapter 9, Headlights

31. A - A passenger car with its hazard lights on

The Iowa law covers stopped emergency, tow, maintenance, construction, and garbage or recycling vehicles with flashing lights, and any stopped vehicle, even a passenger car, showing hazard lights. Change lanes, or slow down if you cannot.

Source: iowadot.gov - p.22 (PDF p.22), 2.27 Iowa's Move Over or Slow Down Law

32. C - Around dawn and dusk

Wildlife moves most at dawn and dusk, when light is also poor for your eyes. Scan both sides of the road and watch for eyes reflecting your headlights.

Source: public.powerdms.com - p.104 (PDF p.109), Animals

33. D - The car on the right

When two vehicles arrive at a 4-way stop simultaneously, the driver on the LEFT must yield to the driver on the RIGHT. This is the standard right-of-way rule.

Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Right-of-Way at Intersections

34. A - Parks and historic sites

Brown signs point to recreational and cultural sites - parks, campgrounds, historical landmarks, and scenic areas.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 1D.05 Color Code

35. 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

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

Official DOT website: <https://iowadot.gov/mvd>

Official Iowa driver's handbook: <https://iowadot.gov/media/7308/download?inline=>

