

North Carolina DMV

Permit Practice Test 2026

25-question test with answer key · permitpractice.us

North Carolina permit test: quick facts

Questions on the real test	Not published by the DMV
Test format	There is a separate road sign test: you must correctly identify 9 of 12 road signs. The knowledge test requires 80% correct.
Passing score	80% correct
Wrong answers allowed	Depends on test length (not published)
Minimum age	15
Testing agency	Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Official permit name	Limited Learner Permit (Level 1)
Permit fee	\$25.50
If you fail	7 calendar days (NCDMV states this for the regular Class C knowledge/driving test)
Online testing	No - the knowledge test must be taken in person.
Driver's education	Required for applicants under 18.
Supervised practice	60 hours incl. 10 at night (G.S. 20-11 driving log, max 10 hrs/week) - see notes on 2025 HB 584
Permit holding period	9 months (temporarily 6 months through Dec 31, 2025 under 2025 HB 584)
Under-21 alcohol limit	Zero tolerance (any measurable amount)

How to use this PDF

1. The DMV does not publish how many questions the real test has. This test uses 25 questions, the length of our online mock test.
2. Answer every question before you look at the answer key. To pass you need 80% correct.
3. Time: We found no published time limit for the North Carolina knowledge test.
4. Take it online, with every answer explained, at <https://permitpractice.us/north-carolina/> - the mock test there marks your answers only at the end, like the real test.

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

North Carolina Permit Practice Test: 25 Questions

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

1. In North Carolina, if you are using your windshield wipers because of bad weather, you must also:

- A) Turn on your hazard flashers
- B) Turn on your high beams
- C) Turn on your headlights
- D) Stay in the right lane

2. Green traffic signs provide:

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

3. 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

4. Under North Carolina's point system, collecting how many driver license points within three years can lead to a suspension?

- A) 10 points
- B) 12 points
- C) 7 points
- D) 15 points

5. Why should you use low beams instead of high beams when driving in fog?

- A) High beams drain the battery faster in damp air
- B) High beams reflect off the fog and cause glare
- C) Low beams make your car look larger to others
- D) High beams are only allowed on freeways

6. 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

7. 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

8. 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

9. Traffic is backed up just past a railroad crossing. When should you start across the tracks?

- A) Whenever the crossing lights are not flashing
- B) Only when there is room to get fully past the tracks
- C) When the car ahead of you has started to cross
- D) Right away, since no train is in sight now

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

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

11. A North Carolina driver under 21 is convicted of driving with any amount of alcohol in their body. How long is the license revoked?

- A) 6 months
- B) Two years
- C) One year
- D) 30 days

12. What shape is a stop sign?

- A) Pentagon (5-sided)
- B) Octagon (8-sided)
- C) Hexagon (6-sided)
- D) Triangle (3-sided)

13. North Carolina law prohibits all drivers from:

- A) Using cruise control on highways
- B) Driving with headlights on in daytime
- C) Reading or typing texts while driving
- D) Eating or drinking while driving

14. On a road with a speed limit of 45 mph or more, how far before a turn should you signal in North Carolina?

- A) At least 100 feet
- B) At least 500 feet
- C) At least 200 feet
- D) At least 300 feet

15. Worn or bald tires are dangerous primarily because they:

- A) Cause the car to pull hard to one side
- B) Wear out the brakes faster than normal
- C) Only matter on snow and ice, not on wet pavement
- D) Reduce traction and raise the risk of skidding

16. 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

17. A diamond-shaped orange sign indicates:

- A) A work zone ahead
- B) A slow-moving vehicle ahead
- C) A yield ahead
- D) A school zone

18. What is the danger zone around a large truck where the truck driver cannot see you?

- A) Large trucks have no blind spots with modern mirrors
- B) In front, behind, and along both sides
- C) Only beside the cab on the driver's side
- D) Only behind the trailer and on its right

19. You are already on the tracks when the crossing lights start flashing and the gates begin to come down. What should you do?

- A) Get out and leave the vehicle
- B) Stop and wait on the tracks
- C) Keep moving and finish crossing
- D) Back up off the tracks quickly

20. You have stopped for a school bus that has its stop arm out and red lights flashing. In North Carolina, when may you pass it?

- A) When the bus driver waves you past
- B) When the children have reached the curb
- C) When the red lights stop, even if the bus waits
- D) When the signals are off and the bus moves

21. 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

22. A warning sign showing an arrow splitting into two directions around a vertical line indicates:

- A) A fork where you must choose a route
- B) A divided highway begins ahead
- C) A passing lane opens ahead
- D) Two-way traffic begins ahead

23. When not supervised, an NC Level Two (limited provisional) driver may generally carry how many passengers under 21 who are not members of the driver's household?

- A) No limit
- B) One
- C) Two
- D) Three

24. Passing on a curve or a hill is unsafe and usually illegal if you cannot see at least how far ahead?

- A) 300 feet
- B) 200 feet
- C) 500 feet
- D) 1,000 feet

25. 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

Answer Key & Explanations

1. C - Turn on your headlights

North Carolina law links wipers and headlights: whenever wipers are on because of rain, snow or other bad weather, headlights must be on too.

Source: [ncdot.gov](#) - p.73 (PDF p.75), Windshield Wipers/Headlights

2. 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

3. 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

4. B - 12 points

At 7 points you may be sent to a driver improvement clinic. At 12 points within three years, your license may be suspended.

Source: [ncdot.gov](#) - p.34 (PDF p.36), Driver License Points

5. B - High beams reflect off the fog and cause glare

Fog reflects the bright light of high beams back at you, making it harder to see. Low beams light the road with less glare. Also slow down.

Source: [oregon.gov](#) - p.77 (PDF p.85), Fog, Dust and Smoke

6. 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

7. 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

8. 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

9. B - Only when there is room to get fully past the tracks

Never stop on railroad tracks. Wait behind the crossing until there is enough space on the other side for your whole vehicle.

Source: [assets.dps.mn.gov](#) - p.53 (PDF p.56), Railroad crossing safety

10. 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

11. C - One year

For drivers under 21 there is no safe amount: driving with any alcohol or drugs in the body leads to a one-year revocation on conviction.

Source: [ncdot.gov](#) - p.33 (PDF p.35), Alcohol and the Young Driver

12. B - Octagon (8-sided)

Stop signs are always octagonal (8-sided) and red. This unique shape allows drivers to recognize them even when covered in snow or seen from behind.

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

13. C - Reading or typing texts while driving

North Carolina bans texting (reading or typing text messages) for all drivers, regardless of age.

Source: [ncdot.gov](#) - Ch. 4, Cell Phones (PDF p.43)

14. C - At least 200 feet

The usual minimum is 100 feet, but where the limit is 45 mph or higher you should signal for at least the last 200 feet. Faster traffic needs more warning.

Source: [ncdot.gov](https://www.ncdot.gov) - p.69 (PDF p.71), Flashing Turn Signals

15. D - Reduce traction and raise the risk of skidding

Bald or worn tires have little tread to grip the road or channel away water. This dramatically increases stopping distance and the risk of hydroplaning and skidding, especially in wet conditions.

Source: [dps.texas.gov](https://www.dps.texas.gov) - TX handbook - Skids / tires

16. 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](https://www.dmv.ny.gov) - NY handbook - Skids

17. A - A work zone ahead

Orange diamond-shaped signs indicate construction or work zones. Speed limits are often reduced and fines are doubled in work zones. Slow down and stay alert.

Source: [dps.texas.gov](https://www.dps.texas.gov) - TX handbook - Chapter 5, sign colors

18. B - In front, behind, and along both sides

Large trucks have significant blind spots (no-zones): directly in front (20 feet), directly behind (30 feet), to the right (2 lanes wide), and to the left (1 lane). If you cannot see the driver's face in their mirror, they cannot see you.

Source: [dmv.ca.gov](https://www.dmv.ca.gov) - CA handbook - Blind Spots (the No Zone)

19. C - Keep moving and finish crossing

The warning signals give enough time to clear the crossing, so keep going. Crossing gates are flexible and will not trap you; stopping or backing up could stall the car.

Source: [ncdot.gov](https://www.ncdot.gov) - p.61 (PDF p.63), Railroad Crossing Safety

20. D - When the signals are off and the bus moves

Stay stopped until the stop arm is pulled in, the red lights are off and the bus has started to move. Children may still be near the road before then.

Source: [ncdot.gov](https://www.ncdot.gov) - p.47 (PDF p.49), School Buses

21. 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

22. B - A divided highway begins ahead

This sign warns that a divided highway begins ahead - a median or barrier will separate the opposing lanes. Keep right of the divider.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.20

23. B - One

When driving unsupervised, a North Carolina limited provisional driver may carry only one passenger under 21 who is not a household member. A second non-household passenger under 21 is allowed only if that passenger is a student being driven directly to or from school. There is no under-21 limit if all passengers are household members.

Source: [ncdot.gov](https://www.ncdot.gov) - Ch. 1, Level Two Limited Provisional License, p.13 (PDF p.15)

24. C - 500 feet

On a curve or hill you need a clear view of at least 500 feet before passing, so you can get back into your lane before meeting oncoming traffic.

Source: [ncdot.gov](https://www.ncdot.gov) - p.55 (PDF p.57), Passing

25. 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](https://www.ksrevenue.gov) - KS handbook - Tire blowout

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<https://permitpractice.us/north-carolina/>

Official DMV website: <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/>

Official North Carolina driver's handbook: <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-licenses/new-drivers/Documents/nc-driver-handbook.pdf>

