

South Carolina DMV

Permit Practice Test 2026

40-question test with answer key · permitpractice.us

South Carolina permit test: quick facts

Questions on the real test	Not published by the DMV
Passing score	Not published by the DMV (our practice tests use 70%)
Wrong answers allowed	Depends on test length (not published)
Minimum age	15
Testing agency	Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Official permit name	Beginner's Permit
Permit fee	\$2.50 (statutory fee for every beginner's or renewal permit, S.C. Code 56-1-50); separate 'appropriate fee for each complete examination or reexamination' per 56-1-130, amount not stated
Driver's education	Required for applicants under 18.
Supervised practice	40 hours incl. 10 at night (statutory requirement for conditional/special restricted license, 56-1-175 and 56-1-180)
Permit holding period	180 days (must hold beginner's permit at least 180 days before full licensure, 56-1-50)
Under-21 alcohol limit	0.02% BAC or higher

How to use this PDF

1. The DMV does not publish how many questions the real test has. This test uses 40 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 DMV (our practice tests use 70%).
3. Time: We found no published time limit for the South Carolina knowledge test.
4. Take it online, with every answer explained, at <https://permitpractice.us/south-carolina/> - the mock test there marks your answers only at the end, like the real test.

Questions are original study questions written from the South 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

South Carolina Permit Practice Test: 40 Questions

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

1. 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

2. An angry driver is tailgating you, honking and making rude gestures. What is the best response?

- A) Speed up to stay ahead of the angry driver
- B) Avoid eye contact and let the driver get by
- C) Tap your brakes to make the driver back off
- D) Gesture back so the driver knows you are upset

3. 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

4. A South Carolina driver under 21 registers a BAC of 0.02 percent or more. What is the minimum suspension?

- A) 3 months
- B) 6 months
- C) 12 months
- D) 1 month

5. What does the 'basic speed law' require?

- A) Never drive more than 10 mph below the posted limit
- B) You may always drive at the posted limit, whatever the conditions
- C) Drive no faster than is safe for current conditions
- D) Keep up with the flow of traffic, even above the limit

6. Which of these is a warning sign that you are too drowsy to drive safely?

- A) Your passengers start talking more loudly
- B) You feel hungry and want to stop for a snack
- C) You cannot remember driving the last few miles
- D) You notice more traffic signs than usual

7. A vehicle entering a roundabout (traffic circle) must:

- A) Yield only to traffic coming from the right
- B) Stop completely before entering, even if clear
- C) Proceed immediately since they have right of way
- D) Yield to traffic already in the roundabout

8. Under South Carolina law, how far ahead must you signal before you change lanes or merge into traffic?

- A) At least 200 feet
- B) At least 100 feet
- C) At least 500 feet
- D) At least 50 feet

9. 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

10. What is the 'point of no return' when approaching a yellow light?

- A) The stop line - once past it you must proceed
- B) The moment the light changes from green to yellow
- C) The point where you can no longer stop safely
- D) Exactly 100 feet before the intersection

11. 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

12. 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

13. A yellow sign showing a traffic signal symbol means:

- A) An emergency vehicle signal
- B) A traffic light is ahead
- C) The signal ahead is broken
- D) A railroad signal ahead

14. A school bus ahead of you turns on its flashing amber (yellow) lights. What does this tell you?

- A) The bus is turning, so pass it with care
- B) Children are crossing - stop right now
- C) The bus is pulling over with a breakdown
- D) The bus is about to stop - get ready to stop

15. When driving at night on a road you do not know, the South Carolina manual says to add at least how many seconds to your following distance?

- A) One second
- B) Half a second
- C) Five seconds
- D) Two seconds

16. 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

17. At a roundabout, in which direction does traffic flow and who has priority?

- A) Counterclockwise; circulating traffic has priority
- B) Counterclockwise; the larger vehicle has priority
- C) Counterclockwise; entering traffic has priority
- D) Clockwise; traffic in the circle has priority

18. 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

19. On a South Carolina highway with two lanes in each direction, you meet a school bus stopped on the other side with red lights flashing. What must you do?

- A) Stop only if children are visible
- B) Slow to 15 mph and keep going
- C) Stop until the red lights go off
- D) You are not required to stop

20. On a freeway, a green sign with a number in a small square (such as 'EXIT 25') refers to:

- A) The distance to the next city in miles
- B) The exit number, often the mile marker
- C) The posted speed limit on the exit ramp
- D) The route number of the highway

21. Blue signs along a highway typically indicate:

- A) Parks and recreation areas
- B) Gas, food, and lodging services
- C) Rules such as speed limits
- D) Exits and distances to nearby cities

22. 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

23. 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

24. 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

25. When should you use your windshield wipers?

- A) Whenever rain, snow or spray blurs your view
- B) Only when the car's rain sensor turns them on
- C) Only once rain is heavy, to save the blades
- D) Only in rain, not for snow or road spray

26. 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

27. 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

28. 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

29. Brown signs are used to mark:

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

30. 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

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

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

32. A yellow pennant-shaped sign (a long triangle pointing sideways) posted on the left side of the road means:

- A) No passing zone begins
- B) Divided highway ahead
- C) Passing lane ahead
- D) Road narrows ahead

33. What is the minimum age to apply for a learner's permit in South Carolina?

- A) 17 years old
- B) 15 years old
- C) 14 years old
- D) 16 years old

34. A white rectangular sign generally provides:

- A) A rule you must obey
- B) A hazard warning ahead
- C) Directions to a city
- D) A suggested safe speed

35. Under South Carolina's child passenger rules, children of what age must ride in a car seat in the back seat?

- A) Age five and younger
- B) Age three and younger
- C) Age seven and younger
- D) Age twelve and younger

36. A rectangular white sign reading 'KEEP RIGHT' with an arrow means:

- A) Stay in the right lane to pass
- B) Pass the divider on either side
- C) Go to the right of the divider
- D) Right turns only

37. A pedestrian using a guide dog or carrying a white cane is crossing the street ahead. What must you do?

- A) Come to a complete stop
- B) Keep going if they are not in your lane
- C) Slow down and steer around them
- D) Tap the horn so they know you are there

38. 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

39. Which of these will sober up a person who has been drinking?

- A) Eating a big meal
- B) Taking a cold shower
- C) Drinking strong coffee
- D) Only time

40. You park facing uphill on a road that has no curb. Which way should you turn your front wheels?

- A) Straight ahead, not turned at all
- B) To the left, toward traffic
- C) To the right, toward the road edge
- D) Either way, if the brake is set

Answer Key & Explanations

1. 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

2. B - Avoid eye contact and let the driver get by

Do not challenge an aggressive driver. Stay calm, avoid eye contact, and move out of the way so the situation does not get worse.

Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - p.79 (PDF p.82), Aggressive driving

3. 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

4. A - 3 months

Under 21, a BAC of 0.02 or higher means an immediate suspension of at least three months. Refusing the test means losing your privileges for at least six months.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.3-7 (PDF p.38), Alcohol and the Law

5. C - Drive no faster than is safe for current conditions

Every state has a basic speed rule: never drive faster than is reasonable and safe for traffic, weather, visibility and road conditions. You can be cited for driving too fast for conditions even while under the posted limit.

Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Basic speed law

6. C - You cannot remember driving the last few miles

Not remembering the last few miles, heavy eyelids, missing exits or signs, and drifting out of your lane all mean you should pull over and rest.

Source: dol.wa.gov - (PDF p.75), Fatigue

7. D - Yield to traffic already in the roundabout

When entering a roundabout, yield to all vehicles already circulating inside. Enter only when there is a safe gap in traffic. Drive counterclockwise around the circle.

Source: dmv.ca.gov - CA handbook - Roundabouts

8. B - At least 100 feet

South Carolina law requires a turn signal 100 feet or more before you turn, change lanes, or merge. Cancel the signal once you finish the move.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.8-9 (PDF p.102), Signaling Your Movements

9. 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: fhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Flashing Red Light

10. C - The point where you can no longer stop safely

The 'point of no return' is the position from which stopping safely (without running the light or causing a rear-end collision) becomes impossible. Before this point, slow and stop. After it, proceed through safely.

Source: pa.gov - PA handbook - Traffic signals - steady yellow

11. 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

12. 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

13. B - A traffic light is ahead

A signal-ahead warning sign tells you a traffic light is coming up, often where it may be hard to see in time. Be prepared to slow and stop.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.35

14. D - The bus is about to stop - get ready to stop

Flashing amber lights are a warning that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. Slow down and prepare to stop; the red lights come on when the bus stops.

Source: oregon.gov - p.55 (PDF p.63), School Buses

15. D - Two seconds

Add at least one extra second for night driving, and at least two extra seconds when the road is also unfamiliar to you.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.11-2 (PDF p.127), Night Driving

16. 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

17. A - Counterclockwise; circulating traffic has priority

In the United States, traffic in a roundabout flows counterclockwise, and vehicles already circulating in the roundabout have the right of way. Entering drivers must yield and merge into a safe gap.

Source: flhsmv.gov - FL handbook - Roundabouts

18. 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

19. D - You are not required to stop

On a road with four lanes (at least two each way), traffic going the opposite direction does not have to stop. Drivers behind the bus must always stop, on any highway.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.7-10 (PDF p.85), Rules for School Buses

20. B - The exit number, often the mile marker

Exit number signs identify highway exits. In most states the exit number corresponds to the nearest mile marker, helping you judge distance to your exit.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2E.22

21. B - Gas, food, and lodging services

Blue signs indicate motorist services - gas stations, food, lodging, hospitals, and rest areas - available at or near an exit.

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

22. 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

23. 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

24. 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

25. A - Whenever rain, snow or spray blurs your view

Use your wipers whenever precipitation or road spray reduces your view. Many states also require your headlights to be on whenever your wipers are in use because of weather.

Source: dmv.virginia.gov - VA handbook - Bad weather

26. 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

27. 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

28. 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

29. 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

30. 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

31. 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

32. A - No passing zone begins

The no-passing zone sign is the only pennant-shaped sign: a yellow, sideways triangle pointing to the right. It is posted on the left side of the road at the start of a no-passing zone, where a solid yellow line also appears on your side of the centerline.

Source: ksrevenue.gov - Kansas Driving Handbook (Rev. Feb 2022), Passing - No Passing Zone sign; MUTCD 11th ed. Table 2A-1 (W14-3)

33. B - 15 years old

In South Carolina you can apply for a learner's permit at 15 after passing the DMV knowledge test and a vision screening.

34. A - A rule you must obey

White rectangular signs are regulatory signs. They tell you the law - such as speed limits, lane usage, and turning rules - and must be obeyed.

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

35. C - Age seven and younger

Children age seven and younger must be in a car seat in the back seat, away from air bags. A rear-facing seat must never be placed in front of an air bag.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.4-7 (PDF p.50), Child Passenger Safety Laws

36. C - Go to the right of the divider

A 'Keep Right' sign directs you to pass to the right of a traffic island, median, or obstruction. It keeps traffic flowing correctly around the divider.

Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2B.39

37. A - Come to a complete stop

Drivers must always yield to visually impaired pedestrians. When one is crossing with a guide dog or a white cane, you must stop completely.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.10-1 (PDF p.110), Pedestrians

38. 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

39. D - Only time

Only time removes alcohol from the body. Coffee, food and a cold shower do not lower blood alcohol, so the person is still impaired.

Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Myths about Drinking Alcohol

40. C - To the right, toward the road edge

With no curb to stop the car, turn the wheels to the right so that if the brakes fail the car rolls off the road instead of into traffic. Also set the parking brake.

Source: dmv.sc.gov - p.7-13 (PDF p.88), Parking on Hills

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

Official DMV website: <https://www.scdmvonline.com/>

Official South Carolina driver's handbook: <https://dmv.sc.gov/sites/scdmv/files/2026-04/Driver%27s%20Manual.pdf>

