Virginia DMV

Permit Practice Test 2026

40-question test with answer key · permitpractice.us

Virginia permit test: quick facts

Questions on the real test	40
Passing score	at least 10 of 10 on Road Signs and at least 24 of 30 on General Knowledge
Wrong answers allowed	none on Road Signs (all must be correct), 6 per General Knowledge part
Minimum age	15½
Testing agency	Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Official permit name	Learner's Permit
Permit fee	$3 (statutory fee per learner's permit, Va. Code 46.2-335)
If you fail	Under 18: not eligible for retesting for at least 15 days after failing (Va. Code 46.2-334.1). All ages: the exam may be taken only once per business day; after three failures you must pass the classroom part of driver education before a fourth attempt (Driver's Manual)
Online testing	No - the knowledge test must be taken in person.
Driver's education	Required for applicants under 18.
Supervised practice	45 hours, at least 15 after sunset (under 18; certified by parent/guardian)
Permit holding period	Under 18: 9 months plus a state-approved driver education course; 18 and older: 60 days or driver education while holding the permit (from January 1, 2027, ages 18-20 need 90 days plus the course)
Under-21 alcohol limit	0.02% BAC or higher

How to use this PDF

1. This test has 40 questions, the same number as the real Virginia DMV knowledge test. It is split into parts like the real test: 10 Road Signs, 30 General Knowledge.

2. Answer every question before you look at the answer key. To pass you need at least 10 of 10 on Road Signs and at least 24 of 30 on General Knowledge.

3. Time: We found no published time limit for the Virginia knowledge test.

4. Take it online, with every answer explained, at https://permitpractice.us/virginia/ - the mock test there marks your answers only at the end, like the real test.

Questions are original study questions written from the Virginia driver's handbook and general traffic law. They are not copies of actual DMV exam questions. State facts last reviewed 2026-11-10. Free for personal study; do not resell. © 2026 permitpractice.us

Virginia Permit Practice Test: 40 Questions

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

Part: Road Signs

1. What does a sign in the shape of an octagon always mean?

A) Wrong way
B) Yield
C) Do not enter
D) Stop

2. You are stopped at a Virginia pedestrian hybrid beacon. Its two red lights change from solid to flashing in turn. What may you do?

A) Go at once, as walkers must now wait
B) Go with caution if the crosswalk is clear
C) Go only after a green light comes on
D) Stay stopped until both lights go dark

3. 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

4. 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

5. In Virginia, a red light is flashing at a railroad crossing, but you cannot see any train. What must you do?

A) Stop only if the gates are down
B) Slow down and cross with care
C) Come to a complete stop anyway
D) Cross quickly before a train comes

6. 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

7. 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

8. A sign that reads 'DO NOT ENTER' on a red and white background means:

A) Enter only after a full stop
B) Only local traffic may enter
C) Enter only if no cars are coming
D) You may not enter the road ahead

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 yellow sign showing a bump or dip in the road warns you to:

A) Keep speed - it only affects trucks
B) Stop and check the road ahead
C) Slow down for a rough spot ahead
D) Move to the shoulder to avoid it

Part: General Knowledge

11. 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)

12. If your vehicle's accelerator sticks while driving, you should:

A) Shift to neutral, brake, and steer to safety
B) Keep driving and call for help on your phone
C) Switch off the engine and remove the key
D) Shift into park and pull the parking brake

13. A Virginia driver under age 21 can be convicted of illegal alcohol consumption with a BAC of at least:

A) 0.04 percent
B) 0.05 percent
C) 0.02 percent
D) 0.08 percent

14. Under Virginia's open container rules, the passenger area of a vehicle includes the seating area and:

A) Only the space under the seats
B) The trunk and any cargo area
C) Only the front seats of the car
D) Any area within the driver's reach

15. 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

16. 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

17. In Virginia, how close may you follow an emergency vehicle that has its flashing lights on?

A) No closer than 1,000 feet
B) No closer than 200 feet
C) No closer than 500 feet
D) No closer than 100 feet

18. 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

19. 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

20. 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

21. When driving at night, you should:

A) Look straight at oncoming headlights to judge them
B) Keep your daytime speed and following distance
C) Slow down and leave more following distance
D) Use parking lights so you do not dazzle others

22. In many areas a curb is painted yellow. What should you understand from this?

A) It is reserved for motorcycles
B) You may park there for as long as you like
C) Stopping or parking is restricted there
D) It shows a spot reserved for disabled drivers

23. What should you do if your vehicle begins to hydroplane (ride on a film of water)?

A) Speed up gently so the tires cut through
B) Steer quickly toward the dry edge of the road
C) Ease off the gas and keep the wheel straight
D) Brake firmly until the tires grip again

24. 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

25. Your gas pedal is stuck and you switch off the engine to slow the car. What should you expect?

A) The car will speed up for a few seconds
B) Steering and braking will take more effort
C) The car will come to a stop almost at once
D) The brakes will stop working completely

26. What does a blue traffic sign indicate?

A) Recreation areas such as state parks
B) Motorist services like gas and food
C) Rules you must obey, such as limits
D) Highway route information

27. When two lanes merge and there are 'zipper merge' signs, you should:

A) Use both lanes to the merge point, then take turns
B) Merge early - as soon as you see the sign - to be polite
C) Let all vehicles in the other lane go first
D) Stop and wait for all traffic to clear

28. Which lane position helps other drivers see you and gives you the best view of the road ahead?

A) Stay close behind a larger vehicle to block the wind
B) Ride beside other cars so they always see you
C) Keep space around you and stay out of blind spots
D) Keep to the far left edge of your lane

29. A Virginia driver refuses a breath test and is charged with DUI for the first time. How long is the automatic administrative license suspension?

A) 60 days
B) 30 days
C) 90 days
D) 7 days

30. 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

31. 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

32. On a two-lane Virginia road, you come up behind a stopped trash truck that is collecting garbage. If you cannot change lanes, how must you pass it?

A) Slow 5 mph below the limit and leave 1 foot
B) Slow 10 mph below the limit and leave 2 feet
C) Keep the speed limit and leave 3 feet
D) Slow 20 mph below the limit and leave 5 feet

33. 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

34. 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

35. 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

36. In Virginia, the default speed limit on unpaved roads is:

A) 55 mph
B) 25 mph
C) 45 mph
D) 35 mph

37. In Virginia, driving faster than what speed is reckless driving regardless of the posted limit?

A) 75 mph
B) 90 mph
C) 80 mph
D) 85 mph

38. 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

39. 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

40. At night in Virginia, you should switch to low beams when you are following another vehicle within:

A) 100 feet
B) 1,000 feet
C) 200 feet
D) 500 feet

Answer Key & Explanations

1. D - Stop
An octagon (8-sided shape) is used exclusively for STOP signs. The unique shape lets drivers identify it even when snow-covered or viewed from behind.
Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2A.05, Table 2A-1 Use of Sign Shapes; 2B.04

2. B - Go with caution if the crosswalk is clear
Solid red lights on the beacon mean stop. When the two red lights start flashing one after the other, you may move ahead carefully once the crosswalk is clear.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.6 (PDF p.8), Pedestrian Hybrid Beacons

3. 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

4. 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

5. C - Come to a complete stop anyway
A flashing red light always means a full stop. At a railroad crossing you must stop even when no train is in sight, and wait until the lights stop flashing and the tracks are clear.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.5 (PDF p.7), Traffic Signals - Flashing red light

6. 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

7. 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

8. D - You may not enter the road ahead
A 'Do Not Enter' sign means you must not enter the road or ramp ahead - usually because it is one-way or an exit ramp. Entering would put you in oncoming traffic.
Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2B.46

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. C - Slow down for a rough spot ahead
Bump and dip signs warn of an abrupt change in the road surface. Slow down to maintain control and protect your vehicle's suspension.
Source: mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov - MUTCD 11th ed. (Dec 2023) 2C.26

11. 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

12. A - Shift to neutral, brake, and steer to safety
Shift to neutral (to disconnect engine power), then apply brakes steadily to slow the vehicle. Steer to a safe location. Only turn off the ignition if other methods fail - as this can lock the steering column in older cars.
Source: ksrevenue.gov - KS handbook - Accelerator Failure

13. C - 0.02 percent
Virginia has zero tolerance for underage drinking. A driver under 21 with a BAC of at least .02 but under .08 can be convicted of illegal consumption; at .08 or higher, a DUI conviction is possible.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.24 (PDF p.26), Drunk and Drugged Driving

14. D - Any area within the driver's reach
The passenger area covers the seats for the driver and passengers and anything the driver can reach, including an unlocked glove compartment. An open, partly emptied container there plus signs of drinking can lead to a charge.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.30 (PDF p.32), Open Alcohol Containers in Vehicles

15. 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

16. 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

17. C - No closer than 500 feet
Virginia drivers must never follow an emergency vehicle with flashing lights closer than 500 feet. If one comes up behind you with a siren or lights, pull to the right edge and stop until it passes.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.16 (PDF p.18), Yielding to Vehicles with Flashing Lights

18. 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

19. 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

20. 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

21. C - Slow down and leave more following distance
At night your visibility is reduced, so reduce speed and increase following distance. Do not overdrive your headlights - be able to stop within the distance you can see. Avoid staring at oncoming lights; glance to the right edge of your lane.
Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Night driving

22. C - Stopping or parking is restricted there
Curb colors are not uniform across states. In California and Nevada yellow means a loading zone; in Florida, Tennessee and several other states a yellow curb means no parking. In every case it signals a restriction, so read nearby signs and follow state and local rules.
Source: dmv.nv.gov - NV handbook - Colored Curb Markings

23. C - Ease off the gas and keep the wheel straight
During hydroplaning, ease off the gas gradually to slow down. Hold the steering wheel firmly and straight. Do not brake suddenly or steer sharply - this can cause a spin.
Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - MN handbook - Hydroplaning

24. 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

25. B - Steering and braking will take more effort
With the engine off you lose power steering and power brake assist, so the wheel and pedal feel much heavier. They still work - push harder and steer to a safe stop.
Source: alea.gov - p.75 (PDF p.77), Stuck accelerator pedal

26. B - Motorist services like gas and food
Blue signs provide information about motorist services: gas stations, food, lodging, hospitals, and rest areas. They help drivers find services along the route.
Source: dps.texas.gov - TX handbook - Chapter 5, sign colors

27. A - Use both lanes to the merge point, then take turns
Where zipper-merge signs are posted, stay in your lane until the merge point, then take turns with the other lane like the teeth of a zipper. Merging early leaves one lane empty and makes the queue longer; the Minnesota Department of Transportation reports that the zipper merge can cut the length of a backup by as much as 40 percent.
Source: dmv.colorado.gov - CO handbook - Zipper Merge

28. C - Keep space around you and stay out of blind spots
Maintain a space cushion around your vehicle and avoid lingering in others' blind spots. This keeps you visible, gives you escape routes, and improves your view of developing hazards.
Source: assets.dps.mn.gov - MN handbook - Blind spots

29. D - 7 days
Refusing a breath test or testing at .08 or higher brings an automatic suspension: 7 days for a first offense, 60 days or until trial for a second, and until trial for a third. Court penalties come on top of this.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.30 (PDF p.32), Administrative License Suspension

30. 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

31. 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

32. B - Slow 10 mph below the limit and leave 2 feet
On a road with fewer than four lanes, or when you cannot move over, Virginia requires you to slow to 10 mph below the posted limit and pass at least two feet to the left of the truck. On a highway with four or more lanes, move to a lane not next to it if you safely can.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.16 (PDF p.18), Yielding to Vehicles with Flashing Lights

33. 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

34. 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

35. 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

36. D - 35 mph
Virginia sets a default 35 mph limit on unpaved roads, and 55 mph on most other roads unless posted otherwise.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - PDF p.17, Speed limits

37. D - 85 mph
In Virginia, driving over 85 mph can be charged as reckless driving regardless of the posted speed limit, as can driving 20 mph or more above the limit. Reckless driving is a criminal misdemeanor.
Source: dmv.virginia.gov - PDF p.16, Section 3 - Speed

38. 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

39. 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

40. C - 200 feet

Use low beams when you are within 200 feet of a vehicle you are following. Dim your high beams when an oncoming vehicle is within 500 feet.

Source: dmv.virginia.gov - p.23 (PDF p.25), Night Driving

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https://permitpractice.us/virginia/

Official DMV website: https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/
Official Virginia driver's handbook: https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/sites/default/files/forms/dmv39.pdf