

Uncoupling and Coupling Exercise

During your test, the examiner will ask you to carry out the uncoupling and coupling exercise, this may be before you leave the Test Centre or on return to the Test Centre you will be guided by the examiner.

Uncoupling

1. Choose a safe, level and even surface. You may be guided by the examiner. If not, avoid using the manoeuvring area if possible.
2. **YOU MUST** put on the hand brake **FIRST. FAILURE TO DO SO IS AN AUTOMATIC FAIL.**
3. Disconnect the lights socket and secure in the plug on the trailer.
4. Lower the jockey wheel so it touches the ground and ensure the clamp is tight.
5. Lower the jockey wheel until there is a good clearance of tow ball and coupling.
6. Disconnect the breakaway cable.
7. Drive forward and reverse alongside the trailer, either to the left or right, using good all round observation so that you are parallel with the trailer and exit the vehicle.

Coupling

The examiner will now ask you to explain how you would check the trailer is safe to tow and then couple the trailer. It is vital that you approach this as if you have just come into the yard to hitch up to this trailer after someone else has used it.

1. **YOU MUST PHYSICALLY CHECK THAT THE TRAILER'S HANDBRAKE IS FULLY APPLIED. FAILURE TO DO THIS FIRST IS AN AUTOMATIC FAIL.**
2. As you walk around the trailer to check its condition, explain to the examiner what you are looking for.
Make sure you check:
 - a. The breakaway cable is attached to the handbrake, the hitch is in good condition, the jockey wheel is secure and set to the correct height to clear the tow bar and the electrical connector are in good condition
 - b. The tyre side wall condition, at least 1.6mm of tread depth, pressure and age;
 - c. The wheel nuts, these can be checked with a torque wrench if necessary;
 - d. That the wheel arches are attached, not loose or damaged;
 - e. That the number plate is present and matches the towing vehicle;
 - f. Condition of the lights/reflectors;
 - g. Condition of body work and the doors/curtains are locked;
 - h. Check the weight plate of the trailer and that the load is even, safe and not exceeding the trailer's Maximum Allowable Mass (MAM).
3. Move the car forward in front of the trailer. Try to be in line by using the mirrors.
4. Reverse up to the trailer using good all round observation. Remember, you do not have to be very close as the trailer can be moved easily. You should aim to have the car and trailer as in line as possible as it can be difficult to move the hitch side to side more than a few inches.
5. **YOU MUST** connect the breakaway cable **FIRST. FAILURE TO DO SO IS AN AUTOMATIC FAIL.**
6. Lower the jockey wheel to raise the hitching point so that it will pass over the towing vehicle's tow ball if not already done.
7. Release the hand brake and pull the trailer to the car if necessary.
8. Lift up the ball locking lever if it has released.
9. Lower the jockey wheel until the coupling lever drops down and securely fastens to the tow ball **YOU MUST CHECK** it has connected properly. **FAILURE TO DO SO IS AN AUTOMATIC FAIL.** The easiest way is to raise the jockey wheel and see if the back of the car lifts or you feel an increase in the resistance when raising the jockey wheel showing that the car is connected.
10. Connect the lights socket.
 11. **YOU MUST CHECK ALL LIGHTS** are working. **FAILURE TO DO SO IS AN AUTOMATIC FAIL.** The examiner will assist you with the brake lights but you may be asked to check the other lights on your own.
 12. You will then be asked to perform a brake test by driving a short distance forwards and then stopping the vehicle.

We wish you the very best of luck with your test.
The Better Driver Training Team