



Dear

I'm really pleased we were able to confirm this week that driving lessons and theory tests will restart on 12 April in England and Wales and driving tests will restart on 22 April.

Last week we were also able to confirm that in Scotland driving lessons could potentially restart on 26 April and driving tests on 6 May. These restart dates are subject to Scottish Government confirmation, based on the prevalence of the virus.

The UK government, Scottish Government and Welsh Government are all cautiously easing lockdown restrictions. We also need to take a cautious approach to restarting our services to help keep everyone safe and reduce the risk of future test suspensions.

The health and safety of you, your pupils and our driving examiners continues to be our top priority, so I wanted to take this opportunity to explain what we are doing to help keep you all safe and share our plans for helping you and your pupils prepare for tests.

Restarting lessons

Following the announcement earlier this week I imagine many of you are excited to start teaching again, and your pupils will be eager to restart their lessons to get ready for their test.

There's a 10-day delay between the restart of lessons and tests to give you the opportunity to see your pupils and assess if they are ready for their test. If they are not prepared, they can rearrange

their test for another date for free on the change your driving test service on GOV.UK.

Hands, face, space, fresh air

In Scotland, it's the law for instructors and pupils to wear a face covering during a lesson and when they arrive at the test centre.

While it's not the law in England and Wales, I cannot emphasise enough the importance of you and your pupil wearing face coverings during lessons, unless you have a good reason not to.

This applies even if you've had the first dose or both doses of COVID-19 vaccine. The COVID-19 vaccine has been shown to reduce the chance of you suffering from COVID-19 disease. You may still get COVID-19 despite having a vaccination, but this should be less severe.

The NHS does not yet know how much it will reduce the risk of you passing on the virus. You're also more likely to be teaching pupils in the age groups where the data shows infection rates are some of the highest.

So remember, to protect yourself and your family, friends, pupils and driving examiners, you must still:

- wear a face covering
- wash your hands carefully and frequently
- open windows to let fresh air in

It is vital we all do everything we can to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

Good practice guidance for instructors

We previously shared our guidance for driving examiners with the driving instructors' National Associations Strategic Partnership (NASP) and they have published good practice guidance for instructors on their website.

It's important that you review this before returning to work and check you have all the measures in place to keep you and your pupils safe.

You can read this here: <http://deanm17.sg-host.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/NASP-Guidelines-on-driver-trainers-safely-returning-to-work-2nd-July-2020.pdf>

Restarting tests

As I mentioned above, to help protect you, your pupils and our examiners, we are being cautious as we restart our services.

Our plan is to restart at 6 tests per examiner per day in England, Wales and Scotland and our examiners will continue to direct candidates back to the test centre at the point they fail their test to reduce the amount of time spent in the vehicle.

We have shared our guidance for driving examiners with Public Health England, Scottish and Welsh Government and they are still happy with the control measures we have implemented.

Waiting rooms

I know many of you were frustrated last year that we were not able to give you access to waiting rooms at driving test centres due to health and safety reasons.

Over the last year, we have worked hard to put measures in place to reopen as many waiting rooms as possible.

I'm pleased to let you know 223 waiting rooms will be open when we restart driving tests on 22 April in England and Wales and on 6 May in Scotland.

The full list of available waiting rooms and the rules on using them have been published on GOV.UK. You can view this here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/driving-test-centre-waiting-rooms-during-coronavirus>

We are still working to reopen more test centres, and we'll update you again on this when we are in a position to do so.

Vehicle cleanliness and ventilation

To help protect you and your pupils, NASP has recommended in the good practice guidance for instructors that you:

- explain to your pupils that the windows will be down as much as possible during the lesson to let fresh air in (ventilation)
- tell them to wrap up warm as it might be cooler in the car than usual

Our examiners will be checking that vehicles used for driving tests are clean inside and you've let fresh air in before a test.

When bringing a pupil for their test, you must clean the inside of your car and make sure at least one window is open on each side before your pupil's test starts.

You can read the full guidance on GOV.UK at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-driving-tests-and-theory-tests>

Helping you and your pupils prepare for tests and standard checks

Now we've confirmed the restart of driving tests and standards checks in England and Wales, I want to explain what we are doing to help you and your pupils prepare for tests and checks to try to help everyone pass first time.

The top 10 reasons for failing a car driving test

The driving test pass rate was 45.9% between April 2019 and March 2020. Many people who failed their test made at least one of the top 10 common mistakes.

Before tests restart on 22 April, we will promote the latest top 10 reasons for failing a car driving test and give you and your pupils tips on how these can be avoided. This will help you to identify pupils who may need more support and practice.

It's important that your pupils take their test only when both you and your pupil are confident they can pass. This will help them to avoid a lengthy wait for a retest and help us by not adding to the backlog of tests.

Helping you prepare for standards checks

Our ADI team is planning to change the way we administer and prioritise standards checks.

We are not changing the assessment but do want to give you more help and support.

This includes a pre-engagement call ahead of your appointment.

During the call, we'll offer you professional development support and help you identify areas for self-development as well as what actions you may need to take to meet the current standard.

We'll tell you more about these changes in the coming weeks. They are designed to reflect the great work you already do and offer support where needed.

Keeping you updated

There are challenging times ahead for all of us. By working together, we can help to reduce the backlog, help your industry recover and help people stay safe on Britain's roads.

I'll write to you again once we are in a position to share our full recovery plan and explain how you can get involved and give us feedback.

I also urge you to keep up to date with the NASP website and seek advice from a NASP member national association if you have any queries, questions or concerns about restarting training

Thank you for your patience and understanding.

I hope that you, your family and your friends remain safe and well.

Yours faithfully,

Loveday Ryder
Chief Executive
Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency