

M5. Reverse parking

Introduction

The reverse park is an essential skill to learn if you want to be able to park in town on the street. More often than not there is insufficient space to drive forward into a vacant parking space and therefore your only option is to reverse in.

Lesson objectives

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

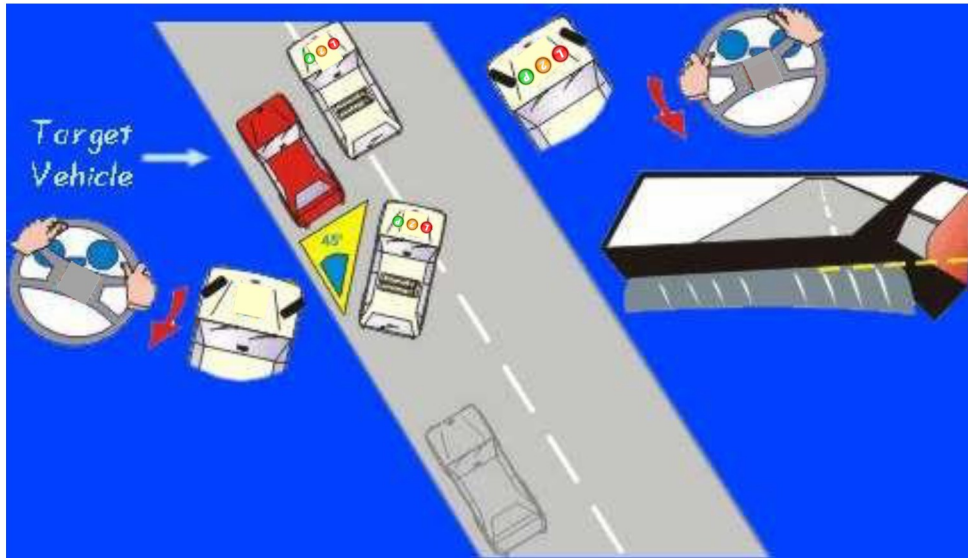
- Explain when it would not be safe, legal or convenient to carry out this manoeuvre;
- pull up in a suitable position along side the car you intend to park behind and immediately select reverse gear to warn other road users of your intentions;
- explain the dangers that the car presents as you undertake this manoeuvre;
- judge when you can begin to turn to the left and straighten the wheels to enable you to reverse the car towards the kerb at an angle of 45 degrees;
- make effective observational checks throughout the manoeuvre and especially before you turn, ensuring it is safe to proceed;
- judge when your car begins to turn to the right and straighten up the wheels to enable you to reverse the car along side and parallel to the kerb;
- deal correctly with other road users;
- complete the manoeuvre within two car lengths from the back of the parked vehicle in front and less than half a metre from the kerb.

Lesson Brief

This lesson combines many of the skills you have learnt from the earlier set manoeuvres.

The manoeuvre requires you to pull along side the target vehicle you propose to park behind. Then having checked that it is safe to commence the manoeuvre you gradually reverse back until your side mirror and the target vehicles side mirror are aligned. This should make the back of your car about level with the back of the target car. At that point you begin to apply one full turn left. Reverse back until your left side mirror is in line (parallel) with the back end of the target vehicle (slightly beyond the back if it is a particularly short vehicle) and turn one full turn right, this straightens your wheels as you approach the kerb. Continue until your car is diagonal to the kerb at about a 45-degree angle. When the back of your vehicle is about 2 feet from the kerb (check this in the left mirror) and the rear number plate on the target vehicle appears to go behind the left mirror, you briskly apply sufficient right hand lock so that the vehicle becomes almost parallel to the kerb, then take off all the steering by turning the wheel left as much as required. If necessary, you would then move forward, straightening the lock allowing sufficient room for the car in front and behind to move away.

If the target vehicle is parked the opposite way around, use the rear door handle on a 4-door car or the rear wheel arch or petrol filler cap on a 3-door car, as a substitute for the side mirror on the target vehicle.



On the driving test although you are not required to move forward (as there will not be a vehicle behind you) it is acceptable to do so provided you can still pull away from behind the vehicle in front without having to reverse again. Irrespective of this the manoeuvre must be done within two car lengths of the rear of the target vehicle in front.

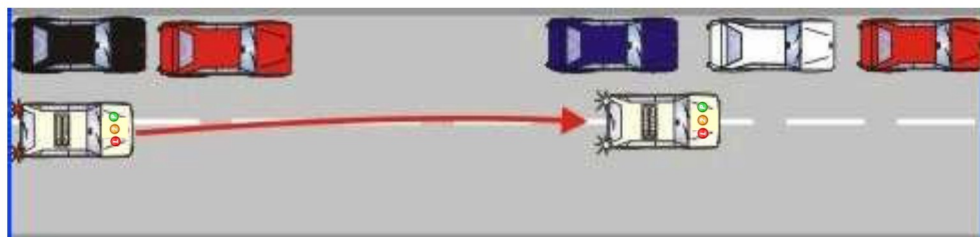
The additional learning points associated with this manoeuvre are as follows.

1. Location

Carefully assess the parking space to ensure it is at least one and a half car lengths in size ensuring that it is safe, legal and convenient.

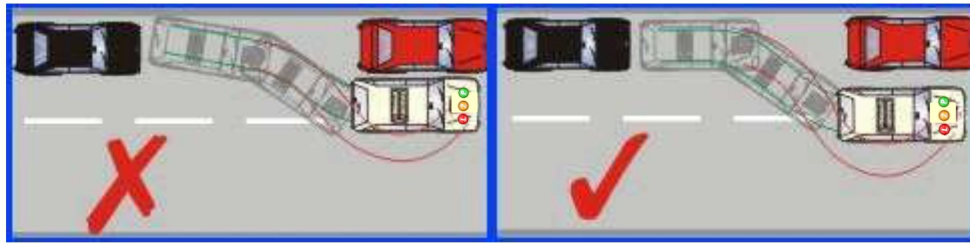
2. Signal your intentions clearly

Make sure your intentions are known by slowing down well before the parking space and by positioning yourself reasonably close (about a doors width) and parallel to the vehicle that you intend to park behind. Immediately get ready to reverse. The brake and reversing lights become a signal to following traffic.



3. Target car position

Try to position your car parallel to the target vehicle such that it will allow sufficient room for oncoming vehicles to pass or following vehicles to overtake but not so close that it prevents you from completing the manoeuvre in the space available. The closer you are to the target car the more difficult it will be to get a suitable angle to reverse into the space available.



4. All round awareness

Particularly watch out for pedestrians from either side of the road who may cross behind you as you attempt to reverse. This will require you to be continually looking over your left and right hand shoulder being careful to pause using clutch control when your view to the rear is temporarily lost in the switch over. Check that you will not present a hazard to passing vehicles as your vehicle swings out. Similarly ensure you will not hit the rear of the target vehicle with the front of your car as you swing in.



5. Dealing with other road users

You must always give way to other road users. You must give way to any pedestrians crossing behind and avoid swinging the car out into the path of overtaking or oncoming vehicles. Whilst you are parallel to the target vehicle, if a car should approach from the front or rear, apply a left signal to show your intention. Cancel the signal when your car becomes angled to the kerb.

6. Keeping calm

Other experienced drivers will appreciate that if you rush this manoeuvre you will end up taking longer and run the risk of hitting something or someone. Therefore if traffic appears once you have started the manoeuvre you will usually find that they give you priority. Under no circumstances allow yourself to be hurried when doing this exercise.

Highway Code practical references

Rules: 213-219 and 222-226.