

Visibility – *Let's be clear*

- *The examiner wants to see my lights on full beam*
- *I must wear Hi-Viz on my test so other road users can see me*
- *It's a bright sunny day, it's safer to wear a black visor*
- *Privacy tints help, so the aftermarket films ones are legal.*

Are these true or are they the myths, the urban legends, that get so ingrained into advanced training circles?

Let's look at the reality and what you need to know, be aware of, and address, not only for test but on a daily basis.

***Remember – it's all about Safety, our primary reason for existing.
Safety should be the basis of every ride or drive undertaken.***

Contrary to common belief, the visibility section in the examiners marking manual – **Section J** (see below extract from manual) in both bike and car is more to do with what your visibility is like regarding what **you** can see, not primarily what can see you.

Yes, there is a requirement to show appropriate lighting if necessary, according to conditions.

- *Motorcycles must have permanently illuminated dip beam by legislation since 2016.*
- *All modern cars have DRL (daytime running lights) under EU legislation.*

There is a common belief within the motorcycle community the use of full beam makes car driver more aware of your presence.

The reality is that it is likely to dazzle other road users, effectively blinding their vision and removing their ability to judge your distance from them.

This is particularly dangerous for motorcyclists.

The use of **additional lighting** on motorcycles, **auxiliary lamps** really must be considered carefully regarding their effectiveness. Some additional lamps can be **so bright they mask the profile and ability to identify the motorcycle.**

Hi-Viz clothing is not required for test; it isn't in the examiners manual and is not legislated in the UK unlike some other European countries.

In low light or poorer visibility Hi-Viz clothing can make a rider more apparent to other road users. In summer though, Hi-Viz yellow (Saturn Yellow) can be masked by natural colours in fields, sun-bleached grass or even sunlight dappling through tree canopies.

Motorcycles

Visibility in **motorcycle** marking manual has three pre-worded scores.

J VISIBILITY

The screen and/or visor should be well maintained and clean at the start of the test, so as not to inhibit the view of the rider.

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|---|---|
| 1 | Clear screen / visor. |
| 2 | Visor not properly maintained. |
| 3 | Headlights not used when conditions demanded their use. |
| 4 | See "Overall Comments". |

Using that as the guide, the only reference to visors in the marking manual, it could be an argument that the view could be inhibited with a really dark visor. Obviously a 'track use only' black would be illegal, but how to prove that would require a Tint-Man light meter, as used by police for checking window tints - not a RoSPA examiner issue item

So, what are the key legal requirements?

- *Light Transmission: Must allow a minimum of 50% visible light transmission. Standard dark "sunglass" tints (which absorb 85% of light) or dark black/iridium/mirrored finishes are usually well below this threshold and fail road-legal standards.*
- *Safety Markings: Must carry an official standard such as British Standard BS4110:1979 (with a Kitemark) or a UNECE equivalent (ECE 22.05 / 22.06).*
- *Daylight Labelling: Legal tinted visors will explicitly state or be stamped with "Daylight use only" or display a sun symbol.*

Cars

Visibility in the **Car** examiners marking manual covers a broader range of available marks, but relate to the same basics:

- Clear screens, all necessary equipment used to good effect in poor weather conditions.
- All windows clean inside and out before test, maintained by ventilation.
- Wipers used correctly as conditions required.
- Headlamps used correctly in poor visibility.
- Fairly dull day, vehicle well ventilated, visibility maintained.
- Weather conditions presented problems; all necessary equipment was used to full advantage.
- Perfectly clear screens and favourable weather gave no problems.
- All windows adequately clean.
- Windows must be kept clear of “film” ins
- Poor ventilation allowed vehicle to steam up, reducing visibility
- Windows not clean prior to drive.
- Vision obscured to an extent by decorative objects - recommended removal.
- Could have anticipated the spray from oncoming vehicles and had wipers working early.
- A washer-solvent would assist with windscreen traffic film dispersal.

Let's look at the legality of window tints.

- **Front Windscreen:** Must allow at least **75%** of light transmission.
- **Front Side Windows (Driver & Passenger):** Must allow at least **70%** of light transmission.
- **Rear Side Windows & Rear Windscreen:** No limits or restrictions; you can make them as dark as you want.

Important Notes regarding Factory Glass

- **Factory Tint:** Most standard car glass from the factory already blocks a small amount of light.
- **Adding Film:** Even a very light aftermarket film on your front side windows can push the total light transmission below the 70% legal limit.

The examiner will also be looking for windscreen clarity, washer solution being topped up, ventilation to avoid steaming up, reduced view due to windscreen ornament – sat-nav for example (or even the marks from one being attached), cleanliness of windscreen, mirror adornments – air fresheners, furry dice(?!)

Some of these are also covered under POWDERS checklist (*RoadCraft - Appendix 2*)

Attitude

The other categories on the examiners manual to consider is Preparation (Section A) which includes pre-ride/roadworthiness checks.

There is also IAMSAFE - with Attitude (*Appendix 1 RoadCraft*) & Human factors (*4 - Goals for Driver Education Appendix 4 RoadCraft*)

This references personality, attitude, and what needs to be managed when riding or driving;

- Competitiveness
- excitement by speed
- irritated by other road users

This is a quite broad spectrum but taken may be reflective of approach to riding and driving.

In conclusion

- Use **headlights** on **dipped beam**
- **Visibility** is a two-way thing – **see and be seen**
- **Hi-Viz** is a personal choice. Think about the **environment** it is being used in.
- Think very carefully about fitting and using **additional/auxiliary lighting**
- Keep **visors, screens and windscreens clear**. Don't add film to windscreens. Remove windscreen adornments that may distract or obscure view. Fit legal visors and consider the environment if considering a tinted item.
- Familiarise yourself with the contents and wording in the **Examiners Marking Manual**. The manuals are available to read on the **E-YARD website** under **Training Documents**
- Familiarise yourself with **RoadCraft** – this applies **to every aspect of driving and riding** – but in this case the appendices.
 - *Appendix 1* – Are you fit to drive/ride (**IAMSAFE**)
 - *Appendix 2* – Is your vehicle fit to drive/ride (**POWDER/POWDDERSS**)
 - *Appendix 4* – Goals for Driver Education (**GDE**)