

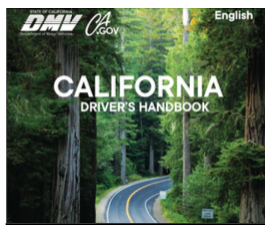
## LESSONS I LEARNED IN TRYING TO RENEW MY DRIVER'S LICENSE

I was one of the 50% who failed their test the first time, as well as several of my much "smarter" friends.

### Tips for Seniors on License Renewal in CA

**NEW For seniors 70 or older:** Your \$45 fee for your license renewal and/or your Real ID includes taking a 30-45 min. E-learning (non-proctored) class online at home **instead** of the knowledge test at the DMV. You will make an appointment to go there for vision test and processing. See [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov) or phone 1-800-777-0133.

FOR THOSE UNDER 70 who are renewing their license, you have challenge of having to take the knowledge test at the DMV on their computers, or on printout upon request. The DMV mails a renewal notice 60 days before your driver's license expires to addresses on record. However, you may want to start preparing earlier, especially if you are under 70 and have to take the challenging test at the DMV.



(I would recommend everyone to read the driver's Handbook (free at the DMV or online at the link above): a) to know the rules of the road for your safety and confidence; and b) to see the rationale behind the rules. If you do not receive a renewal notice, complete a Driver License or

Identification Card Application at [dmv.ca.gov/dlservices](http://dmv.ca.gov/dlservices) or at a DMV office. Visit [dmv.ca.gov/driver-ed](http://dmv.ca.gov/driver-ed) for more information and sample tests.

If you have a smartphone or a computer, you can download a paperless (pdf) CA Driver's Handbook at [dmv.ca.gov](http://dmv.ca.gov). There you can read what the procedures are for getting a Real ID and/or renewing your license, address other issues, take practice tests, etc. **Be careful not to go to look-alike bogus websites which might steal your money and/or confidential information.**

FOR THOSE UNDER 70: As stated above and in the handbook, about 50% of the takers fail the Knowledge Test the first time. There are literally 2000+ facts in this 100 page booklet, most of which you know, but you have to get 80-85% correct to pass. And now there's no keeping the old tests to study from.



I was one of many senior citizens with hearing, vision, or processing issues which also stressed the DMV and inadvertently forced it to change—for everyone's benefit. After I failed the knowledge test the first time, I *really* studied the handbook, reading it 2-3 times, taking notes on what I didn't already know in it and all of the practice tests. However, there are "4.5 x 10<sup>50</sup> different test combinations possible," **so don't just rely on the practice tests as your only learning tool.** Every test is different, and your margin of error for passing the test is about 16-20%. **Also, read the book to see the rationale behind the laws. Don't just try**

**to memorize facts.** The DMV's Knowledge Test for adults renewing a class C driver's license has 25 questions. You cannot miss more than 5 (or 20%) to pass. **If you fail three times within an 8 hour day, you will have to pay another \$40+ dollars and go through the entire process again on a different day, complete with ID papers and vision tests.** So STUDY like it matters, because it does!

If you have to take the knowledge test, get the the earliest appointment you can. It's quieter in the morning, your mind is fresher, and if you fail, you may have time to try it again before they close. it gets more crowded after after 2 pm.

I took a gamble and showed up, without an appointment, 30 minutes early on a weekday before the doors opened. I was lucky. There were only 7 people in front of me, and I was promptly pre-checked before the doors opened by a very efficient staff person to see that I had the proper paperwork. From there it was easy. She sent me inside to pre-register on a computer. There was a person there to help with that. I returned to be first in line to present my ID papers and get my vision checked, then photographed, fingerprinted, and I aced the Knowledge Test. All in one hour! Glad I prepped well and also passed the vision test, which was really my main concern. If I failed that (20/70 in one with corrective lens), there were other options—one substitute test proctor misinformed me that I would not be able to drive at all.

### Tips for Studying/Taking the Knowledge Test

1. The noise and confusion I first experienced in the testing area made it difficult for me to concentrate. On my second visit I was better prepared, arrived earlier in the day, and had ear plugs ready. The staff also was better organized and prepared.
2. Study and organize yourself and your papers, and politely ask for help if you need it. I found most staff there were very kind to the senior citizens with their age-related challenges.
3. The knowledge test on the computer would X an incorrect answer, but not give me time to view the correct answer to know what section to study. In the old days, you could keep the paper test and learn from the errors made. You can request a written test, but my DMV preference that day was by computer.
4. There are many free and helpful video tutorials online. One is called "[The 20 HARDEST Questions on the DMV Written Test.](#)" (after the ad on youtube)

### Success the Second Time

Of course, much of this confusion was my not knowing the new system and not being well prepared for the tests. The DMV was adjusting also. Bottom line: I learned a lot, have more confidence driving, and in myself as a test-taker and a better and safer driver. *-Embrace the Challenge! Joe B.*