

A guide to the drivers' eyesight test

The distance between the top and bottom lines should not be more than 22 cm

A

60

T O

36

U H Y

24

V O X T

18

M X Y W A

12

O P T Y U E

9

T V O F X Y H P

6

X O P Y H A T F

5

Basic eyesight test

Print out this page onto standard A4 white paper. Before you can use the chart, you need to make sure that it has been printed out at the size it was designed to be used at. You should use a ruler and check that the distance between the horizontal line at the top of the chart and the horizontal line at the bottom of the chart is not more than 22 centimetres. If the chart has printed out larger than intended the test will not be correct.

Instructions

You should get someone to hold this sheet three metres away from you (this is three fairly large paces) and you should test each eye separately. You should do this in a place which has good lighting.

If you need glasses to do this test then put your glasses on now.

Cover up one eye.

Start from the top and read each line. Keep reading down the chart until you find the smallest line you can read correctly. Make a note of the little number underneath that line of letters.

Now do the same with the other eye covered up, and write down the number of the smallest line you can read correctly.

Did you manage to read at least down to line number 12 with your worst eye?

Did you manage to read at least down to line number 9 with your best eye?

If you needed glasses or contact lenses to read down to the number 12 line with your worst eye and the number 9 line with your best eye, now remove your glasses or contact lenses and do the same test again.

Can you see the *top* line with each eye separately? If you can't, go closer to the chart until you are 1½ metres away. Can you see the top line now with each eye separately?

Understanding the results

The DVLA standard for lorries and buses (which is also the standard required for driving taxis) is that you must be able to read the number 12 line with your worst eye and the number 9 line with your best eye. It doesn't matter if you need glasses or contact lenses to do this so long as you read down to those lines.

For people who need to use their glasses or contact lenses to achieve this standard, you also need to be able to see the *top* line with each eye separately when you remove your glasses or contact lenses, but you are allowed to stand at 1½ metres to do that.

Warning and limitations

You should not rely on this test as an accurate eyesight test. It is important that the test is done with the correct chart (this is just a picture of a modified version), with good lighting, and at the correct distance. The above is a simplified version of the DVLA eyesight requirements and as such does not completely or accurately describe the requirements. In some cases it may be easier or more difficult to pass the actual test done under appropriate conditions with the correct chart.

This test should not be relied upon to find out whether a person has any particular standard of vision or to decide whether a person is fit or legal to drive any vehicle on a public road. It is provided only for general information purposes to help a person who is considering applying for a vocational licence to understand the general nature of the eyesight test and should only be treated as a rough guide to understanding what the actual eyesight test consists of. If you are in any doubt about your vision you should see a qualified optometrist for an eyesight test.

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