

## National Headquarters

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"Integrity Is Our Driving Force"



® 93/09567

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013

Dear Pepsi,

You asked us to comment on the proposed material for the computerised learner's licence test. Thank you for that opportunity. We appreciate that you have worked hard preparing the content of the Learner Driver Manual.

As a result of consultation with people involved with learner's licence training, as well as learner drivers across the country, there are two main areas of concern with regard to the document and the learner's licence test:

1. Compliance with the Act in terms of the syllabus for the learner's licence test. Certain sections of legislation have been included in the material as if they are 'rules of the road', which they are not;
2. The way some questions are phrased in the test makes the questions themselves a test of language comprehension over and above the knowledge being tested.

Urgent attention to these matters would be highly appreciated since thousands of people are failing the test which was intended to combat corruption. The test has become a snare and way of preventing people who hope to become drivers from achieving their goal in a rational, fair way. Repeated attempts are required before people pass and test dates are in short supply.

In respect of the computerised testing, the current high failure rate implies one of two things: Either the majority of South Africans lack intellect or, the test lacks integrity. The net result is the same – buying a licence becomes an option for many people – so we proliferate corruption.

### **1. Compliance with the Act in terms of the test syllabus**

In your eagerness to fulfil your mandate comprehensively, the lines seem to have become blurred. Legal boundaries set in place in the Act have been overstepped as far as the learner's licence test is concerned.

The idea should never be to trick applicants or to ask them questions from parts of the legislation that fall outside the rules of the road or a basic knowledge of the vehicle controls. Surely a straightforward set of simple questions requiring answers based on valid material in accordance with the prescribed syllabus is the only preparation for a learner's licence test that should be required. This is not to say that we do not

believe additional information is necessary for all drivers. In fact we do. Additional testing of knowledge would be more suitable after practical in-vehicle training.

In fact, it would elevate the quality of driving instruction since it is essential during driving lessons to include matters such as those related to vehicle specifications and fitness (light beams, projections, etc.), how to use the vehicle controls in various situations and in combination, and so on. It is unreasonable, ill-conceived and illegal to ask this prior to would-be learner drivers beginning driving lessons.

The average student has never sat behind the steering wheel of a car when they start driving lessons. On a first lesson we, as driving instructors teach clients what the controls are, and what they are for. We familiarize them with the layout of the interior and exterior of the vehicle.

It is unreasonable to ask a candidate who is totally new to driving to answer questions that a car manufacturer or motor bike manufacturer might not even know the answer to. Why do it? What gain can there be? How does this make them safer drivers?

Please see the attached document for more specifics on this syllabus issue.

## **2. Wording of the test questions**

We are receiving complaints that the tests are in difficult English which is not easy for a person from any other language group to understand.

We ask, as the National Driving School Forum, to review the database of 1500 questions and to discuss these with RTMC and NDoT officials. Together we can simplify some wording without losing the content, and even suggest replacements for unsuitable questions, so that we test relevant knowledge fairly and in compliance with the Act.

As a group of driving instructors from all cultures across the country, we believe we will contribute to this process positively. We support the Government's move to combat corruption in DLTC's across the country, but have a responsibility to members and our clients. For this reason we appeal for this email to be taken seriously.

Best regards,

Pat Allen  
National President, SAIDI.