STUDY GUIDE

MOBILE COUNTY PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

MERIT SYSTEM

SCHOOL TRAFFIC OFFICER

Examination Study Guide

Applicant: Please read the introductory page inside this booklet; it contains information that is of importance to you.
INTRODUCTION

What this booklet and test are about

This booklet has been prepared by the staff of the Mobile County Personnel Department in order to help you prepare for the School Traffic Officer written examination. The written test, which is only part of the selection process, consists of multiple-choice and true or false questions.

Study and learn the materials contained in this booklet. You will be notified later as to the time and date of the written examination. DO NOT BRING THIS BOOKLET TO THE TEST SITE.

Hints on doing your best on the test

1. Review the examination study booklet thoroughly and carefully.
2. Do not wait until the last minute to study.
3. Study the booklet with a friend or relative.
4. You may choose to attend a seminar at the Personnel Department offered on the third Wednesday of each month in order to become familiar with testing procedures and answer sheets. The seminar is offered on a first come first serve basis. (See the official announcement for School Traffic Officer for further details.)
5. Your test score will be based upon the number of questions you answer correctly so it will be to your advantage to answer all questions.
6. Some questions will be more difficult than others so do not spend too much time on any one question.
7. Get a good night's rest and something to eat prior to taking the test.

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TRAFFIC SIGNS

A thorough knowledge of traffic signs, signals and road markings is important for every citizen to obtain. A school traffic officer must know these signs, signals, and markings well enough to recognize them immediately and enforce them without hesitation.

There are three types of traffic signs that are classified according to their functions. These three classifications of signs include the following: Regulatory, Warning, and Informational or Guide Signs.

REGULATORY

Regulatory signs regulate the movement of traffic. The majority of these signs are black and white with the exception of the STOP, YIELD, WRONG WAY, and DO NOT ENTER signs. Below are a few examples of regulatory signs.

The STOP sign is the only 8-sided traffic sign. It means that a driver must come to a complete stop before entering the intersection ahead. Drivers must also stop before entering a crosswalk.

The YIELD sign is a triangular sign that means to slow down so one can yield the right of way to vehicles on the intersecting street or highway and to pedestrians crossing the roadway.

The NO PARKING sign means that a driver may not park his car in a certain area, even though the driver may stay in the car.

The SPEED LIMIT FOR SCHOOL ZONE sign gives the specific speed limit during hours indicated on the sign. School zone speed limit may also be displayed on a lighted sign with flashing amber lights.
WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs are used to warn drivers of hazardous conditions ahead that require driving with extra caution. Most warning signs are black and yellow, except for those used in construction areas which are black and orange. Warning signs are usually diamond shaped, but there are some exceptions. Study the examples below.

There is a RAILROAD CROSSING ahead so you must slow down, look carefully in both directions, and be prepared to stop.

Drivers must yield to pedestrians in a CROSSWALK. The sign also indicates that just ahead is a location where pedestrians often cross. Crosswalks may not always be at intersections. Whenever you encounter one of these signs, you need to drive more slowly and carefully, watching both sides of the street for pedestrians.

The SCHOOL CROSSING sign warns drivers to slow down and watch for children crossing the road. Drivers must yield to the children in the crosswalk. Drivers should use extreme caution when approaching a school crossing.

There is a STOP sign ahead.

There is a NARROW BRIDGE ahead.
INFORMATIONAL OR GUIDE SIGNS

Informational or guide signs give information and direction to motorists. These types of signs are various colors; the green and white signs give motorists directions; blue and white signs relate services; brown and white signs give points of public recreational or cultural interest. Below are a few examples of informational or guide signs.

State Routes

U.S. Routes
PAVEMENT MARKINGS

Pavement markings are categorized into four types: centerline striping, edge striping, crosswalks, and pavement messages.

CENTERLINES

The centerline is the painted line in the center of the road which separates traffic moving in opposite directions. Center lines are painted yellow on two lane highways and white on multi-lane highways and one way streets. Separated lines are used in areas where passing is permissible when it is safe to do so. A solid yellow line is painted alongside the fragmented line when passing is not allowed. If the solid yellow line is on your side of the centerline, then you may not pass. If the two solid yellow lines are painted, then passing is not allowed for traffic in either direction. When there are two or more traffic lanes for vehicles moving in one direction, the lanes are divided by broken white lines. These broken lines may be crossed when passing.

EDGE STRIPING

Edge striping is where the right and/or left edges of the highway are marked with a solid white line which indicates the outside edge of the traffic lane, and may be crossed only by traffic moving to or from the shoulder.

WHITE SOLID LINE

A solid white line is used to define the edge of a travel lane where travel in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line but crossing the line is discouraged. A wide solid line emphasizes the need for extreme caution when crossing where unusual care is required.

DOUBLE SOLID WHITE LINES

A pair of solid white lines represents a travel lane where travel in the same direction is permitted on both sides of the line, but crossing the double lines is prohibited.

CROSSWALKS

Pedestrian crosswalks are defined by white solid lines. Drivers must stop at all cross walks that are occupied by pedestrians, even if there are no controlling signals.

PAVEMENT MESSAGES

Pavement messages are written on the road in white paint, and they are used to warn of certain conditions ahead, such as SCHOOL ZONE, RAILROAD CROSSING, etc.
PEDESTRIAN SIGNALS

Pedestrians must obey the "WALK" and "DON'T WALK" signals at intersections. When the "WALK" signal is on, pedestrians should start to cross the street. Once pedestrians start to cross, they should continue to the nearest curb.

When the flashing "DON'T WALK" signal comes on, do not start to cross the street. If a pedestrian has started crossing on "WALK" and then the flashing "DON'T WALK" comes on, he or she should complete the crossing to the nearest curb, walking at a normal pace. The traffic signal will not change as long as the "DON'T WALK" is flashing.

Pedestrians should not start to cross when the "DON'T WALK" signal is lit up (and not flashing), for the traffic light may change at any time.

If there are no "WALK" or "DON'T WALK" signals, then pedestrians should adhere to the traffic control signals. Pedestrians should follow the same rules as the cars. For example, when the light is red, a pedestrian must not cross the intersection; when the light is green, pedestrians may cross the intersection. Pedestrians should not start to cross while the yellow light is on; however, if a person has already begun to cross when the yellow light comes on, he or she should continue to the nearest curb. When there is only a green right or left turn arrow on, a person must not cross the street. If a steady green light or green through arrow is on with a green right or left turn arrow, then a pedestrian may start to cross the intersection. If a flashing red or yellow light is on, a pedestrian should stop and cross when it is safe to do so.

DRIVERS' RULES AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING PEDESTRIANS

Traffic laws are written for both drivers and pedestrians. There have been many pedestrians killed or severely injured by motor vehicles. These accidents could be greatly reduced if motorists were more alert and observant of pedestrian rights.

Motorists need to be particularly alert for pedestrians:

1. On streets where cars are parked.
2. At nighttime or during poor visibility.
3. At places where people cross the street, such as bus stops, churches, shopping malls, near mailboxes, etc.
4. During the morning and afternoon hours when children are going to and from school or play.
5. Who are older people that may move slowly and cannot see or hear well.
Drivers must adhere to the following laws concerning pedestrians:

1. Drivers must yield the right of way to all pedestrians using a crosswalk.
2. Drivers must not pass another vehicle stopped for pedestrians in a crosswalk.
3. Drivers must stop for school children and for school safety patrols directing children.
4. Drivers must yield to blind pedestrians.
5. Drivers must not block crosswalks when stopped at a traffic signal or stop sign.
6. When making a left turn, drivers should yield to pedestrians in a crosswalk.
7. Before making a turn on red, drivers should yield to pedestrians.

REGULATIONS AND SAFETY RULES FOR PEDESTRIANS

1. Use sidewalks where provided.
2. Obey traffic control signals at intersections.
3. When walking on a roadway, stay as close to the left side as possible and in a single file giving way to oncoming traffic.
4. During the hours of darkness or poor visibility, carry some type of light and/or wear light-colored clothing or clothing trimmed with reflective materials.
5. Pedestrians should yield to all vehicles when crossing at places other than marked crosswalks.
6. Even though vehicles are required to yield at intersections and crosswalks, pedestrians should not assume that they will yield; pedestrians should yield, if necessary, for their own safety.
7. A pedestrian should be sure that the driver sees him before proceeding across the street.
8. Pedestrians need to be aware of drivers' difficulty in stopping quickly when streets are slippery and when visibility is poor.
9. Hitchhikers should not stand in the roadway.
VEHICLE LANE CHANGE

Before changing lanes you should make certain that you can do so safely by checking for safe clearance to the side, ahead, and behind your vehicle. One should never solely rely on his mirror when checking for clearance. The driver needs to check over his right and/or left shoulder to check any "blind spot" a mirror does not cover. Show your intentions to other drivers by using turn signals or hand signals. The signals should continue until you are ready to make the actual turn; turn signals do not automatically give drivers the right to change lanes. Drivers must wait until it is safe to change lanes.

If your car's turn signals are not working properly, then you should use the following hand signals:

1. To make a left turn you should have your left hand and arm extended straight out.
2. To make a right turn you should have your left hand and arm extended upward.
3. To stop, or decrease speed you should have your left hand and arm extended downward.

Following correct turning procedures may save a life.

TO TURN ... TO TURN ... TO STOP OR SLOW DOWN

1.  
2.  
3.  

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LAWS CONCERNING BUSES

When a school bus or church bus is stopped on the road with the stop signal arm extended and its red lights flashing, all lanes of traffic should come to a complete stop. Traffic should remain stopped until the stop signal is withdrawn and red lights are terminated. Even if one is traveling on a 4 to 6 lane highway with opposing traffic lanes separated by a median or safety zone, traffic in all lanes must stop for a stopped school bus.

The majority of persons injured or killed in bus transportation are not injured or killed on the bus, but outside the bus where motorists fail to stop for the flashing red lights and extended stop signs. The area around the stopped bus is often referred to as the "Death Zone".

CAUTION: The majority of children injured or killed in pupil transportation are not injured or killed on the bus, but outside the bus. Most are struck by motorists who fail to stop for the flashing red lights and extended stop signs. This area around the stopped school bus is often referred to as the "DEATH ZONE:"

Flashing amber lights are pre-warning that the bus is preparing to stop to load or unload children. In rural areas, the lights are used at least 300 feet before stopping and in municipalities at least 100 feet.
DUTIES OF SCHOOL TRAFFIC OFFICERS

1. School Traffic Officers shall be responsible for the safety and welfare of the children at the school crossing within that officer’s area while on duty.

2. The School Traffic Officer shall work with the school authorities, teaching children the rules of safety and striving for their cooperation and support of safety programs.

3. The School Traffic Officer shall strive to do the following:
   A. Preserve the lives of school children.
   B. Build character of the school children when possible.
   C. Maintain feelings of friendliness between the department and the school children.

4. The School Traffic Officer shall not engage in long conversations while on duty, but shall give information on request as concisely and courteously as possible.

5. School Traffic Officers shall maintain a professional appearance while on their post and shall give all hand signals in a concise and clear manner according to their training.

6. School Traffic Officers shall be properly uniformed while on assignment and shall wear no unauthorized clothing that would detract from the highest standard of police appearance.

7. School Traffic Officers shall be neat and clean in appearance.

8. School Traffic Officers shall perform other duties as required.
PROCEDURE FOR USE OF POLICE WHISTLE

A police whistle shall be kept accessible to the officer at all times.

Signal definitions:

1. Stop Traffic: In conjunction with the hand signal, one long blast of the police whistle will signify the stopping of traffic movement.

2. Directional Movement: Attention to directional movement defined by hand signals shall be obtained by two or more short blasts of the police whistle.

STANCE

1. Stand with your feet approximately shoulder width apart so your weight is evenly distributed on both feet.
2. Hands and arms should hang naturally at your sides.
3. Head and body are erect, but not stiff.
4. Keep your feet planted in position, but do not lock your knees or tense your body.

Basic Stance

Shoulders parallel to moving traffic.
STARTING TRAFFIC TO PROCEED FORWARD

1. POINT

Hand signals for motioning traffic from the right to proceed forward:

1. Look and point to the right.
2. Bending at the elbow, bring your right arm up until it is parallel with the body.

3. POINT

Hand signals for motioning traffic from the left to proceed forward:

3. Look and point to the left.
4. Bending at the elbow, bring your left arm up until it is parallel with the body.
STOPPING TRAFFIC

1. POINT

Hand signal for stopping traffic from the right:

1. Look and point to the right.
2. Thrust your right arm to the right and up, bending the elbow slightly. Fingers are extended and together, palm is flat and facing out to the right with the entire surface clearly visible to oncoming traffic. Your elbows should be bent at eye level so the hand is well above your headgear.

3. POINT

Hand signal for stopping traffic from the left:

3. Look and point to the left.
4. Thrust your left arm to the left and up, bending the elbow slightly. Fingers are extended and together, palm is flat and facing out to the left with the entire surface clearly visible to oncoming traffic. Your elbows should be bent at eye level so the hand is well above your headgear.

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DIRECT TRAFFIC FROM THE RIGHT TO TURN LEFT

(Refer to the graphics on page 16)

1. Look to the right and determine the driver’s intent to turn.

2. Halt traffic on the left.
   A. Look to the left.
   B. Thrust your left arm to the left and up, bending the elbow slightly. Fingers are extended and together, palm is flat and facing out to the left with the entire surface clearly visible to oncoming traffic. Your elbows should be bent at eye level so the hand is well above your headgear.

3. Holding the stop signal in place on the left, look back to right and extend your right arm out to the right side, parallel to the ground, pointing the first two fingers of your right hand at the vehicle to turn.

4. Turning only the upper portion of the body, bring your right arm up until it is parallel with the body, bending at the elbow. Then extend the right arm in the direction of the turn until it is again parallel to the ground.

5. Complete the turn signal by dropping your right arm to your side.

6. Watch the turning vehicle (s) until it has cleared the intersection, and then look back to the right.

7. Convert the stop signal to the straight through signal by rotating your left palm inward, rotating your left forearm across the rear of your body until your hand is just below your neck and dropping your arm smartly to your side. Return to the basic stance.

INSURE DRIVER’S RESPONSE

If it appears the driver does not understand, repeat the signal.
DIRECT TRAFFIC FROM THE RIGHT TO TURN LEFT, the graphics below refer to instructions on page 15.

1. LOOK RIGHT

2. HALT TRAFFIC ON LEFT

3. POINT AT TRAFFIC ON RIGHT

4. COMMAND RIGHT TRAFFIC TO TURN