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Letter to the editor**

With a Class C drivers license a person may drive:

(1) A 3-axle vehicle if the Gross Vehicle Weight is less than 6,000 pounds.

(2) Any 3-axle vehicle regardless of the weight.

(3) A vehicle pulling two trailers.

(from sample test, available at dmv.ca.gov)

While spending several frustrating days at a local DMV, I talked to number of people who were there to take the written driver's test. We agreed that while some test items seem reasonable, others had nothing to do with safe driving (see example above).

Is there any evidence that the test is valid? Do those who get higher scores have better driving records? Has there been an analysis showing which items predict safer driving?

Test-takers I talked to also agreed that many items and the California Driver's Handbook descriptions were difficult to understand. Have the test items and handbook been researched for clarity?

My impression is that the DMV test designers would certainly fail a beginning course in testing and measurement.

According to DMV statistics, about 50% fail the written test when they take it for the first time. Some of this is most likely due to irrelevant and poorly written questions.

If the test could be improved, the failure rate might be reduced, and fewer people would have to take the test more than once, reducing the long waiting time at DMV offices. It might also improve driving safety, as a revised test would focus on knowledge that is truly important for drivers to know.

Stephen Krashen

“According to DMV statistics”: <https://www.dmvcheatsheets.com/articles/the-dmv-written-test-whats-your-states-pass-rate>