

Risk Management: Competence No.5

This fifth competence in Risk Management asks: **'Was sufficient feedback given to help the pupil understand any potential safety-critical incidents?'**

In previous competencies, I've talked about managing safety-critical incidents when they occur. Our experience as a driver tells us that all driving is a risky thing to be involved in. And how we manage what we do inside and outside the car can dramatically impact our exposure to risk.

What we have seen, and perhaps personally been involved in gives us a great understanding of the consequences of driver actions and behaviour. I am sure we can all think of a driving incident we have seen or been involved in that has impacted our experience and what we now do.

These are our experiences and although your pupil may not have driven before, they have spent a minimum of 17 years in the passenger seat. They also come with experience and may have witnessed or been party to poor driving behaviour and experienced or seen the consequences.

Consider, what your pupil may understand as being risky behaviour, from what they have seen, been party to, or experienced and that this will not match with yours. I talk more about driver behaviour in my other training videos.

This competence highlights your role as a trainer to use your experience and the experience of others, including your pupil, to have a conversation with them around a safety-critical, or potentially critical, incident that has just happened. This may be something that they have done themselves or seen other roads users do during the lesson that has impacted on them.

If an incident does occur through the actions of your pupil, it will be necessary for you to provide feedback to them not only when it's obvious to the pupil it was an error on their part, but also if the pupil simply did not see a problem or thought what they did was ok.

To learn effectively from the experience around what just happened, you need to use your questioning and listening skills to fully involve and guide the pupil in breaking down what happened. Support the pupil by helping them process the situation for themselves, grow their understanding and experience and to come up with a plan of action. It is vital that the pupil fully understands what happened and how they could have avoided or dealt with the situation better.

This can only be done effectively with a coaching conversation at the side of the road. The reality is that in the time between the incident occurring and finding somewhere safe to stop, the learner may have forgotten some or all of the events leading up to it as they have been dealing with other events that have 'overwritten' their memory. As drivers, we tend to process things, deal with them and then move on to where our attention is needed next.

So, make sure when a safety-critical incident does occur, that you pull up as soon as is practically possible in a safe place to have that conversation and give feedback to the pupil. What happened will be clearer in the mind and the pupil should be able to recall the incident in more detail. So, when stationary, remember to use your coaching and skills and rapport to help the pupil analyse what happened rather than you jump straight in with a detailed recollection of what happened, what the pupil did and how and why you used the controls.

Try and direct them to what happened. Then talk to them about their thoughts, feelings and what they understood from the incident. Make sure you analyse the situation with the pupil to help them

understand the risk and consequences of their actions and what might have happened if you had not stepped in.

Here are some examples of questions you could ask to start off the discussion.

Or, you might ask,

YOU: "Do you remember when I had to brake for you just now and I mentioned it at the time? What caused me to have to do that do you think?"

Or, if the pupil needs a little help remembering the detail, you might say. "I've pulled you over to talk to you about that meeting traffic situation we had back there when I had to alert you to the oncoming car that was not giving way. What are your thoughts on that?"

If you get a "don't know" from the pupil when you ask your questions, either rephrase the question to make it less broad and clearer or if they still don't know because they can't remember, or they lack the knowledge, then give them the answer. The result of you bombarding your pupil with questions that they don't know the answer to will just frustrate them and impact on the rapport you have with them.

Here is an example. You might ask your pupil:

YOU: "Talk to me about what happened at the traffic lights?"

Your pupil says: "I don't know what you mean..."

YOU: "As we approached the lights they started to change. Do you remember what happened next?"

Your pupil says: Oh yes, I remember I didn't react to the lights soon enough and you had to tell me to slow down and then you braked for me"

If at this point the pupil said that they didn't remember, then you might consider telling them. Unless you thought they just needed a bit more clarification.

However, if your pupil is on your wavelength and gives you this answer at this point you might respond with

YOU: "Yes that's it, talk to me more about that and what your thoughts are."

Try to ask more than you tell. Try and get the answers from the pupil, you want to know that they think not what you assume they are thinking. Give them time to think before jumping in too soon with the answer. But give them the answer if they don't know. A pause from the pupil after you ask them a question might be them just thinking about it.

Look for my video training tips on being client-centred. In tip number two I cover building Rapport. With great rapport, you are more likely to get great answers from pupils about how they think and feel.

Ok, in summary, here are some indications that the examiner will be looking for that all the elements of this competence are in place in either your part three or your standards check assessment.

Firstly, you need to make sure you stop for every safety-critical incident making sure that where you stop is safe. That you then allow the pupil time to express any fears or concerns about the incident, helping them to reflect clearly about what happened. You need to make sure that you provide explanation and clarification around any aspects of the incident that the pupil does not understand.

You need to support and help the pupil work out what they would do differently next time, and if necessary, provide them with some solutions. It is important that you check with the pupil that they are able to carry out what you agreed to do next. If not, you need to agree with the pupil what they might need to work on to develop the skills.

Indications of a lack of competence in this area and where you would be marked down on your Part 3 or Standards Check include things like, failing to examine a safety-critical incident with the pupil. Taking too long after the event to address issues generated by an incident.

You also show a lack of competence when you don't allow the pupil to explore their own understanding of what happened, you either jump, state your version of events and what the pupil should have done without any feedback from the pupil,

Or your questions don't allow the pupil to tell you their thoughts around what happened.

Also, you tell the pupil what the solution is and not check their understanding of what happened or their ability to put a solution in place.

Ok, that brings us to the end of all the competencies in Risk Management. In my next video, I'll be looking at Teaching and Learning Strategies and the first competence which is: 'Was the teaching style suited to the pupil's learning style and current ability?'

Indications that all the elements of competence are in place could include:

- finding a safe place to stop and examine the critical incident
- allowing the pupil time to express any fears or concerns the incident might have caused
- supporting the pupil to reflect clearly about what happened
- providing input to clarify aspects of the incident that the pupil does not understand
- support the pupil to identify strategies for future situations
- providing input where the pupil does not understand what they should do differently
- checking that the pupil feels able to put the strategy in place
- agreeing ways of developing that competence if the pupil feels the need

Indications of lack of competence include:

- failing to examine the incident
- taking too long to address issues generated by an incident
- not allowing the pupil to explore their own understanding
- telling the pupil what the solution is and not checking their understanding
- failing to check the pupil's ability to put in place the agreed strategy