

A general guide to driving licences

For more information go to www.direct.gov.uk/motoring





Questions and answers on driving licences

Q Why do we need driving licences?

A The main reason is road safety. You need to meet certain medical standards and show that you can drive safely by passing a driving test (theory and practical). Driving licences also help the police to enforce the law as they can only be held by people who are not disqualified from driving.

Q At what age can I drive?

A Most drivers can start learning to drive at the age of 17 (at 16 for mopeds). Driving licences are valid until the driver is 70. After that, they need to be renewed every three years. We may issue short-period medical licences to people with certain medical conditions. Some drivers have to be older to drive certain vehicles (for example, 21 for driving lorries and buses). These licences are valid until the driver is 45, and then have to be renewed every five years. After the age of 65, they are renewed every year. Stricter medical standards apply to drivers of buses and lorries.

Q What type of licences are there?

A Provisional driving licences are issued to learner drivers. Full driving licences are issued to drivers who pass a driving test (theory and practical). From July 1998 we have issued photocard driving licences with a paper counterpart. Photocard driving licences have to be renewed every 10 years until the driver is 70, to make sure the photograph remains a true likeness of the driver.

Q How do I apply for a driving licence?

A For ordinary vehicles you need to fill in a D1 form. You can get this from Post Office® branches, DVLA local offices, or from us by phoning 0870 240 0009. You can order forms and get more information from our website at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

Q How do I apply for a minibus, bus or lorry licence?

A You need to fill in a D2 form which you can get from us, DVLA local offices or any Traffic Area Office. You can also order one online at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring Strict medical rules apply for these applications and you may need to provide a D4 medical report. (You can get these from us, DVLA local offices and at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring,



and they must be filled in by a doctor.) These licences need to be renewed when you are 45 and you must provide a D4.

Q I have applied for a provisional licence. Can I start to drive?

A You must not drive until you receive the licence or we have confirmed the date your licence starts. This is usually the day after the date we process your application, unless you have asked for a later date.

Q How much will it cost?

A Driving licence fees are listed on the D1 application form. You can also find details on the website at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

Q I am nearly 17 and I have a provisional licence to drive a moped. Do I need another licence to drive a car?

A As long as the licence is current, when you are 17 you can learn to drive a car.

Q How do I apply for a driving test?

A You can apply online at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring, over the phone by calling 08700 101372, or by filling in a form DL26 and TT26 from the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) or from approved driving instructors or driving test centres.

When you have passed your driving test (theory and practical), exchange your pass certificate for a full licence **as soon as possible**. If you do not do this within two years of passing your test, you will have to pass a further driving test (theory and practical) for that category of vehicle.

Q What do I do if I lose my licence?

A Tell the police about the loss and apply to us for a new one by filling in a D1 application form and sending it to us with the appropriate fee. If none of the details on the licence have changed, you can order your new licence by phoning the Customer Enquiries Group on 0870 240 0009 and pay the fee by credit card or debit card.

Q What do I do if I change my name or address?

A Fill in the change of address section on your paper licence or your photocard's paper counterpart and send it to us. If your name has changed, send us original proof of the name change (for example, a marriage certificate, decree absolute or deed poll certificate) with the licence and a filled-in D1 form.

If you do not tell us about a change of name or address, you may be fined up to £1000.



Q At what age can someone supervise a learner driver?

A For car drivers it is 21, as long as that person has held a full GB, Northern Ireland or EC driving licence for at least three years.

Q How do I apply for a provisional motorcycle entitlement?

A Since March 2002, provisional entitlement for motorcycles has automatically been included in provisional licences.

Q How long is provisional motorcycle entitlement valid for?

A The licence is valid until you are 70. (Licences issued before 1 February 2001 show a two-year motorcycle entitlement if this was asked for.) You must take a compulsory basic training (CBT) course before riding a moped or motorcycle on the road. When you successfully complete a CBT course you will get a training certificate (DL196). The certificate is valid for two years. Keep your certificate safe because you will need to show it to the examiner when you take your moped or motorcycle practical test. You may also need to show it to the police.

You do not need to take a CBT course in the following circumstances.

- If you have passed a moped test since 1 December 1990.
- You already have a full licence for one class of motorcycle entitlement and want to upgrade to another. However, you will need to take a further training course on the larger machine if your full licence limits you to riding automatics and you want to ride a manual motorcycle.

If you have any questions about the CBT course, phone the DSA on 0115 901 2500 and choose the CBT option.

Q What is the procedure for reporting a medical condition?

A When you apply for a driving licence, you must tell us if you have any of the medical conditions listed in the health section of the D1.

Q What if I report a condition?

A If you tell us about a medical condition, we will ask you to fill in a medical questionnaire. We may also ask your doctor for a medical report. (We will only do this with your permission.)

Our medical advisor will consider the reports and decide whether you can have a licence. If you can, they will decide whether your condition should be reviewed at set intervals.



Q What convictions do lorry and bus drivers have to report?

A Drivers of Large Goods Vehicles (LGV) and Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCV) must tell us about any driving convictions they have. PCV drivers must tell us about all convictions, not just those relating to driving.

Q What happens if I get penalty points or am disqualified?

A If you are convicted of a motoring offence, the court can put penalty points on your licence, or disqualify you from driving for a period. Points will stay on your licence for four or 11 years, depending on the offence. After this period you can apply to have them removed from your licence. For drivers (including motorcyclists) from the UK, EU/EEA, the Isle of Man, the Channel Islands or Gibraltar, special rules apply for a period of two years from the date of passing their first driving test in these countries. The rules also apply to other foreign drivers who have to pass a test for a UK licence because this is treated as their first driving test.

If you get six or more penalty points before the end of the two-year period (including any points you got before passing the test), your licence will automatically be revoked (withdrawn). To get your licence back you must apply for a provisional

licence to drive as a learner and to pass the theory and practical tests again.

Passing the tests does not remove the penalty points from your licence and if the total reaches 12, you may be disqualified from driving.

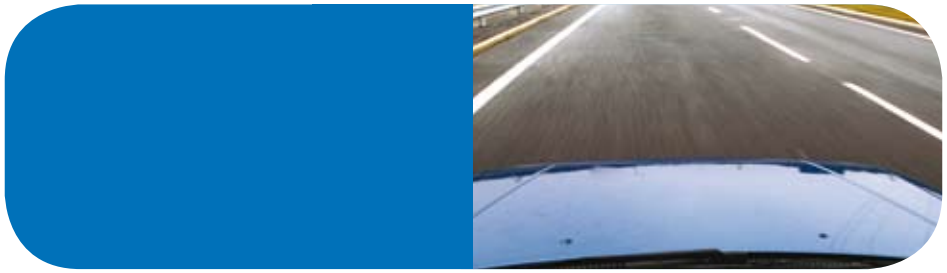
These rules also apply to drivers who have exchanged a licence issued in a designated country for a UK licence and then passed a test in this country for driving another type of vehicle (for example, a HGV). This is treated as a first driving test and the special rules apply.

Q How do I apply for an International Driving Permit (IDP)?

A You should contact the AA, RACMS or Green Flag for advice, but you will need to produce a valid GB licence. You do not need to be a member of any of the organisations.

Q What if I hold a foreign licence?

A If you have a full licence from a country in the European Community or European Economic Area you can drive in the UK with that licence until it ends or would need to be renewed under the laws of England and Wales. If you have a foreign licence, which we do not recognise for the purpose of exchanging licences, you can drive as a visitor for up to 12 months from the date you last entered the UK. If you live in the



UK you can drive for up to 12 months from the date you become a resident. To continue driving you must get a provisional GB licence and pass a driving test before the 12-month period ends.

Q What countries' licences do we exchange for GB licences?

A We exchange licences from countries in the European Community/European Economic Area (EC/EAA). We also exchange licences from the following countries.

Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands (not motorcycle entitlement), Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea (not motorcycle entitlement), Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland, Zimbabwe.

Q I hold a foreign licence and intend to take a British driving test. Do I need to display 'L' plates?

A Not if you take the test within the first 12 months of becoming a resident. If 12 months have passed, you need to apply for a provisional licence and the rules for learner drivers will apply.

Q What categories of vehicle are shown on licences?

A The categories are as follows.

A1 Light motorcycles with an engine size of up to 125cc

and a power of no more than 11kw (14.6 horsepower)

A Motorcycles (with or without a sidecar) up to 25kw or 33 horsepower and a power-to-weight ratio of up to 0.16kw/kg

B1 Motor tricycles and quadricycles weighing up to 550kg when unladen (not loaded)

B Motor cars or light vans with up to eight passenger seats and weighing up to 3500kg (allowed to tow a trailer weighing up to 750kg)

C1 Vehicles weighing between 3500kg and 7500kg (allowed to tow a trailer weighing up to 750kg)

C Vehicles weighing over 3500kg and with a trailer of up to 750kg

D1 Small passenger-carrying vehicles with nine to 16 passenger seats and a trailer weighing up to 750kg

D Any bus with more than eight passenger seats and a trailer weighing up to 750kg

B+E Motor cars or light vans with up to eight passenger seats, with a trailer of more than 750kg

C1+E Vehicles over 3500kg and a trailer of more than 750kg

C+E Vehicles over 3500kg and a trailer of more than 750kg



D1+E Small passenger-carrying vehicles with nine to 16 passenger seats with a trailer of more than 750kg

D+E Any bus with more than eight passenger seats and a trailer of more than 750kg

- f** Agricultural tractors
- g** Roadrollers
- h** Tracked vehicles
- k** Pedestrian-controlled vehicles (those powered by a person)
- p** Mopeds

You can get more information on driving licences from the D100 booklet. You can get this from us, from Post Office® branches, and from the website at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

**Driver Customer Services
Correspondence Team
DVLA
Swansea
SA6 7JL**

**Customer Enquiries (Drivers)
0870 240 0009**

**Customer Enquiries (Vehicles)
0870 240 0010**

The lines are open between 8am and 8.30pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 5.30pm on Saturdays. Your call may be answered by an interactive voice system but you will be able to speak to an operator

during office hours. We monitor or record some calls for quality-control purposes.

Our e-mail address is drivers.dvla@gtnet.gov.uk

Our fax number is 0870 240 1651.

The following information leaflets or booklets are also available from us or to download from www.direct.gov.uk/motoring

INF28 – Driving a minibus

INF29 – Minimum Test Vehicles

INF30 – Towing Trailers in Great Britain

INF31 – Motorcycles

INF38 – Driving in GB as Visitors or New Resident

INF40 – Renewing your Car Driving Licence

INF52 – Special Licensing Arrangements for Drivers of Large Vehicles

This booklet only gives general information. It is not a complete guide to the law. The information in this booklet was correct at the time it was printed. Visit the website at www.direct.gov.uk/motoring or contact us for the latest information.



