

# Driving in Great Britain (GB) as a visitor or a new resident

For more information go to [www.direct.gov.uk/driving](http://www.direct.gov.uk/driving)



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**This leaflet explains the current rules affecting people who have non-GB driving licences and are visiting, or have come to live in, Great Britain. All drivers must meet the minimum age requirements for driving in Great Britain. Generally, you must be:**

- **17 to drive a car or a motorcycle**
- **18 to drive a medium-sized vehicle (for example, a vehicle between 3500kg and 7500kg with a trailer up to 750kg), and**
- **21 to drive a large lorry or a bus.**

**Booklet INS57P, 'Information on driving licences', gives more information on minimum ages.**

The information in this booklet applies to both 'ordinary' and 'vocational' licences (see below).

### **Ordinary licences**

An ordinary licence is one which entitles you to drive cars, motorcycles and small vehicles (those weighing up to 3500kg and having no more than eight passenger seats).

### **Vocational licences**

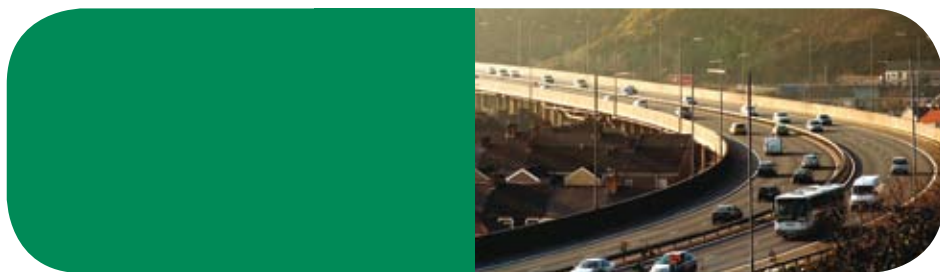
A vocational licence is one that entitles you to drive minibuses and buses, and medium-sized or large vehicles weighing over 3500kg and able to tow a trailer over 750kg.

These licences can be 'provisional' or 'full'. A provisional licence shows which vehicles you can drive only as a learner. A full licence shows which vehicles you have passed a driving test for.

## **1 European Community/European Economic Area (EC/EEA licences)**

Driving licences issued by countries in the European Community and three other countries in the European Economic Area (EC/EEA) are treated equally. The countries are:

**Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg,**



**Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.**

### **Coming to live in Great Britain**

If you have a valid EC/EEA licence, you can drive any vehicle covered by the categories shown on your licence for the periods set out below.

#### **Ordinary licences**

- Until you are 70 or have lived in GB for three years, whichever is longer.

#### **Vocational licences**

- If you are younger than 45, until you are 45 or have lived in Great Britain for five years, whichever is longer.
- If you are over 45 but under 65, until you are 66 or have lived in Great Britain for five years, whichever is sooner.
- If you are aged 65 or over, until you have lived in Great Britain for 12 months.

**You must get a British driving licence to continue driving in Great Britain after these periods.**

### **Visiting Great Britain**

If you have a valid EC/EEA licence and you are visiting Great Britain, you can drive any vehicle covered by the categories shown on your licence.

### **Register of European Community Licence holders**

By law, if you come to live in Great Britain and hold an EC/EEA vocational licence you must register your details with us within 12 months of moving here.

If you have an EC/EEA ordinary licence, you do not have to register, but you can if you want to.

To register you will need to fill in, 'Application for a driving licence counterpart for non-GB licence holders' (D9). You can:

- download this application from the website at **[www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)**
- pick one up at a DVLA local office (see section 10), or
- order one by phoning **0300 790 6802.**



## Reporting health conditions

You must tell us about certain health conditions which you:

- currently have
- had before coming to live here (even if you have already reported them to other authorities), and
- have recently found out about.

In most cases, our rules will be the same as those in other EC/EEA countries. There is a full list of the conditions you must tell us about in booklet D100, 'Driving Licences', which you can get from a post office or download from the website at [www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets).

## Taking a test

To take a GB driving test, you normally have to live in Great Britain. If you have recently moved to Great Britain from another EC/EEA country, you must have lived in Great Britain for at least 185 days in the 12 months before taking the test and applying for a full driving licence.

To take a Great Britain driving test you will need to do one of the following.

- Apply for a GB counterpart document (D58/2) by filling in a D9 (Application for a driving licence counterpart for non-GB licence holders) and enclosing your EC/EEA driving licence. We will send these back to you, free of charge, with your D58/2. However, you must pay the appropriate fee and give up your EC/EEA driving licence when you claim your full GB licence.
- Exchange your EC/EEA driving licence for a GB provisional licence.

## Vehicles you can also drive in Great Britain if you have an EC/EEA licence

If you have an EC/EEA ordinary licence, in Great Britain you can also drive certain vehicles in which the normal requirements for driving large vehicles do not apply to. You can get more details about these vehicles and the conditions that apply to them in the factsheet 'Special Licensing Arrangements For Drivers of Large Vehicles' (INF52).



## **EC/EEA licences issued in exchange for licences from elsewhere**

- If you got an EC/EEA licence by exchanging one from a designated country (see section 3), it will only be valid in GB for 12 months. However, you can exchange your EC/EEA licence for a GB licence.
- If you got an EC/EEA licence by exchanging one from a country that is **not** a designated country (see section 5), it will only be valid for 12 months and you cannot exchange it for a GB licence.
- If you exchanged your EC/EEA licence for a licence from any country outside the EC/EEA, the licence you got will be valid in Great Britain for only 12 months. You can exchange that licence for a GB one if you prove you are entitled to an EC/EEA licence.

## **2 Northern Ireland driving licences**

You can use your Northern Ireland (NI) licence here until it runs out. When it runs out you can apply for a GB licence.

You can exchange a full NI ordinary licence for a full GB ordinary licence if your NI licence was issued on or after 1 January 1976. You can exchange a full NI vocational licence for a full GB vocational licence if your NI licence was issued on or after 1 April 1986.

You can take a driving test in Great Britain using your:

- NI provisional licence, or
- NI full licence that entitles you to drive the relevant vehicle as a learner.

## **3 Countries we have agreements with for exchanging licences (designated countries)**

**You can exchange a valid driving licence from any of the following countries.**

**Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland and Zimbabwe.**



## Visiting Great Britain

If you are visiting Great Britain and normally live abroad, and you hold a full ordinary licence from a designated country, you can drive any type of vehicle that:

- weighs up to 3.5 tonnes
- has no more than eight passenger seats, and
- is shown on your licence,

for up to 12 months from the date you last came into Great Britain, whether or not you brought the vehicle into Great Britain. If you hold a full vocational licence from a designated country, you are only allowed to drive lorries and buses that are registered outside Great Britain and you have driven into Great Britain. If you have a licence from Gibraltar you can also drive lorries and buses registered in Great Britain.

## Coming to live in Great Britain

### Ordinary licences

You can drive small vehicles for 12 months from the time you started living in Great Britain. To continue driving you must exchange your licence for a GB one before the end of the 12 months. If you do not do this you must stop driving. You can apply to exchange your licence at any time within five years of starting to live in Great Britain.

### Vocational licences

You cannot drive medium-sized or large vehicles, or passenger-carrying vehicles, until you have passed the relevant GB driving test. If you hold a full Gibraltar vocational licence, you can drive these vehicles for 12 months, and can exchange a valid vocational licence within five years of starting to live in Great Britain.





## **Disqualified non-GB licence holders**

We will send your non-GB driving licence to you on the date your disqualification ends, to the address we hold for you in our records. If you want to exchange your licence for a GB one, you will need to fill in a D1 application form (see section 9 of this booklet for details of how to get our forms and leaflets).

## **4 Licences from Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man**

### **Visiting Great Britain**

#### **Ordinary licences**

As long as your full licence is valid, you can drive any category of vehicle shown on it for 12 months from the date you arrive in Great Britain.

#### **Vocational licences**

You can drive the vehicle you have driven into Great Britain in, for up to 12 months. You can also drive vehicles registered in Great Britain.

## **Coming to live in Great Britain**

### **Ordinary licences**

You can drive in Great Britain for up to 12 months from the time you started living here. To continue driving after that time you must exchange your licence for a GB one. You can exchange a licence from Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man for a GB one if your licence was issued after 1 April 1991.

### **Vocational licences**

If you hold a vocational licence issued in Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, you can drive for 12 months on that licence, and can exchange it for a GB one.

## **5 All other countries**

### **Visiting Great Britain**

While your full licence or driving permit is valid, you can drive vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tonnes, and with up to eight passenger seats, for up to 12 months from the date you came to Great Britain.





However, if you have a vocational licence, you can only drive large vehicles which have been registered outside Great Britain and which you have driven into Great Britain.

## **Coming to live in Great Britain**

### **Ordinary licences**

While your full licence is valid, you can drive any type of small vehicle shown on your licence for up to 12 months from the time you started living in Great Britain.

To continue to drive after this you must pass a GB driving test before the 12-month period ends. If you get a GB provisional licence during this period, you will not have to display 'L' plates or be supervised by a qualified driver, and you will be able to drive on motorways.

If you do not pass a test within the 12-month period, you will not be allowed to drive as a full licence holder and the conditions of a GB provisional licence will apply.

If you do not apply for a provisional

licence within 12 months, you must stop driving and get a GB provisional licence by filling in an 'Application for a driving licence' (D1) (see section 9 of this booklet for details of how to get our forms and leaflets). The conditions of GB provisional licences will then apply.

### **Vocational licences**

You cannot drive large vehicles until you have passed the relevant GB driving test. You must pass a car driving test before applying for provisional entitlement to drive larger vehicles as a learner.

**For more information about how to apply for a provisional GB driving licence, see section 8.**



## 6 Driving in Great Britain as a student

### Students from the European Community

If you are a student and hold a full EC/EEA licence, you can drive cars and motorcycles in Great Britain while your licence is valid or until you are 70, whichever is sooner. If you do not hold a full licence, you must have been studying here for at least 185 days before you can take a GB driving test or apply for a full licence.

### Students from a country outside the European Community

If you hold a licence from outside the European Community, or an International Driving Permit, you can drive here for up to 12 months.

If you hold a licence from a designated country (see section 3), you can apply to exchange this for a GB licence. You need to do this within five years of moving here.

If you do not have a driving licence,

or your licence was not issued in a designated country, you will need to apply for a GB provisional licence and then pass a driving test.

You will be able to take a test and get a full licence if you meet the requirements for becoming a Great Britain resident.

## 7 How to exchange your non-GB licence for a GB licence

To exchange your non-GB licence for a full GB one, you should fill in 'Application for a driving licence' (D1) and send it to us at DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1BT with your licence and the correct fee (see section 9 of this booklet for details of how to get our forms and leaflets). If the licence you are exchanging is a **vocational** one, you should fill in an 'Application for a lorry or bus' (D2). If the licence was issued in Jersey, Guernsey or the Isle of Man, you must also provide a 'Medical report' (D4) filled in by a doctor. If your vocational licence



was issued in an EC/EEA country, you only need to provide a D4 if you are 45 or over. This applies even if your vocational licence is still valid.

**When you exchange your non-GB licence, you cannot get it back.**


### Rules for exchanging your licence

You must meet the following conditions before you can exchange your non-GB licence for a GB one.

- You must normally live in Great Britain and have a permanent address here.
- If you:
  - have an EC/EEA licence
  - apply for a GB driving test at the same time as exchanging your licence, and
  - have moved to Great Britain after recently living in another EC/EEA country,you must have lived in Great Britain for at least 185 days in the 12 months before you apply for a full driving licence.
- Licences from the designated countries listed in section 3

must be valid when you apply to exchange your licence. You will be able to exchange a EC/EEA country even if it is no longer valid.

- You must send us your non-GB licence, which we will return to the authority that issued it.
- You cannot exchange International Driving Permits.
- You cannot exchange test-pass certificates (except for those issued in NI or Gibraltar for a test passed within the past two years).
- If you apply to exchange a Canadian licence, you must provide evidence that you passed a driving test in a manual vehicle, otherwise we will issue a driving licence that only allows you to drive automatic vehicles.
- To exchange a Japanese licence you must provide an official translation (available for a fee) from the Consulate General of Japan at 101-104 Piccadilly, London, W1V 9FN, or at 2 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7HW.
- To exchange a licence issued from the Republic of Korea, you must provide an official



translation (available for a fee) from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea, 60 Buckingham Gate, London, SW1E 6AJ.

- If you have lost your non-GB licence, you will need to get an official document from the authority that issued it to confirm you are entitled to drive.
- You cannot transfer entitlement to ride motorcycles from a Republic of Korea or Faroe Islands licence to a GB licence.

## 8 How to apply for a provisional GB driving licence

If you need to pass a GB driving test to get a full GB licence, you must first apply for a provisional driving licence. To do this you should fill in 'Application for a driving licence' (D1) and send it to us at DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AF with the correct fee (see section 9 of this booklet for details of how to get our forms and leaflets).

## 9 How to get our forms and leaflets


- You can order application forms D1 and D2 from our forms ordering service on the website at **[www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)**
- You can download other forms from **[www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)** and driving licence leaflets from **[www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets)**
- Form D1 is also available from post offices or by phoning DVLA customer enquiries on 0300 790 6801.
- You can get form D9 from your nearest DVLA local office, or by phoning DVLA customer enquiries on 0300 790 6801.

## 10 Further information

You can find the address of your nearest DVLA local office:

- on the website at **[www.direct.gov.uk/dvla-local](http://www.direct.gov.uk/dvla-local)** or
- by phoning 0300 123 1277 (you will have to give your postcode).

**If you have any questions about driving licences, you can find more details on our website at [www.direct.gov.uk/driverinfo](http://www.direct.gov.uk/driverinfo)**



and in booklet 'Driving licences' (D100) which is also available on the website, from post offices, from DVLA local offices and from Traffic Area Offices. More details about driving licences are given in 'Information on driving licences' (INS57P), which you can download from **[www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets)**

You can also contact us in the following ways.

**Phone (Customer Enquiries):**

0300 790 6801 (Lines are open between 8am and 7pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 2pm on Saturdays.)

**Fax:** 0300 123 0784 (from the UK), +44 1792 786369 (from abroad)

**Email:** go to

**[www.direct.gov.uk/emaildvla](http://www.direct.gov.uk/emaildvla)**

We cannot provide driver numbers or personal information from a driver's record by email.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing and have a textphone, you should phone **0300 123 1278. This number will not respond to an ordinary phone.**

## 11 Quick summary table

The table below shows you how long you can drive on your ordinary non-GB licence as a visitor or a resident. Please see the relevant section for information on vocational licences.

Country	Duration as a visitor	Duration as a resident
EC/EEA	While your licence is valid	While your licence is valid
Northern Ireland	While your licence is valid	While your licence is valid
Countries we have driving licence exchange agreements with (designated countries)	12 months from date of entry	12 months from the date you move to Great Britain, in which time you must exchange your licence for a GB one
Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man	12 months from the date of entry	12 months from the date you move to Great Britain, in which time you must exchange your licence for a GB licence (as long as your licence was issued after 1 April 1991)
All other countries	12 months from the date of entry	12 months from the date you move to Great Britain, within which time you must get a provisional licence

## Notes



