

# 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 with non-GB driving licences who visit or 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 and/or bus.

**The booklet 'Information on driving licences' (INS57P), gives more information about minimum ages.**

The information in this booklet applies to both 'ordinary' and 'vocational' licences.

### **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, buses and medium-size large

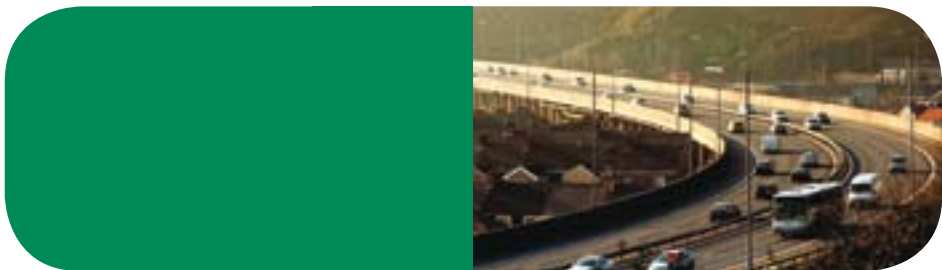
vehicles weighing over 3500kg and able to tow a trailer over 750kg.

These licences can be 'provisional' or 'full'. A provisional licence shows vehicles which 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.**



## Visiting Great Britain

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

## Coming to live in Great Britain

If you have a valid EC/EEA licence, this will authorise you to drive in this country 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 GB for five years, whichever is longer.
- If you are over 45 (but under 65) until you are 66 or have lived in GB for five years, whichever happens sooner.
- If you are aged 65 or over, until you have lived in GB for 12 months.

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

## Register of European Community Licence holders

By law, if you live in GB and hold an EC/EEA vocational licence you must register your details with us.

If you hold an EC/EEA ordinary licence you can also register if you want to. To register, go to your nearest DVLA local office (see section 10) and pick up form 'Counterpart Driving Licence for EC/EEA full licence holders' (D9), or you can phone DVLA Customer Enquiries on 0870 240 0009 and we will send the form to you or you can download the D9 from [www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)

## Reporting health conditions

The booklet 'Driving licences' (D100) will give you more information about the types of condition you must tell us about. These include conditions you had before coming to live here, which you may have already reported to other authorities, and those health



conditions you have recently found out about. In most cases, our rules will be the same as those in other EC/EEA countries.

### **Taking a test**

If you want to take a GB driving test you must normally live in GB. If you have moved to GB recently from another EC/EEA country, you must have lived in GB for 185 days in the 12 months before you can apply for a driving test and a full licence.

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

- Apply for a GB counterpart document (D58/2) by filling in a D9 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 in exchange for a GB one when you claim your full licence.
- Exchange your EC/EEA driving licence for GB equivalent and ask us for appropriate provisional entitlement.

### **Vehicles you can also drive in GB if you have an EC/EEA licence**

If you have an EC/EEA ordinary licence you can also drive certain vehicles in GB to which the normal requirements for driving large vehicles do not apply. 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 it 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. You cannot exchange this for a GB licence.



- If you get a licence from any country outside the EC/EEA which you had exchanged for an EC/EEA licence, that licence will be valid in GB for only 12 months. You can exchange the 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 GB using your NI provisional licence, or your full licence that gives you provisional entitlement to drive the relevant vehicle as a learner.

## 3 Countries we have driving licence exchange agreements with (designated countries)

**You can exchange your driving licence from 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 GB 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 GB, whether or not you brought the vehicle into GB. If you hold a full vocational licence from a designated country, you are only allowed to drive lorries and buses that are registered outside GB and you have driven into GB. If you have a Gibraltar licence you can also drive lorries and buses registered in GB.

### Coming to live in Great Britain

#### Ordinary licences

You can drive small vehicles for 12 months from the time you started living in GB. To continue driving you must get a GB licence before the end of the 12 months. You do this by exchanging your licence for a GB one. **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 GB.

#### 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 GB.

## 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 GB.

#### Vocational licences

You can drive any registered vehicles that you have driven into GB for a period up to 12 months.

### Coming to live in Great Britain

#### Ordinary licences

You can drive in GB for up to 12 months from the time you started living here. To continue driving after



that time you must have exchanged 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 and can exchange your vocational licence for a GB one.

## **5 All other countries**

### **Visiting Great Britain**

You can drive vehicles weighing up to 3.5 tonnes and with up to eight passenger seats as long as your full licence or driving permit stays valid for up to 12 months from the date you came to GB. However, if you have a vocational licence you can only drive large vehicles which have been registered outside GB and which you have driven into GB.

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

#### **Ordinary licences**

If 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 GB.

To continue to drive after this you must pass your driving test before the 12-month period ends. If you get a provisional licence during this period you will not have to display “L” plates, be supervised by a qualified driver, and you will not be stopped from driving 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 provisional licences will apply.

If you do not apply for a provisional licence within the first 12 months you must stop driving and get a GB provisional licence. Conditions of provisional licences will then apply.





## 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 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 GB 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 an 'Application for a driving licence' (D1)

## Vocational licences

You cannot drive large vehicles until you have passed the relevant GB driving test. You must first 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 an EC/EEA licence you can drive cars and motorcycles in Great Britain while your licence is valid or until you are 70. If you do not hold a licence you must have been studying here for at least 185 days before you can take a driving test or apply for a full licence.



and send it to us at DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1BT with your licence and the correct fee. 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 current. **On exchange you must surrender your licence which cannot be returned to you.**

### 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 GB and have a permanent address here.
- If you are an EC/EEA licence holder applying for a GB driving test at the same time as exchanging your licence, and you

have moved to GB after recently living in another EC/EEA country, you must have lived in Great Britain for 185 days in the 12-month period before you apply for a full driving licence.

- Licences from the designated countries listed in section 3 must be valid at the time we receive your application to exchange your licence. You will be able to exchange those issued in any EC/EEA country even if it is not 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).
- Applicants who apply to exchange their Canadian drivers licence must provide evidence that they passed a driving test in a manual transmission vehicle. Canadian licences do not show whether or not a manual driving test has been passed.



- Japanese licences must be accompanied by an official translation (available for a fee) from the Consulate General of Japan at 101-104 Piccadilly, London, W1V 9FN or 2 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7HW.
- Licences issued from the Republic of Korea must be accompanied by 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 apply for an official document from the authority that issued it to confirm your driving entitlement.
- 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 a D1 and send it to us at DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1AD with the correct fee.

## 9 How to get our forms and leaflets

- You can order application forms D1 and D2 from our forms ordering service on [www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)
- You can download other driving licence forms from [www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms) and you can download driving licence leaflets from [www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringleaflets)
- Form D1 is also available from Post Office® branches or you can phone DVLA customer enquiries on 0870 240 0009.
- You can get form D9 from your nearest DVLA local office, or you can phone DVLA customer enquiries on 0870 240 0009.

## 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 0870 243 0444 (you will be asked 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 or from Post Office® branches, DVLA local offices and Traffic Area Offices. More details about driving licences can be found in the booklet 'Information on driving licences' (INS57P) which is available to download from **[www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms](http://www.direct.gov.uk/motoringforms)**

You can also contact us in the following ways.

**Phone (Customer Enquiries):**

0870 240 0009 (lines are open between 8am and 8.30pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 5.30pm on Saturdays).

**Fax:** 0870 240 1651 (from the UK), + 44 1792 786369 (from abroad).

**E-mail:** [drivers.dvla@gtinet.gov.uk](mailto:drivers.dvla@gtinet.gov.uk)

We cannot provide driver numbers or personal information from a driver's record by e-mail.

If you are deaf or hard of hearing and have a textphone, you should phone **01792 766366**. **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 resident. Please see the relevant section for information on vocational licences.

Country	Duration as a visitor	Duration as a resident
EC/EEA	Validity of own licence	Validity of own licence
Northern Ireland	Validity of own licence	Validity of own licence
Countries we have driving licence exchange agreements with (designated countries)	12 months from date of entry	12 months from date of entry, then exchange own licence for GB licence
Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man	12 months from date of entry	12 months from date of entry, then exchange own licence for GB licence provided own licence issued after 1 April 1991
All other countries	12 months from date of entry	12 months from date of entry, then apply for provisional licence

# Notes

# Notes

