



# Learning to drive

## how to get your car licence

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### Three stages to get your licence

New Zealand's *graduated driver licensing system* has three stages:

- Stage 1 — learner licence
- Stage 2 — restricted licence
- Stage 3 — full licence

Each stage has a test you have to pass. There's a theory test to begin Stage 1, and driving tests to begin Stages 2 and 3.

As you move from one stage to the next you're given a new licence, with different requirements and more responsibilities. Normal road rules apply at all times.

You must always have your licence with you when you're driving, and you must be at least 15 years old before you can apply for a car driver licence.

### How much does it cost?

	Fee
Learner licence application fee	\$39.30
Learner licence test	\$39.70
Restricted licence application fee	\$39.30
Restricted licence test	\$48.90
Full licence application fee	\$44.30
Full licence test	\$70.80
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$282.30</b>

All fees include GST and are non-refundable.

### Where do I go?

Driver licensing is handled by participating outlets of these agencies:

- Automobile Association (AA)
- Vehicle Testing New Zealand (VTNZ)
- Vehicle Inspection New Zealand (VINZ)
- On Road New Zealand.

To find driver licensing agents in your region, check the telephone directory or look on our website ([www.landtransport.govt.nz](http://www.landtransport.govt.nz)).

### Stage 1 — learner licence

Before you learn to drive on the road, you must get a *learner licence*. You'll need to:

- fill out an application form
- produce your full birth certificate\*, passport or other proof of your identity and age (call 0800 822 422 or see Factsheet 20 for acceptable identification)
- produce evidence of your current address
- pay the fees for the learner licence application and the test
- pass an eyesight check or provide an eyesight certificate from your doctor or optometrist
- have your photograph taken and provide a signature
- pass the learner licence test.

\* Small, older style birth certificates are no longer accepted by many government agencies as proof of identity.

When you pass the test you'll be given a temporary learner licence, valid for 21 days, to use until you receive your photo driver licence in the mail. (It should arrive within 2–3 weeks).

### Learner licence conditions

- You must not drive on your own. When you're learning to drive you must be accompanied by a supervisor, who always must sit in the front passenger seat beside you. A supervisor is someone who holds and has held a current full car driver licence for at least two years.
- At all times when you're driving you must display 'L' (learner) plates on the vehicle. You can obtain 'L' plates from suppliers, including Land Transport New Zealand driver licensing agents (listed earlier).



If you're driving, you *must* have your learner licence with you.

There's no law stopping you from carrying passengers. If you do want to carry passengers, your supervisor (who will, of course, be in the vehicle seated next to you) must agree to this — the supervisor is responsible for everyone in the vehicle and for what happens when you're driving.

If you're under 20 years old the legal alcohol limit is 30mg/100ml of blood. This is effectively a zero limit — consuming one drink may mean you can be charged with drink driving. If you're over 20 the legal alcohol limit is 80mg/100ml of blood.

## Stage 2 — restricted licence

After holding a learner licence for at least six months, you can book a time at your driver licensing agent to take your *restricted licence test*. The restricted licence test is a practical test of your driving.

To get your restricted licence, you must:

- have held your learner licence for at least six months
- produce identification (eg, your learner licence)
- produce evidence of your current address
- pay the fees for the restricted licence application and test
- pass an eyesight check or provide an eyesight certificate from your doctor or optometrist
- have your photograph taken and provide a signature
- pass the restricted licence test.

When you pass this test you'll be given a temporary restricted licence, valid for 21 days, to use until you receive your photo driver licence in the mail.

### Restricted licence conditions

You must always have your restricted licence with you when you're driving.

You can drive on your own, but not between 10 pm and 5 am. Between these times you must have a supervisor in the front passenger seat who holds a full car licence, and has held this for at least two years.

If you sat the test in an automatic vehicle, your licence will say that you can only drive automatic vehicles.

You must not carry passengers unless you have a supervisor with you. The only passengers you can carry without a supervisor are:

- your spouse (or person you live with as if you were married)
- children who live with you and who are under your or your spouse's care (you or your spouse support them financially)
- relatives who live with you and who are on a social security benefit (domestic purposes, widow's, invalid's, unemployment or sickness), or
- someone you look after as their primary caregiver.

If you're under 20, your legal alcohol limit is still the same as it was on your learner licence. To be safe, you should not drink anything before you drive.

## Stage 3 — full licence

You can apply for a *full driver licence* after 18 months on your restricted licence if you're under 25 years old, or after six months on your restricted licence if you're 25 or older.

If you're under 25 years old and you successfully complete an approved course, you can apply for your full licence after 12 months instead of 18 months. (Please note that you must have had your restricted licence for at least six months before you complete the course). Present the course certificate to the driver licensing agent when you apply for your full licence.

If you're 25 or older and you successfully complete an approved course, you can apply for your full licence after three months. Present the course certificate to the driver licensing agent when you apply for your full licence.

To get your full licence, you must:

- pay the fees for the application and the test
- produce identification (eg, your restricted licence)
- produce evidence of your current address
- pass an eyesight check or provide an eyesight certificate from your doctor or optometrist
- have your photograph taken and provide a signature
- pass the full licence test (see Factsheet 58 for more details on the full licence driving test).

When you pass the test you'll be given a temporary licence, valid for 21 days, to use until your full licence arrives in the mail. It should arrive within two or three weeks.

You must always have your driver licence with you when you're driving.

### Where can I find out more?

- Visit our website: [www.landtransport.govt.nz](http://www.landtransport.govt.nz).
- Call our Driver Licensing Call Centre: (freephone) 0800 822 422.
- Write to us: Land Transport New Zealand, PO Box 2840, Wellington.

### About factsheets

We use our factsheets to provide useful, common-sense advice and information in a concise format. They can't cover all aspects of a topic, and should not be used instead of authoritative legal documents or legal advice. Check our website or phone our Helpdesk (freephone 0800 699 000) to ensure you have the latest version.