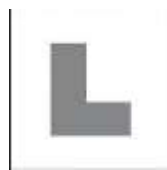


# Learning to Drive

For many people, learning to drive can be a milestone in our wish to become more independent and take on more responsibility.



## Getting licensed

Before you can learn to drive, you will need to apply for a provisional driving licence. You can apply for one online at Gov.uk ([www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences](http://www.gov.uk/browse/driving/driving-licences)) or fill in the D1 form from the post office.

You cannot learn to drive until you are 17 years old for cars or 16 for mopeds.

When applying for a licence you must tell the DVLA about any medical conditions or special needs that could affect your driving. These include things like heart conditions, diabetes, cancers/tumours and vision problems. For further details, visit the DVLA's website ([www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)).

## Learning

Once you've got your licence, you will then have two options: learn with an accompanying driver or a registered driving instructor.

The Government's Driving Standards Agency (DSA) strongly recommends learning to drive with a registered Approved Driving Instructor (ADI). There are thousands of driving schools and instructors around, ranging from small, independent instructors to national driving schools. Details of all the instructors in your area should be available in the phone book.

If you do decide to practise with an accompanying driver, they must be over 21 years old and have had a full driving licence for at least three years. They also must put you, the learner, on their car insurance, ensure the car is safe and roadworthy and put L plates on their car.

## Driving Tests

The theory test is a two part test conducted on a computer. The first part is a multiple-choice test where candidates need to answer 43 out of 50 questions correctly. The second part of the test is called a hazard perception test. This test consists of 14 video clips in which you must identify when hazards start to develop. Once you have passed your theory test, you have two years in which to pass your practical test.

Once you've taken enough lessons, you will then need to take a practical driving test. These are set by the DSA and you will need to book your test beforehand.

You can contact the national test booking line on 0300 200 1122 or book online via their website ([www.gov.uk/book-driving-test](http://www.gov.uk/book-driving-test)). Practical tests normally take around 40 minutes and are designed to see if you can drive safely and demonstrate that you know the Highway Code.

## Driving - Once You've Passed Your Test

Once you've passed your test, you need to live up to the responsibility now placed in you.

### **Be Aware**

Any amount of alcohol affects your ability to drive. There is no foolproof way of drinking and staying under the limit, or of knowing how much an individual person can drink and still drive safely. **Remember that everyone reacts differently to alcohol, so it is best not to drink and drive at all.**

Driving while unfit due to drugs is against the law. This applies to prescribed medication or over-the-counter products as well as illegal substances. Driving while unfit through drugs is just as dangerous as drink driving and carries similar penalties.

Breaking the speed limit, or driving too fast for the conditions on the road, contributes to more than 850 deaths and 33,000 injuries every year. **Stick to the speed limit and drive as safely – not as fast! – as you can.**

### **Legal obligations of drivers and keepers of vehicles**

There are duties and obligations you must meet before driving or keeping a vehicle on the road:

The vehicle must be registered with the DVLA, have valid vehicle tax and hold a current MOT test certificate. You must also have the minimum of third party insurance that covers your use of the vehicle.

You must tell the DVLA if you change your address and or name, make any alterations to your vehicle, sell your vehicle and have or develop a medical condition.

### **New Drivers Act**

Your driving licence is automatically revoked if you build up six or more penalty points within two years of passing your first driving test. You'll have to reapply for your driving licence as a learner driver and resit your driving test.

### **Pass Plus**

Pass Plus is a training course that will build upon your existing skills and knowledge, it will teach you how to anticipate, plan for and deal with all kinds of hazards, and can help you to become more confident on the roads ([www.gov.uk/pass-plus](http://www.gov.uk/pass-plus)).

It is made up of modules which include driving in town, in all weathers, on rural roads, at night, on dual carriageways and on motorways. You will not have to take a test at the end of the course but you will be continuously assessed.

When you have successfully completed Pass Plus, check available discounts offered by insurance companies. The amount you save can be significant, and you may well save more than you paid for the course!

