



Driving Licence Entitlement

Business Impact

To understand how the driving licence entitlement works. As well as information regarding identity checks and foreign driving licences.

Background

In 1997 the new 'European style' laws were introduced regarding Driving Licence Entitlement. The new licences determine the type of vehicle you can drive, however, there is a complicated formula which determines this.

Old Style Licences

Licences pre 1997, on the old style paper licence, (pink and green), there are eight distinct main categories (excluding tractors and road rollers.) which were **A, B, B1, C, C1, D, D1** and **E**. The first category **A** covers motor cycles while **B** is the basic car licence including vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes, while **B1** was for tricycles and small cars. **C** is the category for heavy vehicles over 3.5 tonnes while **C1** restricted drivers to a vehicle with a MAM of between 3.5 tonnes and 7.5 tonnes. **D** and **D1** referred to passenger carrying vehicles. But **E** referred to trailers and was never a stand alone category as trailers were not motor vehicles.

All car drivers who passed their test on or before 31st December 1997 retain their existing entitlement to tow trailers until their licence expires. This means they are generally entitled to drive a vehicle and trailer combination up to 8.25 tonnes maximum authorised mass. They also have entitlement to drive a minibus with a trailer over 750kgs maximum authorised mass.

Passing your test after 1 January 1997

If you passed your driving test on or after the 1 January 1997 and you want to learn to drive a larger vehicle, you may be able to apply for the higher category. Once you have obtained provisional entitlement on your driving licence you can take the test in that category. For example, a driver must hold a full car licence (category B) before being able to apply for a provisional licence to drive a lorry, minibus or

bus. This is known as staging and will apply from the smallest to the largest vehicles.

The table below shows the full licence that needs to be held before you can apply for provisional entitlement in the higher categories. If Members would like further information on how drivers qualify for these extra categories, please visit the DSA website at www.dsa.gov.uk

Provisional Entitlement Required	Full Licence to be held.
B+E*, G*, H*, C1, C, D1, D	B
C1 + E	C1
C+E	C
D1+E	D1
D+E	D

Fact Sheet - No 561

The table on the following pages outlines in detail current licence entitlements.

	Vehicle Description	Category	Min Age	Notes
Cars	Motor vehicle with a MAM ¹ not exceeding 3500kg having not more than 8 passenger seats with a trailer up to 750kg. Combinations of towing vehicles in category B and a trailer, where the MAM of the combination does not exceed 3500kg and the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen mass of the towing vehicle	B	17	Age 16 you may be issued a licence if you are in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility component of the disability living allowance. However, if the higher rate is withdrawn, the normal minimum age for driving a car (17 years) applies.
Cars with Trailers	Combination of vehicles consisting of a vehicle in category B and a trailer over 750kg.	B + E	17	If you passed your category B or B automatic test before 1 January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes), D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement flowing from the category B.
Medium Size Vehicles	Lorries between 3500kg and 7500kg with a trailer up to 750kg	C1	18	Age 18 if a combination weight is under 7500kg. Age 21 if combination weight is over 7500kg If you passed your category B or B automatic test before 1 January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes), D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement flowing from the category B.
Medium Sized Vehicles with Trailers	Combinations of vehicles where the towing vehicle is in subcategory C1 and its trailer has a MAM of over 750kg provided that the MAM of the combination thus formed does not exceed 12000kg and the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen mass of the towing vehicle. If the MAM of the combination exceeds 8.25 tonnes it is classed as a large goods vehicle and the driver will be subject to the conduct regime.	C1 + E	21	Age 18 if combination weight is under 7500kg – if you passed your category B or B automatic test before 1 st January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes), D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement flowing from the category B.
Large Vehicles	Vehicles over 3500kg with a trailer up to 750kg	C	21	Age 17 member of armed forces Age 18 if member of young drivers scheme.
Large Vehicles with Trailers	Vehicles over 3500kg with a trailer over 750kg	C + E	21	Age 17 if member of the armed forces Age 28 if member of young drivers scheme.
Minibus	Vehicles with between 9 and 16 passenger seats with a trailer up to 750kg.	D1	21	Age 17 if member of armed forces Age 18 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While learning to drive or taking passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) test; or • After passing a PCV test when driving on a regular service where the route does not exceed 50km, or driving PCV constructed to carry no more than 16 passengers, and the vehicle is

¹ MAM – maximum authorised mass. This should be taken to mean the permissible maximum weight, also known as the gross vehicle weight.

Fact Sheet - No 561

				<p>operated under a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operators licence or permit; or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not engaged in the carriage of passengers. <p>If you passed your category B or B automatic test before 1 January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes) D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement flowing from the category B.</p>
Minibuses with Trailers	Combinations of vehicles where the towing vehicle is in subcategory D1 and its trailer has a MAM of over 750kg, provided that the MAM of the combination thus formed does not exceed 12000kg and the MAM of the trailer does not exceed the unladen mass of the towing vehicle.	D1 + E	21	<p>Age 17 if member of the armed forces. Age 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While learning to drive or taking passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) test; or • After passing a PCV test when driving on a regular service where the route does not exceed 50km, or driving PCV constructed to carry no more than 16 passengers, and the vehicle is operated under a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operators licence or permit; or • Not engaged in the carriage of passengers. <p>If you passed your category B or B automatic test before 1 January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes) D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement flowing from the category B.</p>
Buses	Any bus with more than 8 passenger seats with a trailer up to 750kg.	D	21	<p>Age 17 if member of armed forces Age 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While learning to drive or taking passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) test; or • After passing a PCV test when driving on a regular service where the route does not exceed 50km, or driving a PCV constructed to carry no more than 16 passengers and the vehicle is operated under a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) operators licence or permit ; or • Not engaged in the carriage of passengers. • Category D entitlement is required to drive an articulated ('bendi') bus.
Buses with Trailers	Any bus with more than 8 passenger seats with a trailer over 750kg	D + E	21	Category D entitlement is required to drive an articulated ('bendi') bus.

Fact Sheet - No 561

Guide to Checking the Validity of UK Drivers Licence

Driver Licence Issued after July 1998

The licence comes in two parts, a small single card, plastic laminated and a paper counterpart. The card is only valid with the printed counterpart.

There are a number of security features, the card has a pastel pink background colour with white lettering in a swirling pattern on the frontside and repeating in a DVLA logo on the reverse side. UV reaction – on the frontside: repeating Royal Coat of Arms is printed in red, yellow and green UV inks. On the reverse side: a green coloured DVLA logo.

Other features include a roundel motif overlapping both the photographic and ghosted images and the text DVLA is repeated in optical ink (gold) across the bottom part of the card.

The counter part of the photo card has a number of security features. The security paper has white wavy text repeats 'Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency'. Under a UV light all green print fluoresces bright on the front (also repeated in the notes on the reverse side). Paper fibers fluoresce to yellow and blue colours on the front and the reverse side of the document.

Watermark – the DVLA logo in repeating vertical pattern across the whole of the document. From the front, the crest of the DVLA logo faces the left hand edge of the document. The serial number appears on the front at the bottom left and near the top right hand corner. More recently the logo has taken the form of DVL.

Driving Licence Issued between June 1990 and July 1998

The licence has no security features. The serial number contains one letter, seven digits appearing at various points along the top, the middle and the bottom of the licence.

Driving Licence Issued before June 1990

The licence has one security feature which includes a watermark styled 'DVLA' which is repeated in rows throughout the length of the licence. The serial number has seven digits appearing at various points on the licence.

Driving in GB on a Foreign Licence issued in a European Community.

Licences issued in the European Community and European Economic Area include: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Republic of Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and United Kingdom.

If you hold a driving licence issued within the European Economic Area, you can drive within the UK for as long as your licence remains valid. All foreigners outside of the European Economic Area can drive in the UK for 12 months.

If you are a visitor to GB and you hold a community licence, you can drive any vehicle if your licence is valid. The appropriate full entitlement for the vehicle you wish to drive must be shown on your licence.

If you have a valid community licence, issued by one of the countries above, this will authorise you to drive in GB for a period set out below. Provided the licence is valid you may drive in GB: Car, motorcycle driving licence holders (ordinary driving licence):

- until aged 70 or for three years after becoming resident, whichever is the longer period

Lorry, minibus, bus driving licence holders (vocational driving licence):

- until aged 45 or for five years after becoming resident, whichever is the longer period
- if you are aged over 45 (but under 65) until your 66th birthday or for five years after becoming resident, whichever is the shorter period
- if you are aged 65 or over for 12 months after becoming resident

In order to continue driving after these periods, you must acquire a British driving licence.

Driving in GB on a Foreign Driving Licence Issued outside of the European Community.

If you have a driving licence issued in one of the countries below, you will need to exchange your licence for a British licence to be able to drive in the UK for more than 12 months. This includes countries such as: Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea,

Fact Sheet - No 561

Switzerland and Zimbabwe. If you hold a driving licence issued by any other country not listed above, then you will need to pass a British Driving Test in order to continue driving in the UK beyond the initial 12-month period.

If Members require further information on foreign driving licences, the 'ID Checking Guide' is available to BVRLA Members, please email info@bvrla.co.uk to order a copy. Copies cost £25 each.

Useful Contacts and Websites

www.directgov.co.uk

www.cifas.org.uk

www.apacs.org.uk

Customer Enquires (Drivers) Group
DVLA
Sandringham Park
Swansea
SA7 0EE

Tel 0870 240 0009

For further information contact the Legal Services Team on: 01494 434747
