

Learning to drive

Getting your car licence

Find out how to get your car licence (class 1), which allows you to drive a light vehicle.

Cars, vans and utes are all light vehicles. They can weigh up to 4500kg on your learner or restricted licence and up to 6000kg on your full licence.

Three stages to get your full licence

The 3 stages are learner, restricted and full.

Each stage has a test you have to pass.

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.

What you need

Each time you apply for a licence stage, you'll need:

- evidence of your identity – see *Identification requirements*
- proof your eyesight meets requirements – see *Eyesight requirements*.

How to apply

- Download and complete an application form (DL1). www.nzta.govt.nz/form-DL1
- Take the completed form and the above documents to a driver licensing agent. Find an agent at www.nzta.govt.nz/agents
- Have your photograph taken and provide a signature.
- Pay the application fee – see *What it costs*.

Stage 1 – learner licence

You must get a learner licence before you learn to drive on the road. You must be at least 16 years old to apply.

Getting a learner licence

To get your learner licence you need to:

- meet the application requirements – see *How to apply*
- pass the theory test – see *Passing your theory test*.

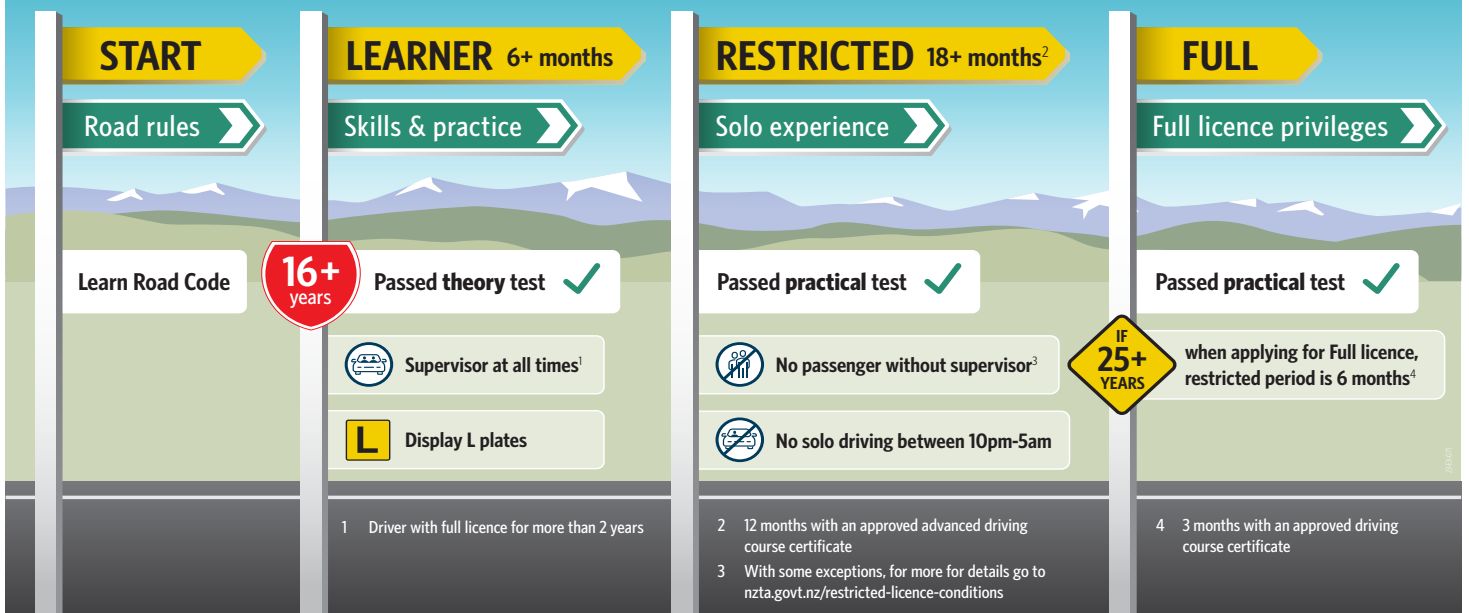
Learner licence conditions

- You must not drive on your own. You must be accompanied by a supervisor at all times – see *Who can be a supervisor*.
- You may carry passengers, if your supervisor agrees.
- You must have learner (L) plates on the front and rear of the vehicle when you're driving. You can get L plates from most driver licensing agents.
- If you're learning to ride a moped, you don't need a supervisor. You need an L plate on the rear of your moped. You must not carry any passengers or ride between 10pm and 5am.

Your new class 1 learner licence will be valid for 10 years.

You can now drive on the open road and gain the skills and experience to progress to the next stage. When you feel ready, you can apply for your restricted licence.

The roadmap to your car licence



Stage 2 – restricted licence

To apply for a restricted licence, you must be at least 16½ years old and have held a current learner licence for at least 6 months.

Getting a restricted licence

To get your restricted licence you need to:

- meet the application requirements – see *How to apply*
- book a time to sit the restricted practical test – see *Booking your practical driving test*
- pass the restricted practical test – see *Passing your practical tests*.

Restricted licence conditions

- You can drive on your own between 5am and 10pm.
- You must be accompanied by a supervisor if driving between 10pm and 5am – see *Who can be a supervisor*.
- If you pass the restricted test in an automatic vehicle, you'll have a condition on your licence that means you can only drive automatic vehicles. This condition doesn't apply if you have a supervisor with you.
- 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 partner (partner means a civil union partner or de facto partner)
 - your parent or guardian
 - a child who lives with you and is under the care of you or your spouse or partner (you or your spouse are their parent or guardian)
 - a relative who lives with you and receives a social security benefit (eg the Sole parent support, Supported living payment or Jobseeker support)
 - someone you look after as their primary caregiver.

Your new class 1 restricted licence will be valid for 10 years. You can build on your existing skills and experience so you can progress to a full licence with no restrictions. When you feel ready, you can apply for your full licence.

Stage 3 – full licence

Drivers under 25 years old

You need to be at least 18 years old to apply. You must have held a current restricted licence for 18 months.

If you complete an approved advanced driving course, you can apply for your full licence when you turn 17½. You must have held a current restricted licence for 12 months before you can apply.

Drivers 25 or over

If you're 25 years old or over you must have held a current restricted licence for at least 6 months before you can apply.

If you complete an approved advanced driving course, then you must have held your restricted licence for at least 3 months before you can apply.

Getting a full licence

To get your full licence you need to:

- meet the application requirements – see *How to apply*
- book a time to sit the full practical test – see *Booking your practical driving test*
- pass the full licence practical driving test – see *Passing your practical tests*.

Once you hold a full class 1 licence, you can drive either automatic or manual vehicles, regardless of the vehicle you sat your test in.

Identification requirements

You must present evidence of your identity each time you apply.

Evidence of identity

Acceptable evidence of your identity must confirm your full name and date of birth.

You can present:

- your **New Zealand photo driver licence** which can be current or expired up to 2 years, or
- your **current New Zealand passport**.

If you don't have either of these documents, you'll need to provide 2 other acceptable forms of evidence of identity such as:

- your New Zealand birth certificate and a student ID or Kiwi Access card, or
- your New Zealand birth certificate and a utility bill.

If neither of the documents you provide has a photo, you'll also need to provide a verified image.

See *Identification for driver licensing* (Factsheet 20) for more information and a full list of acceptable identity documents or go to www.nzta.govt.nz/identification

All your documents must be original. Photocopied or scanned documents are not acceptable.

Evidence of name change

If you want to change the name on your driver licence or the name on your identity documents isn't the same as the name on your licence, you'll need to bring acceptable evidence of name change.

This must be an original (not a copy) of one of the following that was issued in New Zealand:

- your marriage or civil union certificate
- your dissolution of marriage or civil union order
- copy of particulars of marriage or civil union
- a certificate of annulment
- a deed poll certificate, change of name certificate, or a birth certificate showing both names
- a statutory declaration confirming change of name registered with the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Eyesight requirements

You must prove that your eyesight is up to standard each time you apply. You can:

- pass an eyesight screening check at a driver licensing agent, or
- present an original eyesight or medical certificate no more than 60 days old. It must be issued by a New Zealand-registered optometrist or health practitioner.

If you don't pass the eyesight screening check at the agent, you'll need to provide a certificate instead.

If you have sight in only one eye, or have only one eye (monocular vision) you'll need to present an eyesight certificate.

Who can be a supervisor

A supervisor is a person who:

- holds a current full New Zealand driver licence for the class you're learning to drive, and
- doesn't have a supervisor condition on their New Zealand licence, and
- has held a full New Zealand licence for at least 2 years **OR** has held an equivalent overseas licence for at least 2 years.

What it costs

You pay an application fee for each licence stage.

Licence stage	Cost
Learner licence	\$96.10
Restricted licence	\$167.50
Full licence	\$98.90

You don't have to pay separate test fees. It's free to change, cancel or rebook tests if you need to.

Booking your practical driving test

The practical driving tests assess your ability to demonstrate your knowledge of road rules and safe driving practices.

Make sure you get lots of practise before you sit a practical test. We recommend at least 120 hours if you have a learner licence.

You can book a time to sit your restricted or full licence practical test:

- at www.nzta.govt.nz/online, or
- at a driver licensing agent.

If you book online, allow extra time

Allow an extra 30 minutes before your test, or visit a driver licensing agent the day before, to complete the application requirements (eg having your photo taken and eyesight checked).

Check what time the agent opens

Check what time the licensing agent opens on the day of your test. If your test is early in the morning and the agent isn't open, you won't be able to complete the application requirements. You'll need to visit an agent on a day before your test.

Check the test location

Not all test sites have driver licensing agents. If your test is booked at a testing-only site, you'll need to visit a driver licensing agent at another location to complete the application requirements before your new licence can be issued.

Changing or cancelling your test

If you want to change or cancel your theory test, please visit a driver licensing agent as soon as possible.

If you want to change or cancel your practical test, you can do this online or at an agent.

www.nzta.govt.nz/online

Passing your theory test

The learner licence theory test is a computer-based, 35-question, multi-choice test that assesses your knowledge of road rules and safe driving practices.

www.nzta.govt.nz/theory-test

All the information you need to pass the theory test is in *The official New Zealand road code*. You can get the road code from many bookstores and driver licensing agents, or find it online.

www.nzta.govt.nz/roadcode

You can also use our free website Drive to access real theory test questions and play games and quizzes to help you remember the road code.

www.drive.govt.nz

Passing your practical tests

The restricted and full tests are practical driving tests that assess your ability to demonstrate your knowledge of road rules and safe driving practices.

www.nzta.govt.nz/practical-tests

Be on time

The test can't be rushed. If you're late, your test will be cancelled and you'll have to rebook – see *Changing or cancelling your test*.

Take your driver licence

If you arrive for the test and your licence isn't current or you don't have it with you, you won't be able to sit the test and will need to rebook.

Pre-drive vehicle check

The testing officer will look over your vehicle before the test to ensure it's roadworthy. They'll check things like the tyres, indicators and brakelights.

They'll also make sure your vehicle has a current warrant of fitness (WoF) or certificate of fitness (CoF), a valid licence label, and a road user charges (RUC) licence if required.

If your vehicle isn't roadworthy, you won't be able to take the test (even if it has a current WoF or CoF) and you'll need to rebook.

If your vehicle has trade plates or has a space-saver tyre fitted, it can't be used to sit a practical driving test.

Taking a support person

You can choose to have a support person with you during a practical test.

If you're thinking of bringing a support person, please read the *Taking a support person* information in *The official New Zealand road code* or online.

www.nzta.govt.nz/on-the-day

In-car video cameras

The testing officer may attach a small video camera to the front windscreen at the beginning of your practical test.

The camera records the test and allows the testing officer's performance to be audited. It also assists in investigating complaints where the test result is disputed.

If you don't want your test to be recorded, please tell the testing officer.

The role of the testing officer

A testing officer performs many tasks during the test including directing you around the route, observing and marking driving behaviour and keeping an eye on safety. Because of this it's unlikely they'll have time to engage in conversation with you. Please don't be offended by this.

Further information

You can find a test day checklist and further information on how to prepare for the test in *The official New Zealand road code* and on our website.

www.nzta.govt.nz/on-the-day

After the test

After you pass the test you'll be given a temporary licence, valid for 21 days, to use while your photo driver licence is made and sent to you. You should receive it within 10 working days.

Driver responsibility

It's your responsibility to make sure you're always a safe driver. This includes keeping up-to-date with the road rules, managing any medical conditions that may affect your driving, and not driving under the influence of alcohol or prescription or illegal drugs that may affect your driving.

Carry your driver licence

You're legally required to carry your licence at all times while driving, and present it when an enforcement officer asks for it. If you don't, you can be fined instantly.

Don't drive under the influence of alcohol

It's illegal to drive, or attempt to drive, under the influence of alcohol. If you're suspected of being under the influence of alcohol, breath and/or blood tests may be required.

Legal alcohol limits

If you're under 20 years of age, there is a zero alcohol limit. This means if you drive after consuming just one drink, you can be charged with drink-driving.

If you're 20 or older, the legal alcohol limit is 50 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood or 250 micrograms per litre of breath.

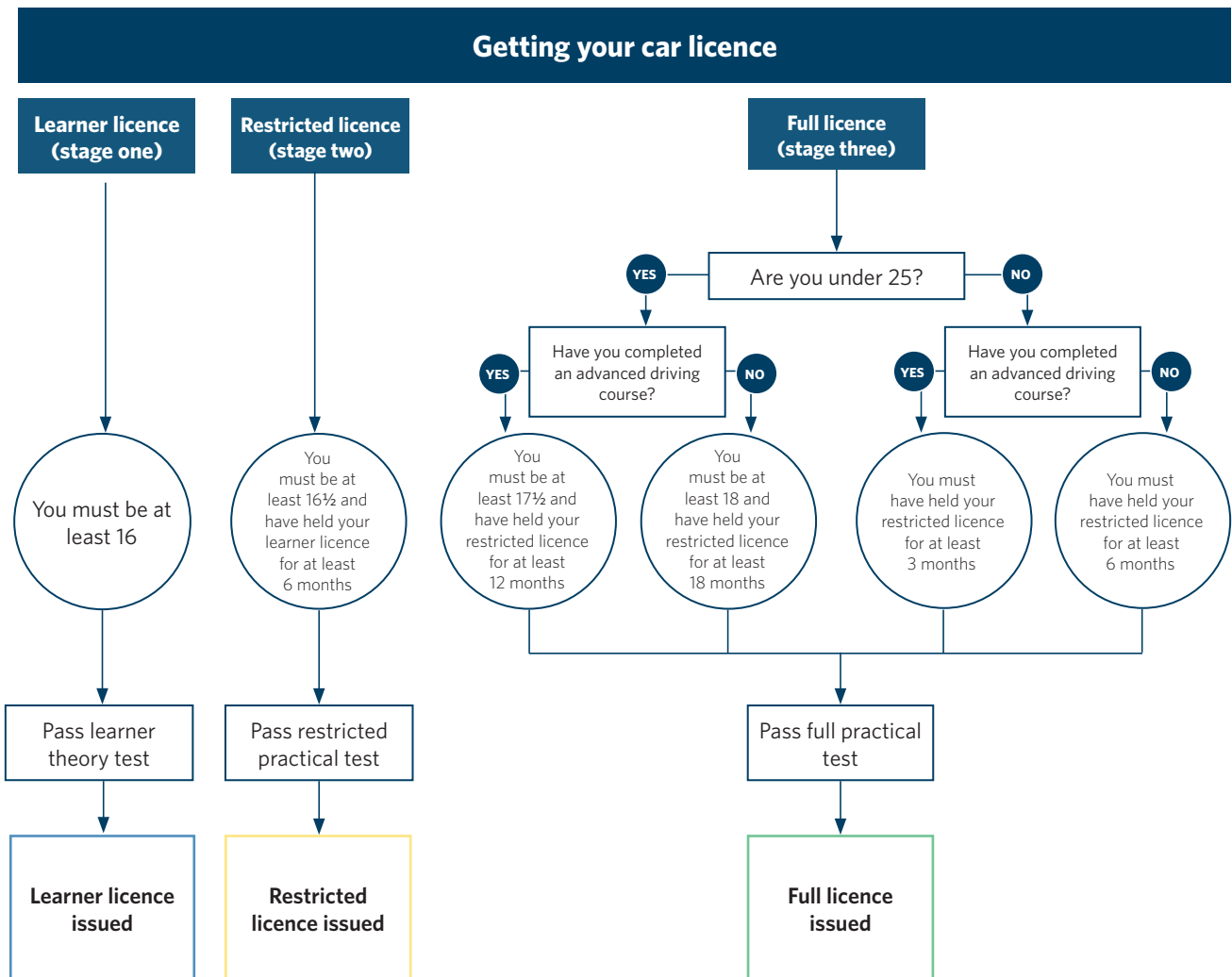
Don't drive under the influence of drugs

It's illegal to drive, or attempt to drive, under the influence of drugs. If an enforcement officer suspects you're under the influence of drugs, you can be required to undertake a compulsory impairment test. If you fail the impairment test, then a blood test will be required.

The law also says you must not drive if you've taken any of 25 specific drugs above the legal limit for driving. These drugs could be ingredients in a range of prescription medications or illegal drug products.

www.nzta.govt.nz/drugs-and-driving

If you're unsure whether your medication may affect your ability to drive, or if you're experiencing any side-effects, the best advice is: don't drive.



This factsheet is a general guide only. It doesn't replace legal advice, and your exact requirements will depend on current legislation.

Make sure you have the most up-to-date version of this factsheet by checking www.nzta.govt.nz/factsheets

www.nzta.govt.nz

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