Find out how to get your car licence (class 1), which allows you to drive a light vehicle. Cars, vans and utes are 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 three stages to getting your licence 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 the Identification requirements section
- proof your eyesight meets requirements – see the Eyesight requirements section.

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. You can find your closest agent online. www.nzta.govt.nz/agents
- Have your photograph taken and provide a signature.
- Pay the application and test fees – see the What it costs section.

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 for a learner licence.

Getting a learner licence

To get your learner licence you need to:

- meet the application requirements – see the How to apply section
- pay the theory test fee – see the What it costs section
- pass the theory test – see the Passing your theory test section.

Learner licence conditions

- You must not drive on your own. You must be accompanied by a supervisor at all times – see the Who can be a supervisor section.
- 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.

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 the How to apply section
- book a time to sit the restricted practical test – see the Booking your practical driving test section
- pay the restricted practical test fee – see the What it costs section
- pass the restricted practical test – see the Passing your practical tests section.

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 the Who can be a supervisor section.
- 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 for your full licence. 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 for your full licence.

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 the How to apply section
• book a time to sit the full practical test – see the Booking your practical driving test section
• pay the full licence test fee – see the What it costs section
• pass the full licence practical driving test – see the Passing your practical tests section.

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

Identification requirements
You must present evidence of your identity each time you apply for a driver licence.

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 Factsheet 20: Identification for driver licensing for more information and a full list of acceptable identity documents.

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 if 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 which has been 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 for a new licence class. 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 and a test fee for each licence stage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Licence Type</th>
<th>Application fee</th>
<th>Test fee</th>
<th>Total Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learner licence</td>
<td>$48.20</td>
<td>$45.70</td>
<td>$93.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted licence</td>
<td>$48.20</td>
<td>$86.60</td>
<td>$134.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full licence</td>
<td>$49.60</td>
<td>$59.90</td>
<td>$109.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you don’t pass a test, you’ll need to pay another test fee when rebooking. You won’t be charged another application fee.

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

Make sure you get lots of practice before you sit a practical test. We recommend at least 120 hours if you have a learner licence.
Go to our website for more information about the restricted and full practical tests.
www.nzta.govt.nz/practical-tests

You can book a time to sit your restricted or full licence practical test:
• online 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 or practical test booking, you may have to pay another fee. However, if you make the change or cancellation with enough notice, we can hold the test fee amount in credit for when you re-book your test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days until test</th>
<th>Method of cancelling or changing your test</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More than 2 complete working days*</td>
<td>Online or changing your test</td>
<td>No extra fee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At a driver licensing agent</td>
<td>$16.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within 2 complete working days*</td>
<td>Any method (online or agent)</td>
<td>Full test fee charged</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you cancel more than 2 complete working days* before the test, and don’t think you’ll be rebooking for a long time, you should be eligible for a refund of the fees you originally paid.

Refunds are assessed on a case by case basis and may be subject to an additional processing fee of $16.40. Download a refund application form (DL13) online or call us on 0800 822 422.


*2 or more complete working days (excluding weekends and public holidays) between the day you change or cancel your test and the date of your test.

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.

Be on time
The test can’t be rushed. If you’re late, your test will be cancelled. You’ll have to rebook and pay another test fee - see the Changing or cancelling your test section.

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. You’ll need to rebook and pay another test fee.

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 brake lights.

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). You’ll need to rebook and pay another test fee.

If your vehicle is displaying trade plates or has a space-saver tyre fitted, it cannot 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.


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.

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### Getting your car licence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learner licence (stage one)</th>
<th>Restricted licence (stage two)</th>
<th>Full licence (stage three)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>You must be at least 16</strong></td>
<td><strong>Have you completed an advanced driving course?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Are you under 25?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass learner theory test</strong></td>
<td><strong>You must be at least 17½ and have held your restricted licence for at least 12 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Learner licence issued</strong></td>
<td><strong>You must have held your restricted licence for at least 18 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass restricted practical test</strong></td>
<td><strong>You must have held your restricted licence for at least 3 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Restricted licence issued</strong></td>
<td><strong>You must have held your restricted licence for at least 6 months</strong></td>
<td><strong>No</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pass full practical test</strong></td>
<td><strong>Full licence issued</strong></td>
<td><strong>Full licence issued</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>