

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 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) - you can find the form at 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 at www.nzta.govt.nz/agents
- Have your photograph taken and provide a signature
- Pay the application fee – see the What it costs section.
- Pay the test fee – 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 learner licence 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 are learning to ride a moped, you don't need a supervisor. You do need an L plate on the rear of your moped, you must not carry any passengers and you must not 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 six 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 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 sit 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 who receives a social security benefit, for example, 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 before you can 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 get your full licence when you turn 17½. You must have held a current restricted licence for 12 months before you can apply.

Drivers 25 years of age or over

If you are 25 years old or over you must have held a current restricted licence for at least six 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 three 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 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 may only have to provide a single document if you have one of the following:

- your New Zealand photo driver licence (which can be current or expired up to two years), or
- your current New Zealand passport.

If you don't have either of these documents, you'll need to provide two 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 is not 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
- presenting an original eyesight or medical certificate no more than 60 days old and 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 of vehicle you are learning to drive, and
- has held their full New Zealand driver licence for at least two years (or where their full New Zealand licence has been held less than two years, they have held an equivalent overseas driver licence for at least two years), and
- does not have a supervisor condition on their New Zealand licence.

What it costs

You pay an application fee and a test fee for each licence stage.

Learner	Cost
Learner licence application fee	\$48.20
Learner licence test fee	\$45.70
Total	\$93.90

Restricted	Cost
Restricted licence application fee	\$48.20
Restricted licence test fee	\$86.60
Total	\$134.80

Full	Cost
Full licence application fee	\$49.60
Full licence test fee	\$59.90
Total	\$109.50

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

Booking a 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 practise before you sit a practical test. We recommend at least 120 hours if you have a learner licence.

Go to www.nzta.govt.nz/practical-tests for more information about the restricted and full 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 then you need to allow an extra 30 minutes before your test to complete the application requirements, such as having your photo taken and eyesight checked.

Check what time the licensing agent opens. If your test is early in the morning and the agent isn't open you won't be able to complete the requirements listed above. This means you'll need to visit an agent on a day prior to your test.

You'll also need to check the location of your test. Not all test sites have driver licensing agents. This means that 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 want to change or cancel your theory or practical test booking, you'll have to pay another fee. Go to www.nzta.govt.nz/online to change or cancel your booking.

If there are two or more complete working days (excluding weekends and public holidays) between the day you change or cancel your test and the date of your appointment, you'll need to pay a rescheduling fee of \$16.40.

If there are less than two complete working days (excluding weekends and public holidays) between the day you change or cancel your test and the date of your appointment, you won't have to pay a rescheduling fee but will need to pay another test fee.

You may be able to get a refund of the first test fee paid if the cancelled test time was then filled by another person. If the test fee is refunded, a processing fee of \$16.40 will be deducted.

Go to www.nzta.govt.nz/form-DL13 to download a refund application form (DL13) or call us on 0800 822 422.

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.

All the information you require to pass the theory test can be found in *The official New Zealand road code*. You can get *The official New Zealand road code* from many bookstores and driver licensing agents. You can also find it online at 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. Go to 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.

Don't be late

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.

Carry your driver licence

Make sure that your photo driver licence is current and that you have it with you. 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 is 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). You'll need to rebook and pay another test fee.

Vehicles displaying trade plates or being driven on a space-saver tyre cannot be used to sit a practical driving test.

Taking a support person

When you sit a practical driving test you can choose to have a support person with you during the 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 on our website at www.nzta.govt.nz/roadcode.

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, allowing 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 let the testing officer know.

The role of the testing officer

A testing officer does many tasks during the test, including directing you around the route, observing and marking your driving behaviour and keeping an eye on safety. Because of this, it is unlikely that they will have time to take part in other conversation during the test.

Further information

A test day checklist and further information on what the test involves and how to prepare for the test can be found in *The official New Zealand road code* and on our website at www.nzta.govt.nz/practical-tests.

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, which should take up to 10 days.

Driver responsibility

You must have your licence with you at all times while driving. The law requires that you must produce your licence when an enforcement officer asks for it. Failure to do so can result in an instant fine.

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.

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.

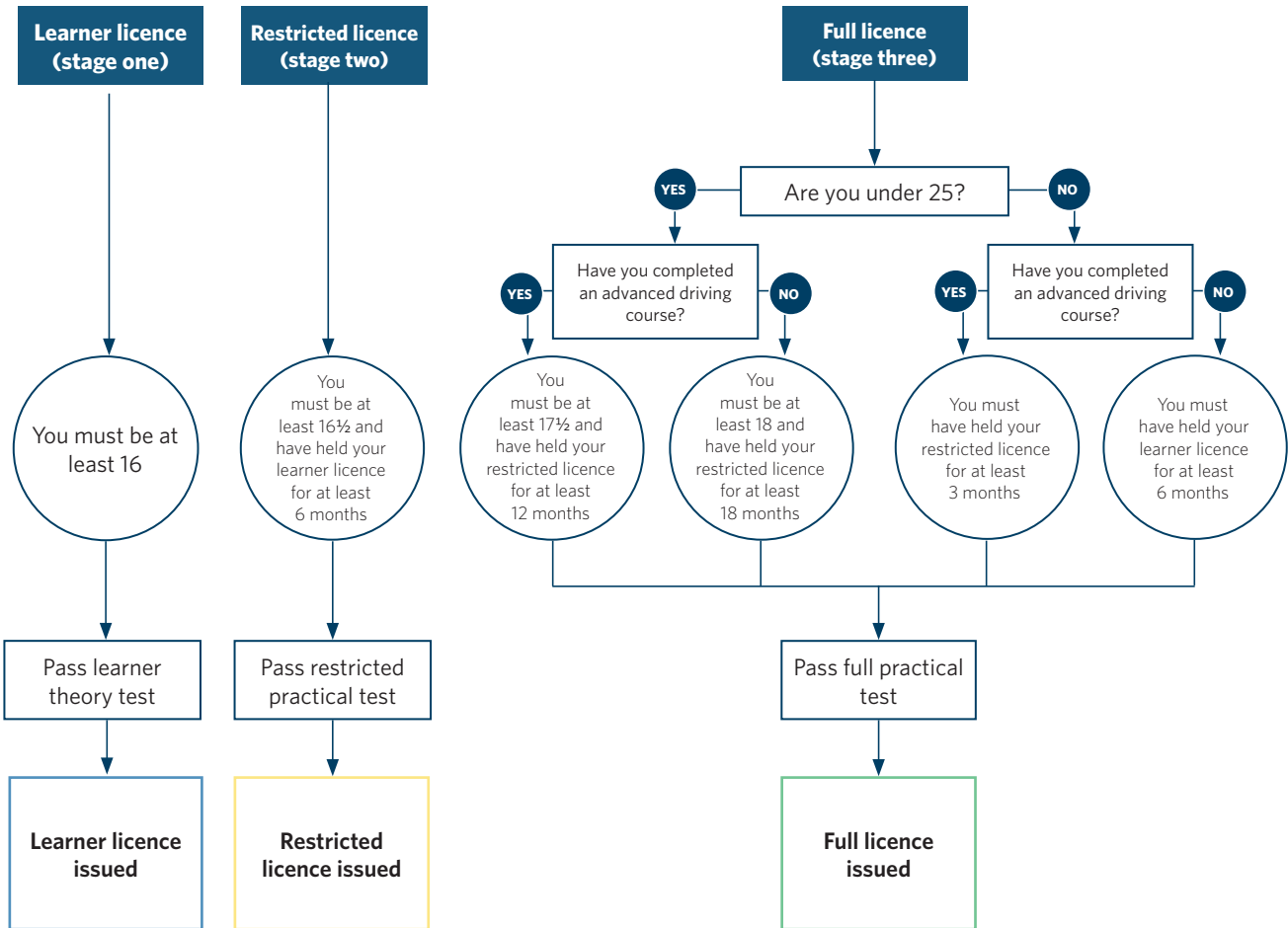
If you're 20 or older, the legal alcohol limit is 50 milligrams per 100 millilitres of blood or 250 micrograms per litre of breath.

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.

Where you can find out more

- Email us: info@nzta.govt.nz.
- Call us: 0800 822 422.
- Write to us:
Waka Kotahi
Private Bag 11777
Palmerston North 4442.

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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

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info@nzta.govt.nz

Waka Kotahi NZ Transport Agency,
Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442