

Preparing for your driving test

Information booklet
November 2022



The purpose of your driving test

The driving test checks if you're properly trained and ready to drive safely by yourself on public roads.

The test takes between 50 and 100 minutes depending on the category of test. It's a combination of questions to test your knowledge and a practical test of your driving skills and awareness.

It checks:

- What you know about the Rules of the Road, road signs, basic vehicle roadworthiness and maintenance, vehicle controls and more
- Your ability to perceive risk and act accordingly
- Your awareness of hazards
- Your knowledge and application of good driver behaviour
- Your ability to safely and competently drive a vehicle under a variety of road and traffic conditions.



Your car learner permit

A learner permit allows you to drive on all public roads, except motorways, for the purposes of learning to drive a car and only when accompanied by someone who has held a full, valid driving licence in the same category for more than two years.

Rules and restrictions

The following rules and restrictions apply to car learner permit holders:

- You must hold a valid learner permit and carry it with you at all times when driving
- You must display L-plates on the front and back of your car at all times when driving
- You must have a valid insurance disc and be covered to drive the vehicle
- You cannot draw a trailer
- You cannot carry any passengers for reward
- You cannot act as an accompanying driver for a learner driver.

Your motorcycle learner permit

When you get your first motorcycle learner permit, you must do an Initial Basic Training (IBT) course with an RSA Approved IBT Instructor.

You must be supervised on the road at all times by an IBT instructor until you have received your certificate of satisfactory completion of IBT.

After this, your learner permit will allow you to drive on all public roads, except motorways, for the purposes of learning to drive a motorcycle.



Rules and restrictions

The following rules and restrictions apply to motorcycle learner permit holders:

- You must carry your IBT certificate of satisfactory completion and learner permit with you at all times when learning to drive a motorcycle
- You must wear a yellow tabard (vest) displaying an L-plate on the front and rear
- You must have a valid insurance disc
- You cannot carry pillion passengers (passengers on the back of your motorcycle)
- You must check if you're restricted to riding a motorcycle with a particular power output (kW).

Applying for a third or subsequent learner permit

To apply for a third or subsequent learner permit, you must provide:

- Evidence that you have taken a car or motorcycle driving test in the two-year period before your application

or

- Evidence of an upcoming test date.

Training for your test

If you're a first-time learner permit holder for car (category B) or motorcycle (category AM, A1, A2 or A), you will need to complete a structured driver training programme.

Training for learner car drivers

Essential Driver Training (EDT)

Essential Driver Training (EDT) is a training course that teaches you fundamental driving skills.

It is mandatory for all learners who received their first learner permit on or after 4 April 2011.

There are a total of 12 lessons to complete before you can take your test. After each Essential Driver Training (EDT) session that you complete, your Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) uploads the details to the EDT system. This allows them, the RSA and you to keep track of your progress and ensure the full programme is completed. EDT is only part of the learning process. You will need lots of practice to become a safe driver. You cannot take your test until you have completed your mandatory 12 lessons.

Exemption from having to do all 12 EDT lessons

If you hold a full, valid foreign licence you may not have to complete all 12 lessons. For more information on reduced EDT or to download an exemption application form please visit www.ndls.ie



Training for learner motorcycle drivers

Initial Basic Training (IBT)

Initial Basic Training (IBT) is a training course that teaches you fundamental driving skills. It is mandatory for all learners who received their first motorcycle learner permit on or after 6 December 2010.

If you're a learner motorcycle driver (category AM, A1, A2 or A), you must complete an IBT course with an RSA Approved IBT Instructor. Completing IBT is just one step to becoming a safe driver. You'll need plenty of practice on the road too.

You cannot take your test until you have completed the IBT course.

Make sure your instructor is approved by the RSA

Make sure your driving instructor is a fully qualified Approved Driving Instructor (ADI) (and currently registered with the RSA). An ADI is a driving instructor who has met the standards set by the RSA.

To find your nearest ADI visit www.rsa.ie

Apply for your driving test

How to apply for your driving test online

You can apply for your driving test by signing up or logging in to our customer portal MyRoadSafety.ie.

Once you have registered on our portal, you can set your driving goal and proceed to the 'Driving test' step to book a test. If no suitable test dates are available at your chosen centre you can request to be placed on the waiting list. When new driving test slots become available, we will email you a booking invitation.

Please note we are unable to schedule driving tests over the phone or by email.

You will need:

- Your learner permit. You'll need to supply your driver number. This is listed at 4(d) on your learner permit
- Your Personal Public Service Number (PPSN)
- A valid debit or credit card (Visa or Mastercard)

How to apply for your driving test by post

To apply for your driving test by post:

Download the application form in English or Irish from the RSA website www.rsa.ie

Complete the form in full

Include your payment by bank draft, postal order, money order made payable to the Road Safety Authority.

Post your completed form and payment to: Driver Testing Section, Road Safety Authority, Primrose Hill, Dublin Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F26 V6E4.

If you make your application by post, and do not supply an email address, the RSA will make a driving test booking for you. Confirmation of your driving test booking will be sent to you by post.



How to request an emergency driving test

At the moment emergency driving test appointments can only be offered to critical frontline workers. If you are employed by the HSE, a private hospital or the emergency services and need to drive as part of your job (not including commuting to your place of work) you can request an emergency test.

If you're a critical frontline worker who has not yet applied for a driving test, you need to:

- Register or log in to MyRoadSafety.ie
- Apply for a driving test and add yourself to the waiting list
- Request an emergency test.

You must have completed all driver training before sitting a driving test.

You must be eligible to sit a test

To be eligible to sit your driving test you must meet a number of requirements. You must have:

- a valid learner permit which you need to bring to your driving test appointment. If it is a first-time learner permit you must have held it for at least six months
- completed Essential Driver Training (EDT) for your chosen car category (if you obtained your first learner permit on or after 4 April 2011)
- completed Initial Basic Training (IBT) for your chosen motorcycle category (if you obtained your first learner permit on or after the 6 December 2010). The IBT certificate must be in date and completed for the correct category of motorcycle for your test.

You can check the validity of your learner permit in your MyRoadSafety account and view the status of your driver training in MyEDT, (cars only). All EDT sessions must be uploaded by your instructor before you can sit a test.



Your appointment will be cancelled if you're not eligible

If you have a driving test scheduled but have not yet completed all of your required Essential Driver Training or Initial Basic Training, we will have to cancel your test five days before your appointment date. Don't worry, you won't lose your fee and you will be kept on our waiting list. We will email you another booking invitation after you've met this requirement.

Booking your driving test

If you've received your invitation to book a test you will need to sign up or log in to MyRoadSafety.ie to select your appointment. You will have 10 days to do this.

If you're not ready to sit your test, don't worry, you can hold off booking and re-add yourself to the invitation queue at a later time.

When booking your driving test, please follow the steps below:

- You can book your driving test at www.MyRoadSafety.ie
- Choose a driving test centre - you will be shown available test slots at your nearest test centre, however, you can choose to sit your test anywhere in Ireland.
- If you require assistance sitting your test, please click the 'Special Accommodations' option and advise us of what assistance you require. If you don't, your test will not go ahead and you may lose your fee.
- Select a date and time convenient to you for your test. Please note - you must be available to sit the driving test on the date you have chosen.



- Click pay now and use your service credit to pay for your test. Please only click 'pay now' once and do not refresh your screen, otherwise you risk making multiple payments.
- Review your booking details and confirm you have read the Terms and Conditions.
- Booking complete! You will receive an email to confirm the details of your driving test.

Driving test booking notice

Once you have booked your test you will be sent a booking notice outlining the time, date and venue of the test, together with the conditions which must be met. Read this notice carefully as it may help avoid problems at your test.

Special accommodations during your driving test

You should notify the RSA's Driver Testing Section in advance if you:

- Are deaf or hard of hearing
- Have a learning difficulty
- Have restricted movements or a disability which could affect your driving
- Drive an adapted vehicle.

This will ensure you don't face any delays on the day of your test.

You should also note that if the vehicle you use for the test is adapted to suit a disability (eg, it has additional controls), this will be recorded on your full driving licence.

Interpreters

You can bring an interpreter to the first (oral) part of the test if:

- English is not your first language. You must advise us in advance that you are bringing an interpreter with you.
- You are deaf or hard of hearing. You can ask the RSA to organise an interpreter for you.

When making your application for a driving test you must tell us that you will be using an interpreter, otherwise your test will not go ahead and you will forfeit your fee.



Taking your test

You might be feeling apprehensive about taking your driving test. Knowing what to expect and how to prepare can help to settle some of these nerves so you can focus on your driving.

How to prepare for your test:

You can prepare for your test by:

- Studying the Rules of the Road carefully (available at www.rsa.ie)
- Getting lessons from an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI)
- Getting plenty of practice driving on all road types and traffic conditions, including driving at night
- Building up your driving experience and confidence before booking your test, but only when accompanied by someone who has held a full, valid driving licence in the same category for more than two years
- Reading the RSA Learner Driver manual (available from bookshops).

When practising you should always avoid:

- Obstructing traffic unnecessarily
- Driving on busy, congested test routes.

This will ensure a better, safer journey for you and other road users.



Your test day



On the day of the test you should arrive at your chosen test centre in plenty of time. If you're late, you cannot take your test and you will lose your fee.

While the driving test itself has not changed, there are elements of the service that must now be delivered differently due to Covid-19. This is so that we can protect our driver testers and our customers.

Motorcycle tests

If you are attending for a motorcycle test you will need to bring an ear piece with you.

You will have to produce your valid learner permit before your test can begin.

Your tester will check that your learner permit is:

- Yours and not someone else's
- Current and valid
- For the correct category of vehicle in which you are being tested.

You will be asked to confirm that:

- The insurance cover in place is adequate
- Your vehicle is in a roadworthy condition.

Your vehicle

Make sure that the vehicle you present at your test meets the requirements for the category of vehicle for that test. Your test requirements will be provided to you with your test notification. Remember, your vehicle will need to be in a roadworthy condition.

Your test

Your driving test will be straightforward and will last between 50 and 100 minutes depending on the category of test.

Your driving test is split into two parts: an oral test and a practical test.

The oral part will test your knowledge of:

- The Rules of the Road
- Road signs

The practical part of the test will test your knowledge and ability in a number of areas:

- Technical checks – including tyres, lights, oil levels
- In-car checks – including seat and mirror adjustments
- Secondary controls – including windscreen washers, wipers, lights
- Reversing around a corner
- Turnabout manoeuvre
- A hill start

While driving approximately eight kilometres in a variety of road and traffic conditions, your driving will be assessed in these situations:

- Moving off
- Driving in traffic
- Stopping – reversing around a corner
- Turning about, to face the opposite direction
- Starting on a hill



Aspects of your driving assessed will include:

- Road positioning
- Overtaking and passing
- Anticipation and observation
- Use of mirrors and signals
- Progress speed
- Compliance with traffic lights, road signs and markings
- Use of vehicle controls (accelerator, clutch, gears, brakes and steering).

Motorcycle test

Your motorcycle test will also assess if you:

- Know how to safely remove your motorcycle from its stand
- Know how to adjust your helmet
- Can demonstrate a braking manoeuvre
- Can demonstrate an 'avoid the obstacle' manoeuvre
- Know how to perform a check on your tyres, lights, reflectors, indicators, engine oil, coolant, windscreen washer fluid, steering, brakes, horn, chain and emergency stop-switch if fitted.



Automatic car test

If you take and pass your test in an automatic car, your driving licence will only allow you to drive an automatic car. You would need to take and pass another driving test in a manual car to be qualified to drive a manual car.

Things you should know if you're being tested for bus, heavy vehicle or vehicle with trailer

If you're taking a bus driving test, you should know:

- How to operate the fuel shut-off valve and the main power switch
- How to manually open and close any powered doors fitted to the bus.

If you're taking a heavy vehicle driving test, you should know:

- How to check the power-assisted braking and steering systems
- How to use any retarder or exhaust brake fitted to the vehicle.

If you are taking a heavy vehicle and trailer driving test, you should know:

- How to uncouple and recouple the trailer from or to the drawing vehicle.



Helpful advice for your test

Feeling nervous

You may feel nervous on the day of your test. Don't worry, nerves are perfectly normal. Your tester understands this and will help to put your mind at ease.

Your tester

Your tester is different to your instructor. Unlike your instructor, your tester will not give you verbal encouragement or advice during your test. Your tester will be completely focused on giving you directions and assessing your performance. This is to ensure that every test is assessed fairly.

Just ask

Your tester will give you clear directions to follow during your test. But if at any time during your test you don't understand a given direction, just ask your tester to repeat it. Your tester will be more than happy to clarify the direction. Remember, this won't reflect negatively on your result.

Making mistakes

We all make mistakes from time to time. If you make a mistake on your test, don't worry about it. It might be a less serious driving fault and may not affect your result.

Passengers

You cannot be accompanied by any passengers other than your tester during your test. An RSA official may accompany your tester for training and supervisory purposes. However, they will take no part in the test itself.



Common reasons why people are unsuccessful

The most common reasons learner car drivers are unsuccessful:

- Inadequate observation moving off, at junctions, at roundabouts, and when changing lanes
- Failure to anticipate the actions of other drivers
- Incorrect road position on the straight, on bends, turning left, turning right, at roundabouts, and when overtaking
- Inadequate progress at junctions, roundabouts, on the straight, and when overtaking
- Incorrect, inadequate or inappropriate use of mirrors and signals
- Non-compliance with traffic controls (e.g. road signs and markings, and traffic lights)
- Incorrect, inadequate or inappropriate use of vehicle controls, including gears, clutch, accelerator, steering, handbrake, footbrake, and secondary controls
- Excessive speed for the road or traffic conditions
- Failure to yield the right of way to others
- Lack of competence in the reverse and turnabout manoeuvres.

The most common reasons learner motorcycle drivers are unsuccessful:

- Failure to perform a u-turn correctly
- Inadequate control at slow speed
- Inadequate observations to the rear
- Incorrect or inadequate hand-signals
- Lack of competence in specific manoeuvres.

The list of reasons above is by no means comprehensive.

How to avoid making mistakes

You can avoid making mistakes on your test by:

- Studying the Rules of the Road carefully (available at www.rsa.ie)
- Getting plenty of practice driving on all road types and traffic conditions accompanied at all times by someone who has held a full, valid driving licence in the same category for more than two years.

Your result

If you are unsuccessful

If you are unsuccessful in your driving test your tester will give you a statement of driving test outcome. They will also go through the main points which will help you identify areas to practice and improve on before you re-sit the driving test.

If you feel that your test was not conducted fairly you can lodge an official appeal to the District Court under Section 33 of the Road Traffic Act, 1961. If the court finds that your test was not conducted properly, you will be offered another test free of charge. If you are unhappy with how your driving test was conducted you can complete an online complaints form on www.rsa.ie

If you pass your driving test

If you pass your driving test your tester will give you a certificate of competency. They will also briefly go through the parts of your test which you should still look to improve upon. This will help you become a safer, more competent driver.

You should apply for a full driving licence within two years of your test pass date and must display N-plates on any vehicle you drive for a period of two years from qualification.

Remember, until you hold your full driving licence, you can only drive when accompanied by someone who has held a full, valid licence in the same category for at least two years.



The better a driver you become, the safer our roads will be for you and everyone.



Your online resource to easily and safely manage all your driver information, services, tests, permits and licences.

Údaras Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre
Road Safety Authority

Páirc Ghnó Ghleann na Muaidhe, Cnoc
an tSabhaircín, Bóthar Bhaile Átha Cliath,
Béal an Átha, Co. Mhaigh Eo, F26 V6E4.

Moy Valley Business Park, Primrose Hill,
Dublin Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo, F26 V6E4.

Tel: (096) 25 000

Email: info@rsa.ie Website: www.rsa.ie

 MyRoadSafety.ie

Your online resource to easily
and safely manage all your
driver information, services,
tests, permits and licences.