

Driving in Ontario: Obtaining Your **Driver's Licence**

Getting your Ontario **Driver's Licence**

To drive legally in Ontario, you must be at least 16 years of age and hold a valid **driver's licence**. If you are visiting Ontario for less than 3 months and want to drive **while here, you may use your valid driver's licence from your own province or country**. You must also have appropriate vehicle insurance coverage. If you intend to continue driving after **this, you will need an International Driver's Permit (IDP)**, which must be applied for in your home country. Organizations such as the [Automobile Association \(AA\)](#) or their equivalent issue such permits. If settling in Ontario, you may use your valid licence from another province or country for the first 60 days, but will then need to switch to an Ontario **Driver's Licence**. For automobiles, this is a G license.

The **G Driver's Licence** is a high tech plastic card which displays a digitized photograph of the driver, the driver's **signature**, and a magnetic information strip. A bar of 4 dots on it indicates that you qualify to be an accompanying driver under the graduated licensing program. It must be renewed every five years, up to the age of 80.



Your driver's licence is often requested as a form of identity, for example, by banks and government offices. Canadian driver's licences allow you to drive in the United States and many other countries by virtue of various international agreements and treaties.

You are required to carry your **driver's licence**, vehicle registration and proof of insurance documents with you whenever you drive, and could be asked to produce them on demand by a Police Officer. Failure to produce these documents can result in a fine.

Graduated (G) Driving Licence

There are fourteen different licence [classes](#) in Ontario. The G class **driver's licence** is for automobiles (cars, vans or small trucks). You can obtain it via one of two options:

1. Apply as a licenced, experienced driver.
2. Apply as a new driver, if you have never held a licence before.

Licence Exchange and Out of Country Drivers

Ontario has reciprocal driver's licence agreements with other Canadian provinces, Canadian Forces Europe, the USA, and a few other countries. If you are an experienced driver from one of these [jurisdictions](#), and are eligible to exchange your licence under

the Licence exchange program, the process of getting a full G licence will be much quicker than if you apply as a new driver. You will need to visit a [Drive Test Centre](#) in order to apply. Details of how to apply can be found at, www.ontario.ca/driving-and-roads/exchange-foreign-drivers-licence.

A knowledge test or road test is not usually required by experienced drivers; however, you must pass a vision test. The Drive Test Driver Examination Centre will take the former licence originally issued to you and return it to the licensing authority in your former country. You will be issued a temporary G class Ontario **driver's licence**. The plastic photo card licence will follow in the mail within a few weeks.

New Driver Applications

All inexperienced drivers seeking their driver's licence are required to proceed through the [Graduated Licensing System](#) (GLS). This process enables new drivers to gain driving experience and skills gradually. To apply for a licence, you must be at least 16 years of age, pass a vision test, and pass a written test demonstrating your knowledge of the rules of the road and traffic signs. On passing these tests, you will be issued a G1 licence. You must pass the G1 road test in order to receive your G2 licence, and then pass the G2 road test in order to become fully licenced and obtain your G licence. The process takes at least 20 months to complete. Five years is the maximum timeframe allowed for completion.

G1 and G2 drivers under the GLS must meet various [conditions](#). For example, G1 drivers must be accompanied by a fully licenced driver; G2 drivers must maintain a zero blood alcohol level while driving.

Road Tests

If you are not an experienced driver, road tests are required in order to acquire your G licence. Your driving skills will be evaluated as you drive a vehicle. The test date you are given at the time of booking can be months into the future, although an earlier date is possible if you book your test at a centre that is less busy, or you obtain the appointment of someone who has cancelled their test.

If you are using the automated telephone and online versions of the [Road Test Booking](#) system, check for any cancellations, and book immediately (your G1 driver's licence details are required). You may also wait in person at a Drive Test Centre and if fortunate, **take the test appointment of anyone who 'did not show'**, or cancelled at the last minute.

Locations

For your nearest **driver's licence** or vehicle registration locations, please visit <https://www.services.gov.on.ca/sf/#>.

Driving your own vehicle

All motor vehicles must be registered, insured and maintained before being driven on Ontario roads. Without a recognized and valid **driver's** licence, it is impossible to get auto insurance. By law, drivers are responsible for ensuring that passengers under 16 years of age are properly restrained by a seat belt, and in a car seat or booster seat if applicable. Please educate yourself on [road safety topics](#) such as [Ontario's Drive Clean Program](#), car seats, emergency vehicles, cell phones, transporting alcohol, and reporting collisions by reading the [Official MTO Driver's Handbook](#) and the web site links provided. For information on the RIDE program and other such impaired driving programs and campaigns, please visit www.ridechecks.com.

The Ministry of Transportation has produced a number of information sheets. Examples are below, but for the full selection please visit their web site.

- [School Bus Safety](#) – The law regarding stopping for school buses.
- [Drinking Drivers/Impaired Drivers](#) – Information about the law and associated penalties of driving while impaired.
- [Disabled Person Parking Permit/Accessible Parking Permit](#) – Designated parking.

Additional Related Information

Vehicle Registration

Most vehicles must be registered, insured and maintained to meet certain basic safety standards, such as ensuring all lights and brakes are in good working order. If you own a vehicle, you are responsible for meeting these requirements. For more information on this topic please visit [Licensing a Vehicle in Ontario](#).



In Canada, the licence plates belong with the driver, not the vehicle. This means that should you sell your vehicle, you may remove your plates (this is desirable, especially if you have purchased personalized plates). The purchaser buys their own licence plates.

Auto Insurance

Ontario law requires that all drivers be insured in order to drive on public roads. Since auto insurance in Ontario is administered by private insurance companies, it may be beneficial to shop around for the best rate. Consider obtaining a quote from the University's preferred insurer, [TD Meloche-Monnex](#).

For more detailed information on Auto Insurance, please refer to **Help Sheet #4**.

Smoke Free Ontario

Effective January 21, 2009, it is illegal to smoke in a car when a young child under 16 years old is present. For more information, please refer to the [Smoke-Free Ontario Act](#).