

Preparing for your driving test

Information booklet



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.



Before booking your test

The six-months rule for car and motorbike learners

Before you can take your driving test you must have held your first learner permit for at least six months. This is called the six-months rule. This is to give you enough time to practice safe driving and complete your driver training with an approved instructor.



Exceptions to the six-months rule

You may be exempt from the six-months rule but only under the following conditions:

- You have a current full valid foreign driving licence from a country that Ireland does not have a licence exchange agreement with
- You have held your full foreign driving licence for at least two years
- Your full foreign driving licence has not expired more than six months ago

If you fulfil these conditions and want to apply you can download the exemption application form from www.rsa.ie

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 certificate 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 certificate
- 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 (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

Booking your driving test

You can book your driving test at www.myroadsafety.ie

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).

Driving test lead-in times

When booking your test online you will see a calendar of available slots at your chosen test centre. You can also check other centres to see if an earlier slot is available.

Earlier test slots

If you urgently need to take your driving test we will do what we can to help you. When other applicants cancel their test we can make that slot available. When booking your driving test, you can request to be notified if an earlier slot becomes available. You will then receive notification of any earlier available test slot and can log into myroadsafety.ie to view this and reschedule 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. The notice also tells you how to cancel your driving test if you need to.

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:

- ✔ You cannot speak English
- ✔ You are deaf
- ✔ You are hard of hearing.

You can ask the RSA to organise an interpreter for you at www.rsa.ie or advise us that you are bringing an interpreter with you.

This person must be 16 years of age or older and cannot be an Approved Driving Instructor (ADI). They cannot accompany you on the second (practical) part of the test.

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. When you arrive at the test centre, take a seat in the waiting area and you'll be called by your tester. 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 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
- A hill start

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're taking a vehicle with 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 Action 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.



RSA

MyRoadSafety.ie

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

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