

RSA




# RULES OF THE ROAD

## March 2007

Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre  
Road Safety Authority

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# Foreword



The purpose of the Rules of the Road is to save lives and prevent injury on our roads. The rules apply to all road users: drivers, pedestrians, motorcyclists, horse riders and cyclists.

The rules are written in plain English to encourage good behaviour on the road. The rules ask us to take personal responsibility for our use of the road.

The Rules of the Road have been designed in an easy to read format. It is your responsibility to read the rules and know them. At the back of the book is a Glossary that explains some of the terms used. The rules are also published in Irish.

The rules comply with and reflect the Road Traffic Law as at 1 March 2007. Where planned changes in the law are known with certainty a comment is included in the appropriate section to ensure the content reflects them. It will be important to check the relevant section of the Road Safety Authority web site [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie) for updates.

We can save lives and prevent injury by changing our behaviour. Reading these rules and applying them will help achieve this goal.

It's our responsibility.

It's our choice.

# Introduction



The rules of the road are for all road users – drivers, pedestrians, motorcyclists, horse riders and cyclists. You must have a satisfactory knowledge of these rules to get a driving licence, but learning about road safety doesn't stop once you pass a driving test. It takes a lifetime. You need to constantly update your skills and knowledge and be aware of changes to road traffic laws. This is why you should understand and obey these rules whether you are learning to drive or have been driving for many years.

This book uses a 'how to' approach and covers many of the manoeuvres identified as factors in a road crash. It uses three methods to set down clearly and concisely how the law applies to all road users.

- It uses **must** and **must not** to draw attention to behaviour the law clearly demands or forbids.
- It uses terms such as **should** and **should not** to tell you how best to act in a situation where no legal rule is in place.
- It illustrates and describes traffic lights, road markings and signs provided to regulate traffic.

By knowing the rules of the road, practising good driving skills and generally taking care as a road user, you will help to play a vital role in preventing a crash. You will also be making road safety policies more effective.

A number of skills are expected of road users, especially drivers:

- the ability to act responsibly,
- the ability to foresee and react to hazards,
- good concentration, and
- a good level of driving expertise.

Road users are also expected to have a positive and considerate attitude to each other, and particularly to vulnerable road users such as cyclists, motorcyclists pedestrians, children, people with disabilities and older people.

In the interest of road safety, be aware of the importance of gaining a good knowledge of this booklet and putting that knowledge to good practice.

The overall aim of this booklet is to promote safety, good driving practice and courtesy in using our roads according to the law. It is an interpretation of the law from a road safety view. If you have a query you should check the legislation or ask a Garda. It covers the road traffic laws currently in force, but it will be updated regularly in the future to take account of new laws.

**Important:** Road safety policies and laws will work only with the support of *all* road users. If you do not obey road traffic law, you could face a fine, penalty points or a conviction in court. You might also be disqualified from driving and in some cases have to serve a prison term.

For example, a 5km/h difference in your speed could be the difference between life and death for a vulnerable road user such as a pedestrian.

- Hit by a car at 60 km/h, 9 out of 10 pedestrians will be killed.
- Hit by a car at 50 km/h, 5 out of 10 of pedestrians will be killed.
- Hit by a car at 30 km/h, 1 out of 10 pedestrians will be killed.

Source RoSPA UK

**REMEMBER**

**Driving is a life skill that requires lifelong learning.**

For up to date information, visit [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie).

*Section 1:*

# Driving licences and categories of vehicles









You **must** hold a current driving licence or a provisional licence before driving any motor vehicle in a public place. You can drive only the type of vehicle for which you hold a licence and you **must** carry your driving licence at all times when driving.







This section describes when and how to apply for or renew a driving licence. It also describes the different categories of vehicle to which the licences apply.



## Categories of vehicles and minimum age for a first provisional licence

The following table outlines the types of vehicle you may drive under each category of licence and the age you **must** reach before applying for a first provisional licence in the relevant category.

## Categories of Vehicles/Minimum Age of Driver/Restrictions

	Category	Vehicle(s) covered	Minimum Age
	A	Motorcycles - with or without a side-car. There are restrictions on this category of licence. The maximum power output cannot exceed 25 kW or a power/weight ratio of 0.16kW per kg. This restriction continues for a period of two years after obtaining a full category A licence.	18
	A1	Motorcycles with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an engine capacity of 125cc or less, and a power rating of 11kW or less.</li> </ul>	16
	B	Vehicles (other than motorcycles - mopeds - work vehicles or land tractors) with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a design gross vehicle weight of 3,500kg or less, and seating for up to 8 passengers (apart from the driver).</li> </ul> <p>These include a trailer when the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is 750kg or less. (See page 17).</p>	17
	C	Vehicles (other than work vehicles or land tractors) with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a design gross vehicle weight of more than 3,500kg, and seating for up to 8 passengers (apart from the driver).</li> </ul> <p>These include a trailer when the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is 750kg or less.</p>	18
	C1	Vehicles in category C with a design gross vehicle weight of 7,500kg or less. These include a trailer when the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is 750kg or less.	18
	D	Vehicles with seating for more than 8 passengers (apart from the driver). These include a trailer when the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is 750kg or less.	21

	Category	Vehicle(s) covered	Minimum Age
	D1	Vehicles in category D with seating for 9 to 16 passengers (apart from the driver). These include a trailer when the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is 750kg or less.	21
	EB	Combinations of vehicles and trailers when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the towing vehicle is in category B, and the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is greater than 750kg.</li> </ul>	17
	EC1	Combinations of vehicles and trailers when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the towing vehicle in category C1 and the trailer have a combined design gross vehicle weight of 12,000kg or less, and</li> <li>the design gross vehicle weight of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the drawing vehicle.</li> </ul>	18
	EC	Combinations of vehicles and trailers when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the towing vehicle is in category C, and</li> <li>the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is greater than 750kg and includes an articulated unit.</li> </ul>	18
	ED1	Combinations of vehicles and trailers when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the towing vehicle in category D1 and the trailer have a combined design gross vehicle weight of 12,000kg or less, and</li> <li>the design gross vehicle weight of the trailer does not exceed the unladen weight of the drawing vehicle,</li> <li>the trailer may not be used for transporting people.</li> </ul>	21
	ED	Combinations of vehicles and trailers when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the towing vehicle is in category D, and</li> <li>the trailer's design gross vehicle weight is greater than 750kg.</li> </ul>	21

	Category	Vehicle(s) covered	Minimum Age
	M	Mopeds with a maximum design speed of 45km/h or less with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an engine capacity of 50cc or less.</li> </ul>	16
	W	Work vehicles and land tractors with or without a trailer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the trailer may not be used for transporting people</li> </ul>	16

If you are under 16 years of age you **must not** use any vehicle in a public place.

Design Gross Vehicle Weight (DGWV) is the term used by manufacturers for the weight of the vehicle together with the maximum load it is designed to carry (including passengers, fuel, cargo and attachments). The design gross vehicle weight is usually shown on a metal plate attached to the vehicle by the manufacturer.

You **must** understand the carrying capacity of your vehicle or you are at serious risk of having a crash or causing harm.

Overloading will reduce your ability to control your vehicle and is an offence.

## Conditions attached to categories

### Motorcycles

Category A provisional licence holders are entitled to drive motorcycles with:

- an engine power output of 25kW or less, or
- a power/weight ratio of 0.16kW/kg or less.

The restriction applies for as long as you hold a provisional licence for this category and continues for the first two years of a full category A licence.

It is your responsibility to check the power of the motorcycle. If you are in any doubt, consult with the dealer/manufacturer.

## Provisional driving licence

A provisional licence is issued to allow a person learn to drive. Before you apply for your first provisional licence you **must** pass your driver theory test. In the interests of your safety and that of other road users, you **must** meet certain conditions attached to the licence while you are driving. See Section 2 for more details.

You **must** have a current provisional licence to take your driving test and your licence **must** be for the same category of vehicle as the one you will use in your test. See Section 3 for more details on the driving test.

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**All categories of licences are subject to review. To ensure compliance with EU and Irish road safety policy, you are advised to check the website [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie) regularly.**

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### Applying for a first provisional licence





When you apply for a first provisional licence you **must** include two signed passport photographs and the fee with your application form. You may also need to give evidence of your identity, unless you already hold a driving licence for another category of vehicle or from another country. The following table outlines what else you will need when applying for a first provisional licence. The categories of vehicles are described in the table on pages 11 to 13.

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**The learner permit will replace the existing provisional licence. In the interest of road safety, the learner permit will introduce more rigorous requirements for the use of vehicles on the roadway by learner drivers. Full details will be available at [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie).**

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## First provisional licence

	CATEGORY OF FIRST PROVISIONAL LICENCE	WHAT YOU NEED
	<p><b>A1, A, B, M or W</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application form</li> <li>• Photograph (2 signed passport size photos)</li> <li>• Fee</li> <li>• Theory Test Pass Certificate</li> <li>• Evidence of Identity</li> <li>• Medical report, if applicable</li> <li>• Eyesight report</li> </ul>
	<p><b>C1, C, D1 or D</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application form</li> <li>• Photograph (2 signed passport size photos)</li> <li>• Fee</li> <li>• Theory Test Pass Certificate</li> <li>• Medical report (all applicants)*</li> <li>• Proof of full licence for category B vehicle</li> </ul>
	<p><b>EB</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application form</li> <li>• Photograph (2 signed passport size photos)</li> <li>• Fee</li> <li>• Theory Test, if applicable</li> <li>• Medical report, if applicable</li> <li>• Proof of full licence for category B vehicle</li> </ul>
	<p><b>EC1, EC, ED1 or ED</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application form</li> <li>• Photograph (2 signed passport size photos)</li> <li>• Fee</li> <li>• Medical report (all applicants)*</li> <li>• Proof of full licence for the appropriate towing vehicle (for example category C if applying for a category EC licence)</li> </ul>

\* You will also need to have medical assessments from time to time when you have a full licence for these categories and/or when you renew.

## Eyesight and medical reports

- You can get eyesight and medical report forms from your local motor tax office or from the Road Safety Authority website, [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie).
- A registered doctor or ophthalmic optician **must** fill in the eyesight report form.
- You **must** then sign it in front of them.
- A registered doctor **must** complete the medical report form.
- You **must** then sign it in front of them.

## When you must supply a medical report

Not all applicants need to supply a medical report. However, you **must** supply one if any of the following statements applies to you.

- You are applying for a provisional licence in any of the categories C1, C, D1, D, EC1, EC, ED1 or ED.
- You will be 70 years of age or more on the first day the provisional licence is being granted.
- You have any of the conditions listed in Appendix 1 at the back of the book.
- You are taking drugs or medications that are likely to affect your driving.

Note:

1. If you suffer from a serious medical condition, for example irregular or abnormally fast or slow heart beat (arrhythmia) that has ever caused you to lose consciousness, then make sure you visit a doctor before you apply for a licence.
2. You are not allowed to hold a provisional licence if you depend on or regularly abuse mind-altering substances.

Talk to your doctor if you have any doubts about your physical or mental fitness to drive.

You can get full details of the conditions attached to provisional licences on the Road Safety Authority website, [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie).

## Trailers

### *Cars and trailers*

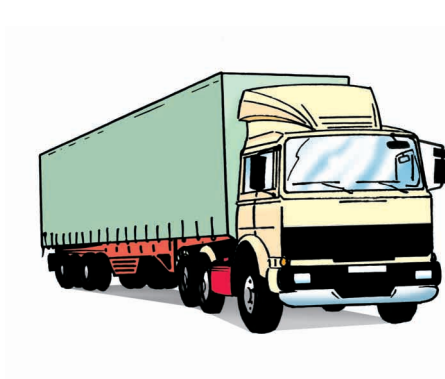
If you hold a **Full category B** licence, you may tow a trailer only if:

- the design gross vehicle weight of the trailer is 750kg or less, or
- the unladen (empty) weight of your towing vehicle is at least the same as the trailer's design gross vehicle weight, and the combined design gross vehicle weight of the vehicle and trailer is no more than 3,500kg.

When using a car to tow a heavier trailer, you **must** hold a category EB licence.

### *Heavier vehicles and trailers*

You **must** hold a Category EC, EC1, ED or ED1 Licence if you want to tow a heavier trailer. These are the licences that entitle you to drive the combinations of the towing vehicles and the trailer (see page 12).



## Heavy goods vehicles and buses

You **must** obey the law on tachographs. For full information please see [www.rsa.ie](http://www.rsa.ie).

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If you drive a heavy goods vehicle or a bus for payment you must hold a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) from September 2008 (Bus Drivers) and September 2009 (HGV Drivers).

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### REMEMBER

You **must not** supply a mechanically propelled vehicle to anyone who is under 16 years of age for use in a public place. The word 'supply' means sell, hire, loan, gift or provide in any other way. If you do, you can be fined up to €3,000 or face up to six months imprisonment.

Working To Save Lives



**Údarás Um Shábháilteacht Ar Bhóithre**  
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**Plain English**  
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€4.00