



Transport  
Roads & Maritime  
Services

# Getting your driver licence



# Introduction

Year after year, crash statistics show that too many young drivers are at risk of being killed or injured on our roads. While young adults aged 17-25 years comprise only 16 per cent of licensed drivers in NSW, they account for 26 per cent of drivers involved in crashes resulting in injuries. To reduce the high numbers of young drivers being killed or injured on NSW roads, the State Government introduced the Graduated Licensing Scheme in 2000.

The scheme helps new drivers gain the necessary skills and driving experience before they obtain a full licence. Under the scheme, new drivers progress from a learner licence to a full licence over an extended period of time, and at a pace that suits their individual driving needs.

This allows new drivers the time needed to develop experience behind the wheel and greater knowledge about the road, resulting in safer driving.

# A three-stage process

The Graduated Licensing Scheme requires new drivers to pass through three licensing stages before obtaining a full driver licence.

- Learner licence
- Provisional P1 licence
- Provisional P2 licence

This flow chart shows how a new driver will progress through the licensing scheme.



# Learner licence

## To get your learner licence you must:

- Be at least 16 years of age.
- Pass a Driver Knowledge Test (DKT) at a motor registry.
- Prove your identity.
- Pass an eyesight test.



## WHAT IS THE DKT?

The DKT is a touch-screen computer-based test of the road rules. There are two sets of questions you must answer:

- 15 driving-related general knowledge questions.  
You have to get at least 12 correct.
- 30 road safety questions (including traffic signs).  
You have to get at least 29 correct.

Before taking the test, you should study the *Road Users' Handbook*, which can be viewed and downloaded from Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) website or purchased from any motor registry. You can also view and download the DKT questions and do a practice test on RMS website.

## BEING A LEARNER DRIVER

Your learner licence is valid for five years. When you get your Ls you will get a *Learner driver log book* so that you and your supervising driver can record your driving experience.

You must hold your Ls for at least 12 months\*, and complete at least 120 hours of driving practice, including 20 hours of night driving, before you can progress to the next licence stage.

You will be restricted from driving high-performance vehicles when a P1 licence is issued. However, as a learner, you can learn to drive or attempt the driving test in these vehicles.

\*The 12 month minimum learner licence period does not apply if you are aged 25 years or over. Additionally, learner drivers who are aged 25 or over are not required to present a Learner driver log book prior to attempting the driving test.

# Provisional P1 licence

## To get your provisional P1 licence you must:

- Be at least 17 years of age.
- Have held your learner licence for at least 12 months (if you are under 25 years of age).
- Have completed at least 120 hours driving practice (including 20 hours of night driving).
- Pass a driving test.



## WHAT IS THE DRIVING TEST?

The Driving Test is an on-road test that assesses your driving skills, decision-making, awareness of other road users, and how you share the road with other traffic. You will drive along a set course while a testing officer scores your driving ability. You will pass if you get 90 per cent or more and you have no fail items.

Before you go for your driving test, get a copy of *A guide to the Driving Test*, which you can pick up from any motor registry or view and download from RMS website. This guide has information about:

- The way the test is structured.
- How your driving is assessed.
- What you will have to do during the test.
- Pass standards.

The driving test will not be conducted unless you produce your log book showing that you have completed and achieved all the learning goals, including a minimum of 120 hours driving practice, of which 20 hours must be night driving. Both you and your supervising driver must sign the declaration of completion at the end of the book.

Your P1 licence is valid for 18 months. You must have held your P1 licence for a minimum of 12 months before you can progress to the next licence stage.

# Provisional P2 licence

To get your provisional P2 licence you must:

- Have held a P1 licence for at least 12 months.
- Pass the Hazard Perception Test (HPT).



## WHAT IS THE HPT?

The HPT is a touch-screen computer-based test that measures your ability to recognise and respond to potentially dangerous driving situations. Research has shown that a lack of these skills is a major factor in crashes, particularly crashes involving young new drivers.

Before attempting the HPT, you should study the *Hazard Perception Handbook* and practice the driving skills described. The *Hazard Perception Handbook* can be viewed and downloaded from RMS website or purchased from a motor registry. You can also practice by doing the interactive exercises on RMS website.

Your P2 licence is valid for 30 months. Holders of provisional P2 licences may learn to drive and upgrade to some classes of heavy vehicle licence, subject to the licence requirements outlined in the *Heavy Vehicle Drivers' Handbook*, which you can view and download from RMS website or purchase from a motor registry.

# Full licence

**To get your full driver licence you must:**

- Have held your P2 licence for a minimum of 24 months.
- Pass the Driver Qualification Test (DQT).

## WHAT IS THE DQT?

The DQT is a touch-screen computer-based test of advanced hazard perception and a knowledge of road rules and safe driving practices.

To help you prepare for the DQT, you should study the *Driver Qualification Handbook*, which can be viewed and downloaded from RMS website or purchased from a motor registry.

You can also prepare for the test by doing the interactive exercises on RMS website.

Your first full licence may be valid for one year, three years or five years.



# Licence restrictions for L, P1 and P2

LICENCE RESTRICTION	LEARNER LICENCE
Automatic transmission vehicles	
Zero Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC)	You cannot have any alcohol in your system when you drive a vehicle
Demerit points	Your licence will be suspended if you incur 4 or more points
Display of signs	L signs must be clearly displayed on the front and back of the exterior of the vehicle. The letter 'L' must not be hidden.
Licence class	You can only drive cars.
Location restrictions	You must not drive in Parramatta Park, Centennial Park or Moore Park when in Sydney.
Mobile Phone	You must not use any function of a mobile phone, including hands free or loudspeaker devices, when driving.
Passengers	
Seatbelts	You must ensure all occupants, including yourself, are in a seat that has a seatbelt or an approved restraint fitted and that each passenger is using the seatbelt or restraint.
Speed limit	You must not drive faster than 80 km/h. You must observe the speed limit where it is below 80 km/h.

## PROVISIONAL P1 LICENCE

You are restricted to driving an automatic vehicle if tested in one.

You cannot have any alcohol in your system when you drive a vehicle

Your licence will be suspended if you incur 4 or more points

P signs (red P on a white background) must be clearly displayed on the front and back of the exterior of the vehicle. The letter 'P' must not be hidden.

You can only drive cars.

You must not use any function of a mobile phone, including hands free or loudspeaker devices, when driving.

P1 drivers under 25 years of age are restricted to carrying one passenger under 21 years of age between 11pm and 5am. If you are disqualified from driving while a provisional licence holder you will be restricted to carrying one passenger at all times while driving for a period of 12 months.

You must ensure all occupants, including yourself, are in a seat that has a seatbelt or an approved restraint fitted and that each passenger is using the seatbelt or restraint.

You must not drive faster than 90km/h. You must observe the speed limit where it is below 90 km/h. Your licence will be suspended for at least 3 months for any speeding offence.

## PROVISIONAL P2 LICENCE

You cannot have any alcohol in your system when you drive a vehicle

Your licence will be suspended if you incur 7 or more points

P signs (green P on a white background) must be clearly displayed on the front and back of the exterior of the vehicle. The letter 'P' must not be hidden.

You can only drive cars, however if you have the required tenure, you may upgrade up to a Heavy Rigid licence class.

You cannot use a hand-held mobile phone when driving.

If you are disqualified from driving while a provisional licence holder you will be restricted to carrying one passenger at all times while driving, for a period of 12 months.

You must ensure all occupants, including yourself, are in a seat that has a seatbelt or an approved restraint fitted and that each passenger is using the seatbelt or restraint.

You must not drive faster than 100 km/h. You must observe the speed limit where it is below 100km/h.

# Licence restrictions for L, P1 and P2

## LICENCE RESTRICTION

Supervising a learner

Supervision

Towing

Vehicles

## LEARNER LICENCE

You must not supervise another learner driver.

You must not drive without a supervising driver. A supervising driver is a person who has an appropriate Australian full licence (not a learner or provisional licence) and who has a BAC of less than 0.05. They must sit next to you.

You must not tow a trailer or any other vehicle.

## PROVISIONAL P1 LICENCE

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You must not supervise a learner driver:

You are allowed to tow light trailers up to 250 kg unloaded weight.

You cannot drive vehicles with high performance six cylinder engines, eight or more cylinders, turbo-charged or super-charged engines, or engine performance modifications.\*

## PROVISIONAL P2 LICENCE

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You must not supervise a learner driver:

You cannot drive vehicles with high performance six cylinder engines, eight or more cylinders, turbo-charged or super-charged engines, or engine performance modifications.\*

\* This applies to all P drivers who got their Ps on or after 11 July 2005.

## Booking a test

All licence tests can be booked online at [myRTA.com](http://myRTA.com), by calling 13 22 13 or at a motor registry. You will need to pay a test fee and, if you pass and satisfy all other requirements, a licence card fee is also payable.

## Questions and answers

**Q** *How old do I have to be to drive?*

**A** You must be at least 16 to have a learner licence and at least 17 to have a P1 licence. (If you are under 25 you must hold a learner licence for a minimum of 12 months before you may progress to a P1 licence.)

You must be at least 18 to have a P2 licence and 20 to get your full licence.

**Q** *Is there a maximum time period for me to move through the GLS?*

**A** No, you may move through the scheme at your own pace. If you do not pass your HPT or DQT within the term of the P1 or P2 licence period, you can renew your P1 or P2 licence.

**Q** *What costs are involved in getting a licence?*

**A** You will need to pay for your tests and for your licence card. You can find out more at the RMS website.

**Q** *Do I have to buy the handbooks to study for my tests?*

**A** To pass the tests you should read the appropriate handbook. You can purchase them from any motor registry or view and download them from the RMS website. You can also use the online demonstration DKT or the HPT and DQT practice activities to help you prepare for the test.

**Q** *What happens if I fail the DKT, HPT or the DQT?*

**A** If you fail any of the tests you may sit for a further test. You will keep your current licence if you have one. Remember that a fee will be charged each time you sit for a DKT, HPT or DQT.

**Q** *Should I have driving lessons with a professional driving school before doing my driving test?*

**A** Professional lessons spread throughout the learning period are more beneficial than a couple just before the driving test.



**Q** *How do I choose a driving school?*

**A** Anyone who teaches new drivers professionally must have a current NSW driving instructor licence and their vehicle must be fitted with dual foot controls for use by the instructor. We recommend selecting an instructor who has structured lessons and who is trained in how to teach 'low risk' driving, such as RMS's Beyond Test Routes program.

The pass rates of driving schools/instructors who have presented 30 or more test applicants in the preceding 12 months are published on RMS website.

**Q** *Can I stay on a P1 or P2 forever?*

**A** Yes. It is not compulsory for any driver to progress to a full licence.

**Q** *What is the blood alcohol concentration limit for L and P licence holders?*

**A** The legal limit for all L and P licence holders is zero. In effect this means you cannot drink alcohol before driving.

**Q** *Is there a limit to the number of passengers I can carry while holding a provisional licence?*

**A** P1 licence holders under 25 years of age are only able to carry one passenger under the age of 21 between 11pm and 5am. Further, if you hold a P1 or P2 licence and are disqualified by a court for a driving offence, once you return from disqualification you will only be allowed to drive with one passenger for a period of 12 months.

**Q** *What if I'm on my Ps and the only vehicle I can drive is prohibited?*

**A** If exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, you may be granted an exemption. To apply for an exemption visit a motor registry or RMS website. A fee applies.

**Q** *Where on the vehicle should I display my L or P signs?*

**A** L and P signs must be clearly displayed on the front and back of the exterior of the vehicle. The letters 'L' and 'P' cannot be hidden. The signs can be placed against the exterior windscreens but they must not obscure your vision. You are no longer allowed to display signs from the inside of your vehicle.

**Q** *Can I use a hands-free phone while driving?*

**A** All mobile phone use is banned for L and P1 licence holders. This includes hands-free kits, Bluetooth™ accessories and loudspeaker functions.

**Q** *What happens if I am caught speeding on my provisional P1 licence?*

**A** Your licence will be suspended for at least 3 months.

**Q** *What happens if I am caught driving whilst unsupervised?*

**A** As a learner driver, if you are caught driving unsupervised the Police may immediately suspend your licence at the roadside and, if you are convicted by a court of the offence, a period of disqualification will apply.

**Q** *What happens if I am caught travelling by more than 30km/h over the speed limit?*

**A** If you are caught travelling by more than 30km/h over the speed limit the Police may immediately suspend and confiscate your learner or provisional driver licence at the roadside. A demerit point suspension will also apply for learner and P1 provisional drivers. For P2 provisional drivers the offence may cause you to reach or exceed the 7 point threshold which will lead to an additional suspension.

**Q** *Can I upgrade to a higher class licence?*

**A** Only P2 licence holders can learn to drive and be issued with a higher class licence up to Heavy Rigid (HR).

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to get and keep  
your LICENCE



Geared gives you the info you need to:

- Guide you through the Graduated Licensing Scheme
- Prepare for your driving test
- Find answers to your driving questions
- Practice the Driver Knowledge Test (DKT) online
- Help keep you and your mates safe on the road



For further enquiries:



[www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au)



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