

# Obtaining Your License

If you are a Massachusetts resident (or even a non-resident), you must have a valid driver's license to operate a motor vehicle on any public road, highway, or other way permitting access to the public.

Through the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issues five license classes with various privileges and restrictions to residents of Massachusetts. Class A, B, and C licenses, which are known as commercial driver's licenses (CDLs), allow you to operate large vehicles, like trucks and buses. The Class D license, which is most common, is for passenger vehicles, vans, and small trucks. The Class M license allows you to operate motorcycles.



# License Descriptions and Classifications

## REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards (License/ID)

To get or renew any driver's license, ID card, or learner's permit, you need documentation showing United States citizenship or lawful presence as required by federal and state law. You need to choose either a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card or a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card.

There are important differences between these two card types. Please read this section carefully to make sure you apply for the card that best meets your personal or business needs. If you are currently licensed in Massachusetts, or have a valid Massachusetts ID Card, you will also need to choose between a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card or a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License or ID Card at renewal.

All driver licensing requirements (age, operator fitness, and written and road testing) are the same for both card types and they both require proof of lawful presence in the United States. The documentation and application requirements are different for the two card types. They also look different, with different markings and words printed on the face of the cards. See *Appendix D* for images of the card types. There is more information on the specific document requirements and card lengths later in this chapter.

A REAL ID Card issued by Massachusetts is compliant with the federal REAL ID Act of 2005. This type of license or ID Card can be used to access certain federal facilities and to board flights within the United States. If you have a passport or military ID card, you may never need a REAL ID. More information about REAL ID can be found at [www.mass.gov/guides/real-id](http://www.mass.gov/guides/real-id).

A Standard Massachusetts Card may be a driver's license or ID Card. A Standard Massachusetts Driver's License offers the same driving privileges as a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License. However, after October 1, 2020, it will NOT be an acceptable form of identification for the federal purposes mentioned above.

If you have a Standard Massachusetts Card, you will need to show a passport or alternative form of federally acceptable identification to board a domestic flight or access a federal facility after October 1, 2020. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) publishes a list of alternative forms of identification at [www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification](http://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/identification).

You may hold only one driver's license or ID Card at a time.

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## Who Needs a Massachusetts License?

All Massachusetts residents need to obtain a valid Massachusetts license in order to operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts. See *Appendix D* for color images of licenses issued by Massachusetts.

### ***Out-of-State/Country Residents***

A U.S. resident living outside Massachusetts may drive in the Commonwealth using a valid out-of-state driver's license. This rule applies both to visitors and to out-of-state residents who work in Massachusetts.

If you are a visitor from another country, you may drive private passenger vehicles in Massachusetts for up to one year from your date of arrival in the United States provided you have a valid driver's license issued by your home country and your country is recognized under one of the conventions listed in *Appendix A* or the Registrar has specifically granted driving privileges to residents of your country as detailed in *Appendix A*. An International Driver's Permit is not required, but the permit may help provide an English translation of your foreign license. The International Driver's Permit is **not** a driver's license.

You must have your valid out-of-state or foreign driver's license in your possession when driving in Massachusetts.

**Once you have established residence in Massachusetts, you must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license to retain your driving privileges. There is no grace period.** For the procedure for converting your out-of-state or foreign license, see the *Converting Your License From Another Jurisdiction* section.

### ***Licensing Rules for Military Personnel***

If you are in active military service and want to drive in Massachusetts, you must have a valid driver's license from your home state. If you are a permanent resident of the Commonwealth, you must have a valid Massachusetts license. Following are exceptions:

- If you are returning from active duty outside the United States and have a driver's license issued by a branch of the Armed Forces based in another country, you may drive with that license in Massachusetts for up to 45 days.
- If you have a Massachusetts driver's license that expired during your active service, you may use that license to operate a motor vehicle for up to 60 days after your honorable discharge from military service. If you choose to exercise this option, you must carry your expired license and proof of your discharge with you when you drive.

**RMV Contact Center: 857-368-8000 (from the 339/617/781/857 MA area codes or from outside of MA)  
800-858-3926 (from all other MA area codes) or email AskRMV@state.ma.us  
The deaf and hard of hearing can call toll free at 877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833).  
Contact Center Hours: Monday–Friday 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Internet Address: [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv)**

## **Who is Eligible for a Massachusetts License?**

Anyone who is a Massachusetts resident, is at least 16 years old, and has not had a driver's license or the right to operate revoked may apply to begin the process of obtaining a Class D or Class M License at any RMV Full Service Center (see *Appendix C* for a list of locations).

Massachusetts law changed in 2016 to comply with the REAL ID Act. Massachusetts now requires lawful presence in the U.S. for at least 12 months.

On March 26th, 2018, we will issue licenses for lengths of time shorter than five years. If you present proof of lawful presence for a minimum of 12 months, a license can be issued and will expire on the expiration date of your permitted stay in the U.S.

## ***Age Requirement***

No person under the age of 16 may drive in Massachusetts. This is true even if you have a driver's license (or learner's permit) issued in a state or U.S. territory or another country that allows operation of a motor vehicle by a person less than 16 years of age.

- To apply for a Class D (passenger vehicle) or a Class M (motorcycle) learner's permit, you must be at least 16.
- You can obtain a learner's permit at age 16, but you may not receive a Class D or a Class M driver's license until you are at least 16 1/2 and have had your permit in good standing for six consecutive months and have completed a driver education training program approved by the Registrar.

**Note:** You must be at least 18 years old to apply for a Commercial Driver's License (Class A, B, or C).

## ***Parental Consent***

Customers applying for permits, licenses, or identification cards who are under age 18 (minors) must obtain written consent from a parent, a legal guardian, a social worker, or a boarding school headmaster. For a learner's permit, or identification card, a person gives written consent by signing the back of the permit / license / ID application.

If the person signing the back of the application is not a parent, documentation of the person's guardian status must be shown at the time of the permit / ID application and, for a license, at the time of the road test. **Forging a signature may result in license suspension or revocation.**

## ***Facial Image Policy***

All applicants for a learner's permit, driver's license, identification card, liquor identification card, or HP placard must have their photo-image captured by the RMV.

This is to ensure that the image contained on the issued document and in the RMV's database is the actual image of the person who provided the identification information to the RMV when applying for the document. It is also to aid law enforcement officers in the proper identification of the person whose image is contained on the document.

The captured image must be a straightforward looking view of the applicant. All of the applicant's facial features must be visible (e.g. eyes, nose, mouth, cheeks, etc.). The appearance must provide a clear view of the applicant's face as a whole. A solid or transparent facial cover (scarf, veil, eyeglasses/sunglasses, goggles, surgical or dust mask, etc.) is not acceptable. Eyeglasses, including reading or prescription glasses, are not allowed, even if the applicant normally wears them. A hat or other head cover is not acceptable, but if worn for medical or religious reasons, it may be allowed if it does not hide any facial features. Natural facial hair and hairpieces may be acceptable unless the overall effect disguises the person's true facial appearance or facial features are obscured. Permanent facial tattoos are acceptable but temporary tattoos are not. Bluetooth headsets are not acceptable.

If your photo-image was taken before you turned 21 and you are now 21 years of age or older, a new photo-image will need to be taken the next time you renew your license or ID.

**Chapter 428 of the Acts of 2006 prohibits the RMV from taking a photo-image for a license or ID if the applicant is wearing eyeglasses.**

## ***Massachusetts Driver's License Limited to Massachusetts Residents***

If your privilege to drive on your valid foreign license has expired because more than one year has elapsed since your last date of arrival in this country, or if you are visiting for business or pleasure and are trying to acquire your first driver's license, your ability to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license is limited. Massachusetts law does not authorize driver's licenses to be issued for the convenience of business persons or tourists from other countries. To obtain a license, you must meet all the requirements for a driver's license under the law, including the requirement that you be lawfully present in the U.S. and a resident of Massachusetts.

**Massachusetts law requires those convicted of sex offenses to register with their local police departments. For more information, call 1-800-93-MEGAN.**

## ***Vision Screening Requirements***

Testing your vision is a necessary part of ensuring that you are capable of operating a motor vehicle safely. An RMV clerk will screen your vision when you apply for a learner's permit or driver's license. You will be screened for visual acuity, color vision, and peripheral vision. If you normally wear contact lenses or corrective lenses to see at a distance, then you must wear them during the vision screening examination.

To be eligible for a Class D or M license, your vision must be at least 20/40 visual acuity in your better eye (corrected) and at least 120 degrees of horizontal peripheral vision (both eyes together) for a full license. If your corrected vision is between 20/50 and 20/70 in the better eye, you may be eligible for a daylight only license. If you fail the vision screening examination, decline to take the examination, or are unable to take the vision screening examination, you may submit an original RMV Vision Screening Certificate that your ophthalmologist or optometrist, licensed in Massachusetts, has completed. The RMV may accept this Vision Screening Certificate in lieu of the vision screening examination to demonstrate compliance with the minimum vision standards to obtain a driver's license.

### Drivers With Monovision

Monovision is a method of visual correction (either through surgery or by contact lens) that allows for the use of one eye for distance vision and the other eye for near vision. If you have monovision, you may have trouble with the RMV's vision screening examination. A Vision Screening Certificate (VSC), completed by an optometrist or ophthalmologist and indicating you are visually qualified to safely operate a motor vehicle, can be accepted in place of the vision screening examination.

**The Vision Screening Certificate is available at any RMV Service Center. You can download the certificate from the RMV's website ([www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv)) or pick up a copy at many eye-care providers.**

For information on other physical qualifications necessary to hold a Massachusetts driver's license or for more information regarding the voluntary reporting procedure for medical

conditions, please call Medical Affairs at 857-368-8020 or refer to the *Medical Restrictions* and *Surrendering Your License* sections.

### **Driving Record Verification**

When you apply for a permit or license, or renew a license, you will be required to provide a list of the states you have been licensed in for the past ten years, as well as all out-of-state license numbers you have had. The RMV's licensing computer system checks your name, birth date, Social Security Number, and any out-of-state driver's license numbers with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS), which stores information about license suspensions and revocations for drivers in all 50 states. If your record matches PDPS, you will not be allowed to continue the application process until all out-of-state suspensions or convictions are resolved.

Massachusetts is part of the State-to-State program, which checks valid driver licenses and state issued ID cards issued by other participating states. State-to-State will cancel any driver's license or state issued ID card issued by the other participating state when a Massachusetts license or ID Card (excluding a Liquor ID) is issued.

### **License Classes**

The table below summarizes Massachusetts license types. A Massachusetts driver's license is valid for a maximum of five years and expires on your birthday. However, your first license will expire on your fifth birthday following the date of issue. Your driver's license is considered a primary form of identification, showing proof of identity, residence, age, and signature. You can renew your license up to one year before its expiration date.

<i>Massachusetts Driver's Licenses</i>	
<b>License Class</b>	<b>Vehicles Permitted</b>
<b>A</b>	Any combination of vehicles with a gross combination weight rating (GCWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, provided the GVWR of the vehicle(s) being towed is in excess of 10,000 pounds. (Holders of a Class A license may, with any appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Class B, C, and D.)
<b>B</b>	Any single vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of 26,001 or more pounds, or any such vehicle towing a vehicle not in excess of 10,000 pounds GVWR. (Holders of a Class B license may, with appropriate endorsements, operate all vehicles within Class C and D.)
<b>C</b>	Any single vehicle or combination of vehicles that does not meet the definition of Class A or Class B, but is either designed to transport 16 or more passengers including the driver, or is required to be placarded for hazardous materials under 49 CFR 172.500 or any other federal regulation. (Holders of a Class C license may operate all vehicles within Class D.)
<b>D</b>	Any single vehicle or combination of vehicles that does not meet the definition of Class A, Class B, Class C, or Class M. (Typically passenger vehicles such as cars, SUVs, or family vans).
<b>M</b>	Any motor vehicle defined as a motorcycle in M.G.L. c. 90, § 1.

- A Class A license can have all endorsements.
- A Class B license can have all endorsements except for Combination and Doubles/Triples.
- A Class C license can only have HAZMAT, Tank, School Bus, and Passenger endorsements.
- If you pass a CDL road test in a vehicle equipped with air brakes, you will be permitted to operate a vehicle with air brakes.
- Transporting school-aged children and/or operation of a 'school bus' requires special authority.

In addition to listing your personal information, a license or an ID issued to you by the RMV features an image of your photo and signature, which is stored on the RMV's central computer.

Vertical licenses and identification cards with the words "Under 21" printed on them are issued to anyone who obtains or renews a license or identification card while under the age of 21. If you renew your license or ID card before your 21st birthday, you will receive a vertical license or ID card. This license or ID card will remain valid to expiration, even after you turn 21. A horizontal license may be obtained after your 21st birthday.

### **Commercial Licenses (Class A, B, or C)**

For information on commercial licenses (CDLs), refer to the Massachusetts Commercial Driver's License Manual, which is available at any RMV Service Center or at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv).

Unless otherwise exempted by Federal Regulations, any operator of a Commercial Motor Vehicle (CMV) weighing more than 10,000 lbs., must have in his or her possession a valid U.S. Department of Transportation Medical Card or a valid Medical Waiver Card issued by Medical Affairs.

### **School Pupil Transport (Eight or fewer passengers)**

If you transport school-aged children, you must have a separate license or special endorsement. A pamphlet on school pupil transport license information is available at RMV Service Centers or online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv).

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## **Endorsements**

Endorsements may be added to Commercial Driver's Licenses (CDLs) for an additional fee. They indicate if you are qualified to operate certain vehicles or carry certain cargo or passengers. For example, if qualified, you may add a hazardous materials (hazmat) endorsement or a school bus endorsement to a Class A, B, or C license. Endorsements cannot be added to a Class D, M, or D/M license. An endorsement expires when the license expires.

**For information on Commercial vehicle restrictions or endorsements, see the CDL Manual.**

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## **Restrictions**

Restrictions are limitations placed on your driving privileges. Your driver's license may be issued with various restrictions, which are indicated by code letters on the front and back of your license.

## ***List of Restrictions***

The RMV may apply any of the following restrictions to a license:  
(list effective March 26, 2018)

- 2** Medical Log / Glucose Required
- A** Use with Certified Driving Instructor Only
- B** Corrective lenses
- C** Mechanical Aid
- D** Prosthetic Aid / Personal Medical Aid
- E** CMV Automatic Transmission
- G** Daylight Only
- H** Limited to Employment
- I** JOL Limited / Other
- J** Other
- K** CDL - Intrastate Only
- L** CDL - Vehicles without Airbrakes
- M** CDL - Except Class A Bus
- N** CDL - Except Class A & B Bus
- O** CDL - Except Tractor/Trailer
- P** No Passengers in CMV Bus
- Q** Class D Automatic Transmission
- R** Bioptic Telescoping Lens
- S** Proof of Blood Sugar Level
- T** Ignition Interlock
- U** 3 Wheeled Motorcycle
- V** Medical Variance
- W** Intrastate Medical Waiver
- X** CDL - No Cargo in CMV Tanker
- Y** Restrict to 14 Passenger Capacity
- Z** CDL - Air Over Hydraulic

## ***Medical Restrictions***

Medical Affairs, which reviews license applications listing physical or mental conditions that may affect a driver's abilities, may issue driving restrictions related to your current medical condition. For example, if you pass the driver's license vision test by wearing glasses or contact lenses, your driver's license will be issued with a "Corrective Lenses" restriction (code letter B) and you must wear your corrective lenses when you drive. If you need a mechanical aid or prosthetic device (adaptive equipment) to operate a motor vehicle, Medical Affairs will issue your license with restriction(s). It considers license applications on a case-by-case basis, and you may be required to provide a physician's letter for medical clearances or special driving-related equipment.



If you develop a medical condition that affects your ability to drive, you must report the condition to the RMV. Please call Medical Affairs at 857-368-8020.

## **Junior Operator Restrictions**

The Junior Operator restriction (code letter I) is added to the licenses of all operators under age 18. For a complete description of the Junior Operator Law and driving restrictions for operators under 18, see the *Junior Operator License Law* section later in this chapter.

## **Massachusetts IDs**

For people who do not have a Massachusetts driver's license, the RMV can issue a Massachusetts ID, which looks similar to a driver's license, but does not extend any driving privileges. Massachusetts IDs are official forms of identity, signature, and age that are accepted in the Commonwealth. You cannot hold a Massachusetts ID and a license at the same time. A Massachusetts ID can be either a REAL ID Card or a Standard Massachusetts Card.

You can apply for a Massachusetts ID at any RMV Service Center. To obtain a Massachusetts ID, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 14 years old
- Be a Massachusetts resident
- Not hold a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or any other jurisdiction
- Prove lawful presence in the U.S.

A Massachusetts ID expires every five years or at the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first).

See *Appendix D* for color images of identification cards issued by Massachusetts.

**Massachusetts IDs and Liquor IDs are produced at a secure location and are generally mailed to you within seven to ten business days after you visit the RMV Service Center.**

**At the service center, you will receive a receipt that includes your personal information, image, and signature. The receipt is not valid for identification. This means that it will not be accepted for travel as a state-issued photo ID.**

## **Liquor IDs**

For people who do not have a Massachusetts driver's license, the RMV can issue a Massachusetts Liquor ID, which looks similar to a driver's license, but does not extend any driving privileges. You cannot hold a Liquor ID and a Massachusetts license at the same time.

The identification requirements are different for a Liquor ID than those for a driver's license or a Massachusetts ID. A Liquor ID card can be issued to Massachusetts residents, as well as to residents of other states or other countries. You do not need to prove lawful presence in the U.S. for a Liquor ID.

You can apply for a Liquor ID at any RMV Service Center. To obtain one, you must meet the following requirements:

- Be at least 21 years old
- Not hold a valid Massachusetts Driver's License

A Liquor ID is valid for five years and cannot be renewed. If you need a Liquor ID for more than five years, you should reapply in person upon the expiration of the existing Liquor ID.

See *Appendix D* for color images of identification cards issued by Massachusetts.

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## Acceptable Identification to Purchase Alcoholic Beverages in Massachusetts

State law (M.G.L. Chapter 138, Section 34B) provides alcohol servers with some legal protection if it is found that alcohol was served to an underage person and it is also found that the server reasonably relied on:

- (1) A valid Massachusetts Driver's License (REAL ID Card or Standard Massachusetts Card)
- (2) A valid Massachusetts Liquor ID Card
- (3) A valid Massachusetts ID Card issued under M. G. L. Chapter 90, Section 8E (REAL ID Card or Standard Massachusetts Card)
- (4) A valid passport issued by the United States government (including a U.S. Passport Card) or by the government, recognized by the U.S. government, of a foreign country
- (5) A U.S. issued Military ID card

**Note that out-of-state and out-of-country licenses and ID cards are not on this list and alcohol servers may refuse to accept such licenses or ID cards.**

## Identification Requirements

The federal REAL ID Act established minimum standards that states must follow when issuing and producing driver's licenses and ID cards. On October 1, 2020, the federal government will require that individuals present a license or ID marked as a REAL ID, or other federally acceptable form of identification, to board domestic flights. Visit [www.mass.gov/guides/real-id](http://www.mass.gov/guides/real-id) for up-to-date REAL ID information in Massachusetts.

To apply for a permit, license, or ID card, you must provide identification documents. These required documents will be different for REAL ID Cards, Standard Massachusetts Cards, and Liquor IDs. See the *Document Requirements Chart* for more information.

To help decide if a REAL ID is right for you, check out the REAL ID Wizard on the page [www.mass.gov/guides/real-id](http://www.mass.gov/guides/real-id)

The identification documents must be from the list of *Acceptable Forms of Identification* (see page 12) and must be satisfactory to the Registrar. You need to provide the required identification for each different type of document you apply for, even if you already have a Massachusetts permit, license, ID, or liquor ID.

## Document Requirements Chart

All Driver's License and Massachusetts Identification Card applicants must present the following:

<b>REAL ID Driver's License/ID Card (valid for federal purposes)</b>	<b>Standard Driver's License/ID Card (not valid for federal purposes)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 document that proves your Social Security Number (SSN) OR an SSN Denial Notice with non-U.S. Passport, Visa, and I-94</li> <li>• 1 document that proves your lawful presence in the U.S. / date of birth</li> <li>• 2 documents that prove your Massachusetts residency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSN must validate electronically OR provide an SSN Denial Notice with non-U.S. Passport, Visa, and I-94</li> <li>• 1 document that proves your lawful presence in the U.S. / date of birth</li> <li>• 1 document that proves your Massachusetts residency</li> </ul>

All Liquor ID applicants (21 years of age or older) must only present the following documents:

- 1 document that proves your Social Security Number (SSN) OR an SSN Denial Notice with non-U.S. Passport, Visa, and I-94
- 1 document that proves your date of birth

Additional documentation may be required for the following services:

<b>Service</b>	<b>Additional Documentation</b>
Out-of-State Permit Conversion from the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. territories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current Out-of-State Permit</li> <li>• Certified copy of Driving Record, not more than 30 days old</li> </ul>
Out-of-State License Conversion from Canada, Mexico, or a U.S. Territory (including Puerto Rico)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certified copy of Driving Record, not more than 30 days old</li> </ul>
Out-of-State License Conversion (if you do not have the Out-of-State License)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable photo ID from the list of acceptable documents</li> <li>• Certified copy of Driving Record, not more than 30 days old</li> </ul>
Name Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For a REAL Driver's License/ID Card, a legal document proving the name change (for example, a marriage license, divorce decree, or court documentation)</li> <li>• For a Standard Driver's License/ID Card, no documentation is required</li> </ul>
Date of Birth Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acceptable document from the lawful presence/date of birth list</li> </ul>

An I-94 can be either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)

A "Denial Notice" must be acceptable to the RMV. See page 17 for more information.

The RMV offers an interactive feature online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). This feature automatically asks you a series of questions about your transaction. If you complete all the information accurately, and indicate which documents you have to bring into an RMV Service Center, this feature will let you know if your documents meet the requirements. This will help to ensure that your transaction is successful when you visit a service center and avoid the need for more than one visit.

**You must also produce your social security number (SSN) that the RMV can verify with the Social Security Administration (SSA) as having been issued to you.** The RMV cannot issue a permit, license, or ID card if an SSN does not verify. If you do not have an SSN, you must apply for one at the SSA. If you are denied an SSN, you will be issued a “Denial Notice” by the SSA which explains why you cannot obtain an SSN. The “Denial Notice” must be dated and cannot be altered or be more than 60 days old. If you present a “Denial Notice” instead of a valid SSN, you must also present the following:

- Proof of your current visa status
- An I-94 Record of Arrival & Departure (either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94))
- Your current non-U.S. Passport

**All documents must be originals unless otherwise indicated. Photocopies will not be accepted.**

Identification requirements are subject to change at any time.  
Visit [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) for the most current information.

**Note 1:** Foreign diplomats and other foreign government officials, their family members, and personal assistants/employees who have been issued a U.S. Department of State driver’s license are not eligible to obtain a Massachusetts driver’s license.

**Note 2:** If your visa includes additional forms, such as F1 and F2 or M1 and M2, both of which require an I-20, that form must be submitted as well.

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## Acceptable Forms of Identification

On the next few pages are the types of documents the RMV will accept to prove identity.

### ***Documents to prove Social Security Number (SSN) Requirement***

For a REAL ID Card, one document must be from this group. For a Standard Massachusetts Card, you must have an SSN that validates with SSA or an SSN Denial Notice with Passport, VISA, and I-94. For a Liquor ID, one document must be from this group:

- SSN Card (cannot be laminated)
- W-2 Form
- SSA-1099 Form
- Non-SSA-1099 Form
- A pay stub with the applicant’s name and full SSN on it
- SSN Denial Notice with Passport, VISA, and I-94

**Note:** For a document to prove SSN, it must show your full nine-digit SSN. None of the numbers can be masked.

## ***Documents to prove Lawful Presence/Date of Birth***

For a REAL ID Card or a Standard Massachusetts Card, one document must be from this group. For a Liquor ID, one document must be from this group. All foreign documents must prove lawful presence for a minimum of 12 months.

- Valid, unexpired U.S. passport or Passport Card

**If your U.S. Passport was issued within the last six months, please bring your certified copy of your U.S. birth certificate.**

- Certified copy of a birth certificate filed with a State Office of Vital Statistics or equivalent agency in the individual's state of birth

**A Puerto Rican birth certificate will only be accepted for identification if it was issued on or after July 1, 2010. For more information on the Puerto Rican birth certificate law, visit the [Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration website](#).**

- Consular Report of Birth Abroad (CRBA) issued by the U.S. Department of State, Form FS-240, DS-1350, or FS-545
- Valid, unexpired Permanent Resident Card (Form I-551) issued by DHS or INS
- Temporary I-551 stamp in foreign passport
- Unexpired employment authorization document (EAD) issued by DHS, Form I-766, or Form I-688B
- Unexpired foreign passport with a valid, unexpired U.S. visa affixed accompanied by the approved I-94 form documenting the applicant's most recent admittance into the United States

**A non-US passport must contain a current visa and be presented with an I-94 Record of Arrival and Departure, unless you have a Permanent Resident Card or other change in status. The I-94 can be either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)**

**For applicable customers who have a Certificate of Eligibility (I-20) or Certificate of Eligibility for Exchange Visitor Status (DS-2019), documentation verifying the applicant's most recent admittance into the United States must be shown.**

- Certificate of Citizenship, Form N-560, or Form N-561, issued by DHS
- Certificate of Naturalization issued by DHS, Form N-550, or Form N-570
- Re-Entry Permit (I-327)
- Refugee Travel Document (I-571)

**For a REAL ID, if your current name doesn't match the one that appears on your lawful presence document(s), you must prove the legal name change with an acceptable document. A marriage certificate, divorce decree, or court document all qualify.**

## ***Documents to prove Massachusetts Residency***

For a REAL ID Card, two documents must be from this group. For a Standard Massachusetts Card, one document must be from this group.

### **Massachusetts RMV- issued documents (can use one from the options below):**

- Current License, Massachusetts ID Card, or Learner's Permit (Liquor ID not accepted)
- RMV-issued correspondence dated within 60 days and received via US mail (including License/Registration reminders)

**State/Federal/Municipal/City/Town/County agency-issued documents:**

- 1st class mail dated within 60 days
- Current MA-issued Professional License with photograph
- Medicaid Statement dated within 60 days
- Current Firearms Card
- Jury Duty Summons dated within 60 days
- Court correspondence dated within 60 days
- Property Tax for current year
- Excise Tax for current year

**Bills:**

- Utility Bill (electric, telephone, water, sewer, cable, satellite, heating) dated within 60 days
- Credit Card Statement dated within 60 days
- Medical/Hospital Statement dated within 60 days
- Cell Phone Bill dated within 60 days

**Lease/Mortgage:**

- Current Lease/Mortgage or similar rental contract

**Financial-related documents:**

- Bank Statement that contains images of cancelled personal checks dated within 60 days
- W2 Wage and Tax Statement from immediate prior year
- Current Pension Statement (401K, 457, SEP, etc.)
- Current Retirement Statement
- Pay Stub dated within 60 days
- Current SSA Statement
- Current Installment Loan Contract (Car Loan)

**School-issued documents:**

- Official School Transcript for current year
- Official letter from school (proof of enrollment) dated within 60 days
- Tuition Bill for current year
- Certified School Record for current year

**Insurance-related documents:**

- Auto Insurance Policy for current year
- Renter's Insurance Policy for current year
- Homeowner's Insurance Policy for current year

**Alternative Residency Affidavit:**

- For applicants under the age of 18 only

**Note:** For a document to prove residence, it must state the residential address. A P.O. Box is not acceptable proof of residency. Documents mailed "in care of" are not valid for proof of residency.

Checklists for common RMV Service Center transactions are available on [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). They list the requirements and documentation you will need to successfully complete your transaction at a service center.

**Note:** It is not the function of RMV employees to advise you about which documents to present. No specific type of document on either list is required or preferred. In following these policies and procedures, RMV employees apply the same eligibility requirements to all applicants equally, without regard to race, sex, creed, national origin, or English speaking ability. The issuance of a driver's license, learner's permit, or ID card is not a determination of whether or not a person has legal or illegal immigration status. That is the responsibility of the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

### ***Translation Required Policy***

If you present a document that is not written or printed in the English language, the Registrar may require the document to be accompanied by a translation that is certified by one of the following:

- A bilingual teacher at an accredited Massachusetts college, university, or private language school
- A bilingual notary public
- The local consulate for the document's country of origin
- The American Translators Association (the national association of professional translators and interpreters)

If translated by a teacher or consulate, the translation must be printed on the letterhead of the consulate, college, university, or private language school and it must be properly formatted. Visit [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) to see the acceptable format. If translated by a notary, the translation must have the notary's official seal.

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## **Social Security Numbers and License Numbers**

You must have a valid Social Security Number (SSN) to apply for any permit, license, or ID, including a replacement or a renewal. When you submit an application at an RMV Service Center, the Registry will attempt to validate the SSN you provide against computer records at the Social Security Administration (SSA). If you do not have an SSN, you may request an application for one by calling 1-800-772-1213 or visiting [www.ssa.gov/ssnumber](http://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber).

If you are not a citizen and do not have an SSN, you should apply for one at a Social Security Office as soon as possible. If you are denied an SSN, you may still qualify for a Massachusetts driver's license or ID if you can meet the other identification requirements. However, to prove that you applied for an SSN, you must present the written Denial Notice (not more than 60 days old) the SSA provided you, which informed you that you were not eligible for an SSN, and a non-US passport, visa, and I-94. The I-94 can be either a paper version from US Customs and Border Protection or a printout of an electronic version downloaded from their website: [www.cbp.gov/i94](http://www.cbp.gov/i94)

For information on obtaining an SSN, call 1-800-772-1213.

## ***RMV May Not Accept SSN Denial Notice***

The RMV reserves the right to not accept any Social Security Denial Notice that does not appear to be genuine, that is more than 60 days old, or which appears to have been altered, or is incomplete, or that indicates the application for an SSN has not been properly completed.

A Denial Notice from the SSA which indicates that the applicant has failed to properly complete the application process will be treated by the RMV as an unacceptable Denial Notice. An application for a Learner's Permit, Driver's License, or ID card that is accompanied by an unacceptable Denial Notice will not be accepted. Evidence of failure to properly complete the SSN application process includes, but is not limited to, failing to provide documents required as part of the SSN application process, including failing to provide evidence of class admission, and failing to comply with a request by the SSA to visit an SSA office for an in-person interview.

## ***"SA" and "S" License Numbers***

The RMV requires your SSN to confirm your identity and to maintain your license and driving records. The SSN cannot be displayed on your driver's license, vehicle registration, or state issued ID card (due to the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004). Beginning March 26, 2018, the RMV license system will assign computer generated numbers beginning with an "SA" or an "S" followed by numbers equaling a total of nine characters on your license/ID card.

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## **Documents and Applications that Cannot be Accepted**

The Registrar reserves the right to not accept any application if she has a good faith reason\* to believe any of the following:

- Any document presented is not genuine or has been altered, defaced, or rendered unreadable to such an extent that it cannot be relied on.
- Any document contains a photograph or photoimage of the applicant that bears little or no resemblance to the applicant.
- The applicant is not the individual represented in the application and supporting documents.
- The applicant does not satisfy the requirement for SSN, lawful presence/date of birth, or Massachusetts residency.
- The applicant has presented an SSN that does not validate as being issued to him/her, or was not obtained in a lawful manner from the U.S. Social Security Administration.

\*A "good faith reason" is one that is based on objective facts and observations, such as statements from the applicant, or information obtained from usually reliable sources. Also, in this and other explanations of RMV laws and policies, the "Registrar" means either the Registrar or her designee.

The Registry will initiate electronic checks for most identification documents with national and state databases. This process provides validity responses back to the RMV within seconds for the vast majority. However, some checks will require additional time for research or may be subject to manual review. This does not mean that your transaction has been denied. It simply means the verifying information is not readily available and additional



time is required. These cases are generally resolved within three to five business days, but in rare occasions may be up to twenty days. Your Customer Service Representative will provide you with additional instructions.

### ***Review of Documents and Applications that are Not Accepted***

If one or more of the documents you present when applying for a driver's license, learner's permit, or ID card is not accepted and your transaction is not processed because you do not have other acceptable documents with you, you have several options, as described in the next section.

### ***Initial Decision and Your Options***

After reviewing your documents, if the RMV Service Center Representative rejects your documents, or if your documents do not pass the electronic check, you may choose to correct the problem, such as by obtaining the appropriate documents and returning later with a new application. You may also seek further review by a supervisor. If the electronic checks require additional time for research, the Customer Service Center Representative will provide you with additional instructions. If the RMV cannot process your application, you will be provided a form indicating the reason(s). This is the Application Status Letter. You may appeal the RMV's final decision within ten days of a Standard Massachusetts Card being denied.

### ***Appeals***

**Please be advised: The Registry is changing its method of reviewing documents. On March 26, 2018, the RMV will begin electronic checks for most identification documents. This process provides verification within seconds for the majority of documents. However, some checks will require additional time for research. This does not mean that your transaction has been denied. It simply means the verifying information is not readily available and additional time is required. These cases are generally resolved within three to five business days. You will be provided with additional instructions by your Customer Service Representative. You may appeal the RMV's final decision if denied.**

You must file any appeal within ten days after you received a written denial from the RMV. Any additional time required by the informal review does not extend the ten-day period. A formal appeal may be filed only with the Board of Appeals on Liability Policies and Bonds at the address below with a check or money order for \$50.

**Board of Appeal on Motor Vehicle Liability,  
Policies and Bonds Division of Insurance**  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 810, • Boston, MA 02118  
617-521-7794 • [www.state.ma.us/doi](http://www.state.ma.us/doi)

To obtain a form online to appeal a decision of the Registrar to the Division of Insurance's Board of Appeal, go to [www.state.ma.us/doi](http://www.state.ma.us/doi) and enter "appeal form" in the search box.

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## **Penalties for Presenting Fraudulent Documents**

Severe penalties are imposed on a person who violates the law in obtaining or possessing a driver's license, learner's permit, or ID card. Following is a brief description of some of those penalties.

- Whoever loans or knowingly permits his or her license or learner's permit to operate motor vehicles to be used by any person, or whoever makes false statements in an application for such a license or learner's permit, or whoever knowingly makes any false statements in an application for registration of a motor vehicle, shall be punished by a fine of not less than \$20 nor more than \$200 dollars or by imprisonment for not less than two weeks nor more than two years or both (MGL c.90, §24).
- Whoever falsely makes, steals, alters, forges, or counterfeits or procures or helps another falsely make, steal, alter, forge, or counterfeit a learner's permit, a license to operate motor vehicles, or an ID card or whoever has or uses such a permit, license, or ID card may be punished by a fine of not more than \$500 or imprisonment in a state prison for up to five years or in a jail or house of correction for not more than two years (M.G.L. c.90, §24B).
- Anyone who falsely impersonates the person named in the application for a license or learner's permit, or anyone who procures or helps another to falsely impersonate the person named in the application, or who uses a name other than his or her own to falsely obtain such a license, or whoever possesses or uses a license or permit to operate a motor vehicle that was obtained in such a manner shall be subject to the penalties described in MGL c.90, §24B. Whoever is convicted of a violation of MGL c.90, §24B, shall also have his or her license, or right to operate, suspended for a minimum of one year.
- Any person who swears or affirms falsely in regard to any matter or thing respecting which an oath or affirmation is required by the Registrar or by MGL c. 90 shall be deemed guilty of perjury (MGL c.90, §28). In addition, falsification of any information provided to obtain, renew, transfer, or upgrade a driver's license or learner's permit may result in a suspension of driving privileges.

## License/ID Fees

*Learner's permit exam fee - \$30.00*

The learner's permit exam fee covers the cost of processing your application and administering your learner's permit exam. If you fail the exam or your permit expires, you will be charged this fee again for another examination.

*Road test fee - \$35.00*

The RMV charges a flat fee for any license application. This fee covers the cost of processing your application and scheduling a road test. If you fail the road test, do not appear for the road test, are rejected by the examiner, or cancel your appointment with less than 72 hours notice, you will still be charged the \$35 fee. For more details on road testing, see the *Taking the Road Test* section later in this chapter.

*License issue/renew fee - Class D - \$50.00*

*License issue/renew fee - Class M - \$50.00*

The RMV charges a driver's license fee so it can issue a tamper-resistant, Class D or Class M license. Fees for licenses issued for less than five years will be prorated based on length of issuance.

*Duplicate or amended license - \$25.00*

The RMV charges a fee for any change that results in the reissuance of a license.

*Out-of-state conversion fees*

Class A\* - \$140.00

Class B\* - \$140.00

Class C\* - \$140.00

Class D\* - \$115.00

\*To add motorcycle privileges (Class M) to any of these license classes, you must pay an additional \$15.00. The Class M privilege will expire the same time as the existing license. If your license is eligible for renewal when you add the Class M privilege, it may be best for you to renew the license at the same time.

Class M only - \$115.00

Class D or M permit conversion - \$30.00

*Massachusetts ID issue/renew fee - \$25.00*

If you have surrendered your license voluntarily, there is no fee for a Massachusetts ID (See the *Surrendering Your License* section of this chapter for more information).

*Liquor ID issue fee - \$25.00*

*Duplicate or amended Massachusetts ID or Liquor ID - \$25.00*

**All fees are subject to change at any time. All license fees are non-refundable.**

**Disabled Veterans do not pay any fees for driver's license transactions if they have Disabled Veteran plates or if they have qualified for Disabled Veteran plates with Medical Affairs.**

## The Junior Operator License Law

Any motor vehicle operator or motorcyclist between the ages of 16 1/2 and 18 is considered a Junior Operator. The Junior Operator Law has several requirements and restrictions that significantly affect the operation of a motor vehicle by a person who has a Junior Operator's License (JOL). The basic purpose of the law is to provide new drivers supervised opportunities in which to develop good driving skills, while keeping those drivers free of the possible distractions caused by friends under age 18 who are present while the drivers are behind the wheel.

### Requirements to Obtain a JOL

An applicant for a driver's license between ages 16 1/2 and 18 must comply with several requirements to obtain a JOL:

- Have a valid learner's permit for at least six consecutive months before taking the road test. (Any suspension will invalidate the permit and the six months will start to run anew when the suspension is lifted.)
- Maintain a clean driving record for at least six consecutive months before taking the road test.

- Successfully complete a Registrar-approved driver education and training program, which includes 30 hours of classroom instruction; 12 hours of in-car, behind-the-wheel training; and six hours of in-car experience observing other student drivers.
- Complete at least an additional 40 hours of supervised, behind-the-wheel driving as shown by a certified statement provided by a parent or guardian.  
The RMV will accept 30 hours of driving supervised by a parent or guardian if the applicant completed a driver skills development program.
- A parent or guardian must participate in two hours of instruction on the driver's education curriculum (unless they have participated within the past five years).
- Pass a final exam to have a driver's education certificate electronically filed with RMV.

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## JOL License Restrictions

The following restrictions apply to all Junior Operators:

- You may not operate a motor vehicle within the first six months after receiving your JOL while any person **under age 18** is in the vehicle (other than you or an immediate family member), unless you are accompanied by a person who is at least 21 years old, has at least one year of driving experience, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and is occupying a seat beside you.

**General Rule:** The passenger restriction that applies to you as a JOL holder under age 18 is lifted once you complete the six-month period (or the portion that applies to you) or you reach age 18, whichever occurs first.

The six-month passenger restriction period will stop running, temporarily, during any suspension. When your JOL is reinstated, you will still have to complete the remainder of the six-month restriction period that existed at the beginning of the suspension period, unless you have already turned 18.

See Chapter Two for a list of the penalties and fees you will face for violating any of these restrictions.

- As the holder of a JOL, you may not operate a motor vehicle between 12:30 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless you are accompanied by one of your parents or your legal guardian. If you are found operating a motor vehicle in violation of this restriction, you may be charged with operating a motor vehicle without being licensed. This is a criminal violation.  
**Note:** The law states that between 12:30 a.m. and 1:00 a.m. and between 4:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m., the provisions of the law shall be enforced by law enforcement agencies only when a Junior Operator of a motor vehicle has been lawfully stopped for a violation of the motor vehicle laws or some other offense. This is called "secondary enforcement." However, it is still illegal for you to operate during those times without a parent present in the car.
- If you violate the passenger restriction or the night restriction, you will be subject to a license suspension of 60 days for a first offense, 180 days for a second offense, and one year for subsequent offenses. For a second or subsequent offense, you will also be required to complete a Driver Attitudinal Retraining course. The law requires the Registrar to impose this suspension in addition to any other penalty, fine, suspension, revocation, or requirement that may be imposed in connection with a violation committed at the time you were violating the passenger or night restriction.

- You may not operate a motor vehicle that requires a **commercial driver's license** (CDL).
- You will be suspended for one year if you are under 18 when you have committed certain driving offenses and alcohol or drugs were involved (180 days if age 18 to 21), **in addition to any penalty assessed by a court or other law.** (For details, see the *License Suspension or Revocation* section of Chapter Two.)
- You will be ineligible for a full license until you have completed the period of suspension imposed while operating with a JOL and you reach age 18.
- You will face additional suspension periods of one year for a first drag racing offense and three years for a subsequent offense. For a first speeding offense, you will be suspended for 90 days; for a subsequent offense, you will be suspended for one year.
- You may not use any mobile electronic device (see *Safe Driving Law* section of Chapter Three) for any reason while operating a motor vehicle. The only exception is for reporting an emergency.

## Applying for a License

You must obtain a learner's permit before you can apply for any license (This manual specifically outlines the procedures for obtaining a Class D or a Class M license). To get a learner's permit, you must complete an application, present identification, pay a fee, pass a vision exam, and pass a learner's permit exam. Your learner's permit does not become a license until you pass the road test and have paid all license fees. If your learner's permit expires, you must re-take the learner's permit exam and pay the required fees.

If you are a new Massachusetts resident and have an out-of-state driver's license, you may be eligible to convert your license without testing. For information on license conversion and foreign license policies, see the section *Converting Your License From Another Jurisdiction*.

The RMV offers an interactive feature online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). This feature automatically asks you a series of questions about your transaction. If you complete all the information accurately, and indicate which documents you have to bring into an RMV Service Center, this feature will let you know if your documents meet the requirements. This will help to ensure that your transaction is successful when you visit a service center and avoid the need for more than one visit.

## Getting a Learner's Permit

You must be at least 16 years old to apply for a Class D or M learner's permit. The learner's permit exam that you must take tests your understanding of Massachusetts motor vehicle laws and safe driving practices. A learner's permit gives you permission to drive while you practice your driving skills and prepare for your road test. A permit is valid up to two years.

When applying for a learner's permit, you can prepay your license and road test fees at that time. You can also use the "Pay My Road Test and/or License Fees" transaction on [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) to pay these fees before or after you take the road test. If fees have been paid, your driver's license will be automatically sent to you, and you will not need to visit an RMV Service Center after passing the road test.

**Important:** If you obtained a learner's permit (but not a license) before March 26, 2018, additional documentation may be required. You will need to prove U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S. The RMV strongly recommends you provide this BEFORE scheduling or taking the road test. If you apply for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, you can provide this online or in an RMV Service Center. If you apply for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, you must provide it at an RMV Service Center. If you cannot provide this documentation, you cannot obtain a driver's license.

To earn your learner's permit, take the following steps:

1. Study all of the information contained in this manual.
2. Complete a learner's permit application and submit it to any RMV Full Service Center. This application can be completed online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) to save you time when you visit a service center. If you are under 18, you must have your parent or guardian sign your application.  
  
In completing the application, you will be required to disclose whether you have a physical, mental, or medical condition or are taking any medications that might affect your ability to operate a motor vehicle.
3. Meet all of the RMV's identification requirements (see the *Identification Requirements* section).
4. Pay a \$30 learner's permit exam fee, which covers the cost of your exam.
5. Have your photo-image and signature captured electronically.
6. Pass a vision test at the service center or submit an RMV vision screening certificate from your medical practitioner.
7. Pass a learner's permit exam based on information in this manual.

Learner's permit exams are offered only on a walk-in basis when you submit your application for a learner's permit. You cannot schedule your learner's permit exam in advance.

**A learner's permit is a document that grants conditional driving privileges. This document is not intended to be used as an identification document for travel. This means that it will not be accepted by most airlines, cruise ships, etc., for travel as a state-issued photo ID.**

## ***Learner's Permit Exam Procedures***

Each learner's permit exam has 25 multiple-choice questions. Topics covered on the exam include alcohol misuse, suspensions, and JOL violations, as well as rules of the road and identifying road signs. To pass the exam, you must answer 18 questions correctly within the allotted time of 25 minutes.

RMV Full Service Centers have automated testing stations (ATS), which are easy-to-use videoscreen kiosks that use a computer program to deliver learner's permit exam questions visually. The learner's permit exam is available in multiple languages (for a Class D or M permit) through the ATS. You have about one minute to answer each question. The ATS lets you practice with sample questions before beginning the actual exam.

**You must study the contents of this manual to be able to pass the learner's permit exam.**

Driver's Manuals and other reference materials cannot be used during the learner's permit exam and are not allowed in the testing area. You also are not allowed to wear or use any electronic device (including electronic optical devices), regardless of the purpose of the device. Audio devices or headphones cannot be used or worn, unless they are being used for taking an audio exam. Hats cannot be worn (unless for medical or religious reasons).

Usage of a Driver's Manual, other reference material, or electronic device during the learner's permit exam is considered cheating.

If you are caught cheating on an exam – or trying to cheat – you will fail and you will not be allowed to hold any type of driver's license or permit for 60 days. In some cases, you may also be subject to further investigation.

## ***Foreign Language Tests***

If English is not your primary language, you may ask to take the learner's permit exam in a foreign language. The RMV currently offers Class D and M learner's permit exams in a variety of languages. Class A, B, and C learner's permit exams are only available in English.

**Class D and M learner's permit exams are available in the following languages:**

**Arabic • Armenian • Burmese • Cambodian (Khmer) • Chinese (simplified) • Chinese (traditional) • Farsi • French • German • Greek • Gujarati • Haitian/Creole • Hindi • Italian • Japanese • Korean • Laotian • Polish • Portuguese (Brazilian) • Russian • Serbo-Croatian (Latin) • Somali • Spanish • Tagalog/Filipino • Thai • Urdu • Vietnamese**

## ***Audio Exams***

Audio exams are available through the ATS. This feature allows you to hear an automated voice read the test questions and possible answers through headphones connected to the ATS. Audio exams are available in all the languages listed above for Class D and M exams, and in English only for CDL exams (per federal regulation). The time limit for Class D and M audio exams is 25 minutes.

Anyone can choose to take an audio exam. The exam does not need to be scheduled in advance and you do not need to present any additional documentation to be eligible.

If you want to use the audio feature for your exam, you should bring a set of headphones with you to the RMV Service Center. Every ATS has a splitter on the bottom left of the machine with a universal connection for headphones. All headphones with a 3.5 millimeter headphone mini-jack (including Ipod headphones) will work with the ATS.

## ***Alternative Exam Options***

If you have a cognitive or physical disability that would prevent you from taking a standard learner's permit exam through ATS, you may request an alternative extended time, paper, or person-to-person oral exam. To request an extended time or paper exam, you must speak to the RMV Service Center Manager when you visit the service center.

To request a person-to-person oral exam, please call 857-368-8105 and leave a message that includes your name, your telephone number, the specifics of your request, and the

service center where you would like to take your exam. You will then be contacted by a Registry employee who will help you schedule an exam.

Person-to-person oral exams are only available in English at this time.

For person-to-person oral exams, you must provide the manager with written documentation that confirms the nature of your disability. This documentation may be a Doctor's or Social Worker's letter, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or a letter from a school on official letterhead. You will also need to provide all of the required identification documents (see *Identification Requirements* section).

A person-to-person oral exam will only be provided if it has been scheduled in advance by calling the number on the previous page. Extended time and paper exams do not need to be scheduled in advance and do not require additional documentation.

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## Driving With Your Permit

You must carry your learner's permit whenever you drive until you earn a Junior Operator's License or a full driver's license.

A Class D learner's permit allows you to drive a passenger vehicle with the following limitations:

- You must be accompanied by a licensed operator who occupies the passenger seat next to you and is at least 21 years old, holds a valid driver's license from Massachusetts or another state, and has at least one year of driving experience.
- If you are under 18, you may not drive between 12:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. unless accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who is a validly licensed operator with at least one year of driving experience.

A Class M learner's permit allows you to operate a motorcycle with these limitations:

- You may not carry a passenger.
- You can drive only during daylight hours (between sunrise and sunset).
- You must wear a US DOT standard helmet.
- You must wear eyeglasses, goggles, or a protective face shield unless the motorcycle you are driving has a windshield or screen.

With a Class D or Class M learner's permit, you may operate motor vehicles in another state as long as doing so does not violate that state's laws.

**See Chapter Two for a list of the penalties and fees you will face for violating any of these restrictions.**

## Driver's Education

The RMV requires drivers under age 18 to take professional driving lessons at a local high school or driver school. Professional driving instruction can help you become a more skillful, knowledgeable driver, and it can increase your chances of passing the Class D or Class M road test on your first try. Another benefit of learning to drive through a licensed school is the ability to use a school vehicle for your road test and a school instructor as your test sponsor.



All professional driver schools in Massachusetts, including public and private high schools, must be licensed and monitored by the RMV. Visit the RMV website to locate a driver school and see if there have been any enforcement actions taken against the school. More information can be found at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv).

You can also obtain information on driving instruction by contacting your local high school.

**If you doubt a driver school's credentials, ask to see a license certificate, which the RMV issues.**

To apply for a Class D or M driver's license when you are between 16 1/2 and 18 years old, you *must* complete a driver's education program, pass a final exam, and have a driver's education certificate electronically on file with the RMV from a licensed driver school or a high school program that is approved by the Registrar. The fact that you have fulfilled this requirement will be available on your RMV computer record at the time of your road test.

You must also complete 40 hours of supervised driving (30 hours if you completed a driver skills development program), and your parent or guardian must participate in two hours of the driver's education curriculum (unless he/she already attended in the past five years).

**Driver Education Certificate Department, Registry of Motor Vehicles  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889**

If you recently moved to Massachusetts and had already completed a driver's education program in another state, you should mail your original out-of-state driver's education certificate, a \$15 check payable to MassDOT, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above. Verification will be made with the state that originally issued your driver's education certificate. If the other state's requirements meet or exceed Massachusetts' requirements, a new driver's education certificate will be electronically filed with the RMV. Once this is done, you may book your road test.

**To convert an out-of-state driver's education certificate, the program you completed must meet or exceed Massachusetts minimum requirements for classroom and in-car instruction. If you have any questions, call the RMV Contact Center.**

## Taking the Road Test

The next step toward earning your Massachusetts driver's license is taking a road test with an RMV examiner. Whether you are applying for your first license or completing a license conversion that requires a road test, you must have a learner's permit to schedule a test. Road test procedures are described in the following pages.

If you are obtaining a motorcycle license, or adding a motorcycle class to your Massachusetts driver's license, you do not have to take a road test if you have successfully completed the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP), approved by the RMV.

For a Class D license, you are not allowed to attempt more than six road tests in a 12-month period. For a Class M license, if you fail two road tests, you must enroll in and successfully complete a beginner rider course before you can schedule another test.

## ***Scheduling a Road Test***

Road tests may be scheduled online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). See the *REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards* and *Identification Requirements* sections for information on the types of licenses and what documentation is required.

**Important:** If you obtained a learner's permit (but not a license) before March 26, 2018, additional documentation may be required. You will need to prove U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S. The RMV strongly recommends you provide this BEFORE scheduling or taking the road test. If you apply for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, you can provide this online or in an RMV Service Center. If you apply for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, you must provide it at an RMV Service Center. If you cannot provide this documentation, you cannot obtain a driver's license.

Road tests can also be scheduled by calling the RMV Automated Service Line at 866-MASSRMV (866-627-7768).

You may cancel or reschedule your road test online or through the RMV Contact Center. There is no additional fee if you give more than 72 hours notice.

**Road tests are scheduled close together; you must be on time for your test. If you are late for your appointment, you will not be tested and you will be required to pay the road test fee.**

## ***Massachusetts Rider Education Program***

The Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP) is designed to reduce the number of motorcycle related fatalities and injuries by increasing the availability of Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF) approved training courses for motorcycle riders and to increase awareness and education for both riders and other drivers. If you successfully complete an MREP course, you do not need to take an RMV Class M road test.

After passing the MREP course, to receive a motorcycle license, you must either:

- 1) Show lawful presence for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License on-line or in person at a Service Center
- 2) Complete our "Get Ready" application on-line for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License before visiting a Service Center where a license can be issued regardless of pre-pay (see *REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards* section)

**If you are under 18 years old, the MREP basic rider course is required to obtain a Class M license.**

For information on motorcycle rider courses for both beginner and experienced drivers, call 857-368-2903 or visit [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv).

The RMV has a Motorcycle Manual. This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is available online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). Study this manual if you want to get a Class M learner's permit or add a motorcycle class to your Class D license.

## ***Policies on Cancellations and Fees***

When a public school system cancels classes for weather-related reasons, road tests scheduled in that school system's community may be canceled at the discretion of the

RMV. Road tests will be canceled automatically when the Governor declares a state of emergency. If the Governor declares an emergency in a particular region, only road tests in that region will be canceled.

Road Test Examiners may also cancel road tests when weather conditions are considered unsafe. To determine if your road test has been canceled, please call the RMV's Contact Center. In any of the preceding cases, you may schedule a new road test at no additional fee. However, you *will* be charged the road test fee if you...

- Fail the test
- Are unprepared for the test
- Are refused the test because your vehicle fails to pass the examiner's inspection
- Do not bring a qualified sponsor
- Fail to appear for or are late for your test
- Cancel or reschedule your test with less than 72 hours notice

### ***Being Prepared for the Road Test***

On the day you take your Class D road test, you must fulfill several requirements:

1. Have a completed road test application, and have your parent or guardian complete the parental consent section if you are under age 18.

In completing the application for the road test, you will be required to disclose whether you have a physical, mental, or medical condition or are taking any medications that might affect your ability to operate a motor vehicle. If you do, prior to taking a road test, you must submit medical clearance, from your physician, to an RMV Service Center Manager. The Road Test Examiner will review your application and either approve it or forward it to Medical Affairs for appropriate review.

2. Have your learner's permit.
3. Bring a qualified sponsor (see the *Sponsor Requirements* section).  
Note: A sponsor is not required for a Class M road test.
4. Provide an acceptable, properly equipped, legally registered vehicle to use in your test (see the *Passenger Vehicle Requirements* section).

**If you are under age 18, you must maintain a clean driving record for the six consecutive months immediately preceding the date you apply for the test. You will not be able to take the test if you...**

- **Have experienced any surchargeable incidents (e.g., at-fault accidents, moving violations) under Massachusetts law or the law of another state**
- **Have had your permit suspended for committing drug or alcohol related motor vehicle violations**
- **Have been convicted for violating any drug or alcohol related laws in Massachusetts or another state**

Note: Even if you had a clean driving record for six consecutive months immediately preceding the date you first booked the road test, if the RMV receives notice of an event that would cause the six-month clean driving period to be interrupted between the date the

test was booked and the date of the test itself, you will not be allowed to take the road test when scheduled. A new clean driving record of at least six months will have to be established, unless you reach 18 years of age prior to that time.

For a Class M road test, you must bring your learner's permit, a completed license application form, and a properly equipped, legally registered motorcycle, but you are not required to bring a sponsor. If you are under 18 years old, you are not eligible for an RMV Class M road test and must complete the MREP basic rider course to get a Class M license.

### ***Sponsor Requirements***

For a Class D license, including a JOL, you need a sponsor for your road test, even if you have a valid foreign driver's license. When you arrive at the test location, you must be accompanied by a licensed operator who...

- Is at least 21 years old
- Has had at least one year of driving experience
- Has a valid driver's license issued by his or her home state. Holders of foreign driver's licenses are not eligible to be sponsors.

**If you are not accompanied by a sponsor, you will not be given a Class D road test.**

### ***Passenger Vehicle Requirements***

**To be acceptable to the examiner, the vehicle you bring to the road test must meet all requirements in this section.**

In general, the vehicle you use for your Class D road test should be safe and in good working order. You must show your vehicle registration to the examiner and the vehicle must be properly inspected. Your test will be canceled if the examiner believes your vehicle is unsafe. In addition to being safe, your vehicle must have these features:

- Adequate seating so that the examiner may sit next to you and your sponsor may sit in the rear seat behind the driver. You may not use a vehicle that does not have a seat for your sponsor. Sponsors may not sit in the bed of a two passenger pickup truck.
- An accessible parking brake so the examiner can make an emergency stop. It is up to the individual examiner to determine if the parking brake would be accessible to him or her in an emergency. To help ensure that brake access will not be a problem, you should bring a vehicle to the test that has a centrally located parking brake. If you have any questions about whether a vehicle is acceptable, you should take it to the scheduled road test location on the business day prior to the scheduled test.

If you are prevented from taking the road test only because the examiner determined that he/she could not access the braking system, you will not be charged a fee for that scheduled test.

Driving instruction vehicles must have a second foot brake for instructors or examiners and must display proper signage.

**In some larger vehicles, like certain minivans, the parking brake is too far from the examiner to be easily accessible in an emergency. These vehicles are *not* suitable for road tests and may be rejected by the examiner.**

- If your test vehicle is registered out of state, you must show the examiner proof of insurance coverage equal to Massachusetts minimum limits, which are \$20,000/\$40,000 for bodily injury and \$5,000 for property damage.  
A policy or a certificate that lists coverage limits serves as proof of a vehicle's insurance.
- If you are renting the vehicle you are using for your road test, you must show your examiner your rental agreement and a letter from the rental company, on its letterhead, that authorizes you to use the vehicle for a driver's license road test. You are not required to provide this information for leased vehicles.

A vehicle cannot be used for a road test if one of its tires has been replaced by a "donut" (limited use spare) tire.

### ***Road Test Policy for Vehicles with Dealer, Farm, and Repair Plates***

You cannot take a road test in a passenger vehicle that is registered with a "dealer" plate unless you can prove, to the satisfaction of the examiner, that you are the dealer, or spouse of the dealer, or a salesperson who works at the dealership. A vehicle with a farm plate can be used, if acceptable to the examiner, but only if the applicant can prove, to the satisfaction of the examiner, that the applicant is a member of the family or an employee of the farmer. If displaying a farm plate, the vehicle cannot be a passenger vehicle, but may be a pickup truck with an acceptable rear seat for a sponsor. You will not be allowed to take a road test in a vehicle with a repair plate.

### ***Passenger Vehicle Test Procedures***

You should arrive approximately 15 minutes early for your scheduled road test appointment. You will not be able to take your test if you are late.

Before your road test, the RMV examiner will inspect your vehicle to ensure that it is properly registered, that all equipment is in good working order, and that the vehicle provides a safe, adequate, and clean seat for the examiner and easy access to the brake.

During your Class D road test, you must prove you have the skills and abilities needed to operate most private passenger vehicles, small trucks, vans, and SUVs. Most newer vehicles are equipped with "specialized features", such as backing sensors, back-up cameras, automatic parallel parking, and GPS-guided independent operation. These features perform or substantially assist a driver with certain driving, parking, or backing skills. Allowing a driver to use these features during a road test would not truly show his/her driving skills and abilities. Therefore, these features (devices, components, computer programs, etc.) **must be turned-off or disabled for the road test** and the vehicle must still be safe to operate. If you bring a vehicle to the road test that has specialized features that cannot be disabled and the vehicle cannot be operated safely without them, the vehicle may be rejected unless the road test examiner determines that specific maneuvers can be performed without the assistance of specialized features unique to the vehicle presented. If the vehicle is rejected for this reason, you will not be charged a fee for that scheduled road test, but you will need to reschedule and bring an appropriate vehicle for the next road test. If adaptive equipment for a legitimate medical condition is installed in the vehicle and necessary for operation, a "mechanical/software aid" restriction will be added to a license.

After the examiner inspects and approves the vehicle, the driving test will begin. Only you, the examiner, and your sponsor are allowed in the vehicle during the test. The examiner will sit in the seat next to you; your sponsor must sit in the rear. **No children or pets are**

**allowed.** Service animals are allowed. If the examiner so authorizes, a language interpreter may also be allowed in the vehicle. You and your sponsor are not allowed to converse unless authorized by the examiner.

The examiner's goal is to observe your driving performance. During a road test, you should be prepared to demonstrate your ability to...

- Use hand signals
- Start the engine
- Start and stop the vehicle
- Parallel Park
- Back the vehicle approximately 50 feet
- Make left - right turns
- Start, stop, and turn the vehicle on a hill
- Turn around between curbs (three point turn)
- Enter and leave intersections
- Recognize and obey traffic signs, lights and signals, and other rules of the road
- Use good driving sense

In addition to judging your overall driving skills, the examiner will note how well you follow general good-driving procedures, including whether you...

- Use good driving posture, with both hands always placed properly on the wheel
- Drive in the proper lane and look carefully and signal properly before changing lanes
- Maintain enough distance between your vehicle and the one ahead of you
- Always drive at safe speeds to comply with speed limits and varying traffic conditions
- Properly yield the right-of-way
- Are generally aware of your actions and particularly those of other drivers

### ***Motorcycle Requirements***

In general, the motorcycle you use for your Class M road test should be safe and in good working order. Your test will be canceled if the examiner believes your motorcycle is unsafe.

In addition, you must show the examiner...

- Your motorcycle's registration document
- A valid inspection sticker

If your motorcycle is registered out of state, you will have to show the examiner proof of insurance coverage equal to Massachusetts' minimum limits, which are \$20,000/\$40,000 for bodily injury and \$5,000 for property damage.

A policy or a certificate that lists limits of coverage serves as proof of the vehicle's insurance.

As a motorcycle operator, you must also...

- Wear a helmet that meets or exceeds US DOT standards.

State law requires your helmet to comply with the US DOT's Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard No. 218.

- Helmets that meet this standard will be labeled with stickers on the inside and outside.
- Wear eyeglasses, goggles, or a protective face shield, unless your motorcycle has a windshield or a screen.

For information on motorcycle rider courses for both beginner and experienced drivers, call 857-368-7270 or visit [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv).

## ***Motorcycle Test Procedures***

You should arrive approximately 15 minutes early for your scheduled motorcycle road test appointment. You will not be able to take your test if you are late.

Before your road test, the RMV examiner will inspect your motorcycle to ensure that it is registered, inspected, and insured properly and that all equipment is in good working order.

**Road Test Waiver Available:** The RMV road test for a Class M motorcycle license may be waived if you can prove that you have successfully completed a course of motorcycle instruction known as the Massachusetts Rider Education Program (MREP) as approved by the RMV. If you are under 18 years old, you are not eligible for an RMV Class M road test and must complete the MREP basic rider course to get a Class M license.

As a pre-road test, the examiner will assess your knowledge of motorcycle equipment and controls. For the road test, the examiner will observe your ability to operate a motorcycle. Your road test will consist of the following riding skills:

- “Figure eights” and 360° circles in both directions without your feet touching the road
- Normal starts and stops
- Driving in traffic
- Crossing intersections
- Making turns
- Riding up and down hills

If you take a Class M road test on a three-wheeled motorcycle or on a motorcycle with a sidecar, you will be limited to operating such a vehicle and a “J” restriction will be printed on your license.

The RMV has a **Motorcycle Manual**. This manual focuses exclusively on motorcycles and is available online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). Check it out for important information you need to get a motorcycle license and to be a safer rider.

## ***Deaf and Hard of Hearing Road Tests***

If you are deaf or hard of hearing, you can schedule a road test by calling 1-877-RMV-TTDD (1-877-768-8833). Describe your request and include your phone number, residential address, and e-mail address. The Driver Licensing Department will contact the Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to arrange for an interpreter. Once this has been set up, you will be contacted to book the road test.

Before the start of the road test, the examiner will have a discussion with you and the interpreter to determine the best way to communicate. The examiner will explain the

elements of the test and will go over the hand signals that will be used during the test. You and the interpreter will also be provided with a written description of the road test and the required elements to review before starting the test.

If you have any questions during the road test, you will be allowed to pull over to the side of the road (when safe to do so) and communicate with the examiner.

### ***Common Reasons for Failing a Road Test***

- You were at fault in a crash with another motor vehicle, pedestrian, or object.
- You were driving in a way that may have caused a crash or in a way the examiner considered dangerous.
- You violated a motor vehicle law, rule, or regulation.
- You demonstrated a lack of experience safely operating a motor vehicle.
- You refused to follow or drove contrary to the examiner's instructions.

**Note:** The RMV has a zero tolerance policy for violent or abusive conduct by road test applicants and sponsors.

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## **Receiving Your New License**

To avoid visiting an RMV Service Center after you pass your road test, you can either pay your road test and license fees at the time you schedule the test, or you can pay online at [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) using the "Pay My Road Test and/or License Fees" transaction.

If you pass the road test, have prepaid for your license, have proven lawful presence, and have no outstanding obligations, the examiner will stamp the back of your learner's permit and it will become a temporary license, valid up to 60 days. The RMV will manufacture your new, permanent photo-image license and mail it to you. If you are over the age of 21, but still have a photo on file from when you were under 21, you will need to visit a service center to obtain your license.

If you pass the road test and have not prepaid for your license, within 60 days, you must either pay online or take the permit with the road test results indicated on the back to a service center. Please note, however, that if you pay online and do not visit a service center, you will not receive a temporary license. (Note: If you do not pay within 60 days of passing your road test, you may be required to retake the road test at your expense.)

A license cannot be issued until you either:

- 1) Show lawful presence for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License on-line or in person at a Service Center
- 2) Complete our "Get Ready" application on-line for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License before visiting a Service Center where a license can be issued regardless of pre-pay (see *REAL ID and Standard Massachusetts Cards* section).



**Important:** If you obtained a learner's permit (but not a license) before March 26, 2018, additional documentation may be required. You will need to prove U.S. citizenship or lawful presence in the U.S. The RMV strongly recommends you provide this BEFORE scheduling or taking the road test. If you apply for a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, you can provide this online or in an RMV Service Center. If you apply for a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, you must provide it at an RMV Service Center. If you cannot provide this documentation, you cannot obtain a driver's license.

If your permanent license does not arrive in the mail within four weeks, please call the RMV Contact Center.

Whenever you operate a motor vehicle in Massachusetts, the law requires you to carry a valid driver's license on your person or within easy reach inside your vehicle.

**Massachusetts driver's licenses are produced at a secure location and are generally mailed to you within seven to ten business days after you visit the RMV Service Center.**

**At the service center, you will receive a receipt that serves as a temporary license and provides proof of driving privileges while the permanent license is being manufactured. The receipt is not valid for identification. This means that it will not be accepted by most airlines, cruise ships, etc., for travel as a state-issued photo ID.**

## Converting Your License From Another Jurisdiction

To retain driving privileges, out-of-state or foreign-licensed drivers must obtain a Massachusetts driver's license upon becoming a Massachusetts resident. If you currently carry a valid license from another state, a U.S. territory, Canada, Mexico, or certain select other foreign countries, you may be eligible to submit your license for conversion, but you will need to meet the RMV's identification requirements. (See the *Identification Requirements* section.) If your license does not contain a photo, you will be required to provide additional documentation.

**All applicants who convert a license must surrender that license in order to receive a Massachusetts license.**

**Note:** If you present any document that is inconsistent with the concept of your being a resident of Massachusetts (such as B1 or B2 or other short term visa status, or an expired visa status or documents showing an out-of-state residence), you will not be considered a resident and an application for a Permit, License, or Mass ID will be denied. Massachusetts law requires proof of lawful presence in the U.S. for a minimum of 12 months (see *Who is eligible for a Massachusetts License* section). You may be eligible for a Liquor ID.

The table on the next page summarizes the requirements for license conversion. License conversions require that you pay all application, testing, and license fees, regardless of whether you must take an exam. In most cases, if you hold a license from a foreign country, you will need to pass both the learner's permit exam and the road test.

## Requirements for New Residents

Place of Issue	License Status	Learner's Permit Exam	Road Test	Driving Record
<b>Out-of-State</b>	Valid or expired less than one year			
	Expired more than one year	✓	✓	
<b>14 U.S. Territories, Canada, or Mexico</b>	Valid or expired less than one year			✓
	Expired more than one year	✓	✓	✓
<b>Other Foreign Countries</b>	Valid license (with English translation if needed)	✓	✓	

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### Out-of-State Conversions

If you have an out-of-state Class D or M license that is current or has been expired for less than a year, you may transfer it to a Massachusetts issued license if you meet the RMV's identification and eligibility requirements. Your out-of-state license must indicate that you hold **full driving privileges** in that state.

Your right to operate will be verified through the Commercial Driver License Information System (CDLIS) and the National Driver Register (NDR) to determine if it is suspended, revoked, canceled, withdrawn, or disqualified in any state or the District of Columbia.

An out-of-state license that indicates **a limit on the customer's right to operate, due to drug, alcohol, or habitual traffic offender violations or similar activity** may NOT be transferred to a Massachusetts issued driver's license and you may not be eligible for a Massachusetts issued license. If a restriction is present on your license, you may need to provide a driving record so that the RMV can establish your eligibility for a Massachusetts issued license. You may also need to provide additional documentation of your eligibility for a Massachusetts issued license to address any medical restrictions that may be present on your out-of-state license.

If you have a restriction for Corrective Lenses, the results of the RMV vision test or submission of a Vision Screening Certificate will determine whether or not you receive the same restriction on your Massachusetts issued license.

If it is determined that you do not qualify for a Massachusetts issued license, you have a right to appeal a decision of the Registry to the Board of Appeal on Motor Vehicle Liability Policies & Bonds (see *Appeals* section on page 17).

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## Junior Operator License Conversion

License Conversion for a Junior Operator requires that you provide a certified copy of your driving record from the state you are leaving, in addition to meeting the RMV's identification requirements. (See the *Identification Requirements* section.) You must also have a Massachusetts driver's education certificate electronically on file with the RMV (see *Driver's Education* section) and you must log an additional 40 hours of supervised driving (30 hours if you completed a driver skills development program) as shown by a certified statement provided by a parent or guardian.

You will be subject to all of the provisions of the Massachusetts JOL law (See the *Junior Operator License Law* section). The only exception is the period of time you will be subject to the passenger restriction, which depends on your driving record. If your record indicates you have had a valid license for a full six months, without suspension or revocation, you will not be subject to the passenger restriction.

**To convert an out-of-state driver's education certificate, the program you completed must meet or exceed Massachusetts minimum requirements for classroom and in-car instruction. If you have any questions, call the RMV Contact Center.**

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## Permit Conversion

Class D and M Learner's Permits may be converted to an equivalent Massachusetts issued permit if you meet the RMV's identification requirements (See the *Identification Requirements* section). To be eligible for conversion, the out-of-state permit must have been issued less than one year ago.

If you are under 18 years old, your parent must sign the permit application. You will not be required to take the learner's permit exam; however, you will need to pay the applicable fee. A converted permit will be dated to reflect the issue date of the original permit in order to meet the six month experience requirement for applicants under 18. The Massachusetts issued permit will expire two years from the adjusted issue date or at the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first).

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## Conversions from a U.S. Territory, Canada, or Mexico

When converting a permit or license from one of the 14 U.S. Territories, Canada, or Mexico, you must meet the RMV's identification requirements. (See the *Out-of-State Conversion section of the Identification Requirements chart*.) You must submit an original certified driving record from your home territory or country. Driving records must be no more than 30 days old. See the *Translation Required Policy* section on page 15 for the policy for foreign language documents.

An original certified driving record is required from the 14 U.S. Territories, Canada, and Mexico because the driving records of those jurisdictions are not available for electronic review by the RMV through the Problem Driver Pointer System.

The 14 U.S. Territories consist of the following:

American Samoa • Baker Island • Guam • Howland Island • Jarvis Island • Johnston Atoll • Kingman Reef • Midway Islands • Navassa Island • Northern Mariana Islands • Palmyra Atoll • Puerto Rico • U.S. Virgin Islands • Wake Islands

Source - The Worldfact Book (U.S. CIA-2004)

A Puerto Rican birth certificate will only be accepted for identification if it was issued on or after July 1, 2010. For more information on the Puerto Rican birth certificate law, visit the [Puerto Rico Federal Affairs Administration website](#).

## Conversions from Certain Select Foreign Countries

The RMV has entered into reciprocal arrangements with South Korea (The Republic of Korea), the Republic of France, Taiwan (The Republic of China), and the Federal Republic of Germany to convert valid passenger vehicle licenses issued by these countries to former residents who have relocated to Massachusetts and who are authorized by their Visa status to remain for at least one (1) year in the U.S. These reciprocal arrangements were entered into following requests from the individual governments.

The RMV may issue a Massachusetts issued license to a qualified driver based on the arrangements with each individual country. Please see the information for license conversion from these countries on the RMV website in the *Converting a Foreign License* section.

These arrangements will also allow a former resident of Massachusetts to convert his/her valid Massachusetts passenger vehicle license to a license of the same class upon relocating to one of these countries and meeting the qualifications. Former residents of Massachusetts moving to one of the identified countries should contact the country's driver license issuance agency for applicable information.

## Other Foreign Licenses

If you hold a driver's license from any country other than the United States, a U.S. Territory, Canada, Mexico, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the Republic of France, Taiwan (Republic of China), or the Federal Republic of Germany, you must take both the learner's permit exam and road test. While you may drive in the United States with your valid foreign license from one of the countries listed in *Appendix A* of this manual for up to one year from the date you entered the country as a visitor, you must still apply for a Massachusetts issued license if you establish residency in the Commonwealth. Massachusetts Law requires proof of lawful presence in the U.S. for a minimum of 12 months (see *Who is eligible for a Massachusetts License* section).

Many motor vehicle agencies around the country, including Massachusetts, are reviewing their rules for converting licenses from other countries, so there may be changes in this area. If you have a question about converting a foreign license, you should call the RMV Contact Center.

The United Nations Road Traffic Convention of 1949 and the Inter-American Automotive Traffic Convention of 1943 extend the one-year driving privilege to all member countries (see *Appendix A* for a complete list of participating nations).

## Renewing Your License

It is your responsibility to renew your driver's license before the expiration date and you must inform the RMV and the U.S. Post Office of any address change. **As a license holder, you are solely responsible for its safekeeping, renewal, and replacement.** Please check the expiration date printed on your license and remember to renew before this date. The RMV offers an Internet feature that allows you to verify your license status and your renewal options online.

Your Massachusetts driver's license is valid for five years, unless it is your first license which expires on your fifth birthday after the date of issue, or until the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first). You may renew your license up to one year before the expiration date. If your license expired more than two years ago, you will be required to take a learner's permit exam and road test.

**Eligible customers may renew their licenses online two straight renewal periods** and must renew in person every third renewal period (once every 15 years). To be eligible, your license photo must be less than 14 years old and have been taken after your 21st birthday.

**You are not eligible to renew online if:**

- You hold a Commercial Driver's License (CDL)
- You need to change your name
- You do not have an SSN
- You are 75 years of age or older
- You have outstanding obligations
- You have not established lawful presence
- You are requesting a first time issuance of a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License
- You have a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License marked "Limited Term"

Visit [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) for more information.

If you are not eligible to renew online, visit any full service or limited service RMV Service Center (see *Appendix C* for locations and business hours). Each time you renew, you will have to pass a vision screening test and supply your SSN or updated Social Security Denial Notice (not more than 60 days old).

**Please note that at RMV Limited Service Centers (as opposed to RMV Full Service Centers), you can pay your renewal fee by check or credit card only.**

Massachusetts driver's licenses are produced at a secure location and are generally mailed to you within seven to ten business days after you visit the RMV Service Center.

If you renew your license in a service center, you will receive a receipt that serves as a temporary license and provides proof of driving privileges while the permanent license is being manufactured. The receipt is not valid for identification. This means that it will not be accepted by most airlines, cruise ships, etc., for travel as a state-issued photo ID.

If a new photo is required, but your appearance has been temporarily changed due to medical treatment, you can obtain a duplicate license and keep your current photo for one year if you present certification from a licensed physician. You will then need to renew your license with a new photo after one year.

**Turning 21?** If you choose to renew your Driver's License before your 21st birthday, you will receive a vertical license with the words "Under 21" printed on it. However, if you renew your license on or after your 21st birthday, you will receive a standard horizontal license that does not have the words "Under 21" printed on it.

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## SSN Verification on Renewal

Approximately six months prior to your license expiration date, the RMV will attempt to confirm your Social Security Number with the Social Security Administration (SSA). The RMV will run a computer check through the SSA to ensure that the SSN you provided to the RMV is the number that has been issued to you. If we are told it is not, you will receive a letter from the RMV informing you that license renewal is not possible until you resolve the SSN problem with the SSA.

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## Driving Record Check on Renewal

Approximately two months prior to your license expiration date, the RMV will run a check of your license status in other jurisdictions. The RMV will run a computer check of your name, birth date, and SSN with the Problem Driver Pointer System (PDPS). If you are identified as a suspended or revoked driver in that system, you will not be allowed to renew your license until the matter is resolved. You will be notified by letter of your non-renewal status.

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## Other Reasons for Non-Renewal

In addition to the reasons previously stated, if you have outstanding parking tickets, unpaid excise taxes, outstanding warrants, outstanding E-ZPass, Pay-by-Plate, or other tolling violations, abandoned vehicles, or unpaid fines for evasion of a fare on a vehicle or ferry owned or operated by the MBTA, you will not be able to renew your license. The RMV will notify you by letter if you are not eligible for license renewal due to any of these problems. For detailed information on reasons for non-renewal, see *Chapter Two, Keeping Your License*.

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## Renewals for Military Personnel

Military personnel are not required to renew their Massachusetts driver's licenses during active service. However, you may wish to renew your license during your military service. In such cases, the RMV will issue a photo license or a special nonphoto driver's license, depending upon the circumstances, if you are stationed outside Massachusetts.

**You are not required to renew your Massachusetts license while you are in active military service.**

You can only request a nonphoto driver's license by mail. To order a nonphoto license renewal, for military personnel and their dependents, mail your request, the renewal fee (see the *License Fees* section), and a copy of your military ID to the address on the next page. A nonphoto driver's license will be mailed to you, if you are located outside Massachusetts. In any correspondence, include your out-of-state address and phone number.

Unless you have already been issued a REAL ID Massachusetts Driver's License, renewals for military personnel can only be a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License.

The Driver Licensing Department, Registry of Motor Vehicles,  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889

## Replacing Your License

### Duplicate License

To apply for a duplicate of your photo-image license, simply log on to [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) or call the RMV's Contact Center, request a duplicate, and pay the \$25 duplicate fee by VISA, MasterCard, Discover, or American Express. You can also visit an RMV Service Center.

If you request a duplicate for a license obtained before the implementation of REAL ID, but don't prove lawful presence for a REAL ID Massachusetts License or a Standard Massachusetts License, the replacement license will be an exact copy of your current card (not REAL ID or Standard).

If you request an amended license, you will need to prove lawful presence of at least 12 months to obtain a Standard Massachusetts Driver's License, or meet all of the requirements for a REAL ID Massachusetts License.

**All fees are subject to change at any time. All license fees are non-refundable.**

### Temporary Replacements

If you are temporarily out of Massachusetts and cannot return home before your driver's license expires, you may ask the RMV to issue you a temporary license. A temporary license is valid for a maximum of 60 days after the expiration date of your original license. At the discretion of the Driver Licensing Department, this extension may be granted one additional time. To request a temporary replacement license, call the RMV Contact Center or write to the RMV's main office at the address listed below. In any correspondence, be sure to include your name, license number, out-of-state address, and telephone number.

Customer Assistance Bureau, Registry of Motor Vehicles, P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02203-5889

### Replacements for Military Personnel

Active members of the Armed Forces and their dependents who wish to obtain duplicates of their licenses can simply send letters of request stating whether their licenses were lost or stolen to the address listed below and include copies of their military IDs.

For military personnel and their dependents, duplicate licenses are free.

The Driver Licensing Department, Registry of Motor Vehicles,  
P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889

## Surrendering Your License

If you become unqualified to operate a motor vehicle safely due to a physical or mental condition or simply wish to cease driving for other reasons, you may voluntarily surrender your license at any RMV Full Service Center during normal business hours or by mailing the license to Medical Affairs.

Medical Affairs, Registry of Motor Vehicles, P.O. Box 55889, Boston, MA 02205-5889

If you choose to give up your license, it will not negatively affect your insurance and there is no fee. When you give up your license, the RMV will give you a free Massachusetts Identification Card. If you want your license back, you may need to give the RMV medical documents. You may also need to take a competency road test. You will not need to pay to get your license back unless it expired. If it did expire, you will need to pay the normal renewal fee.

## Renewing Your Massachusetts Identification Card

It is your responsibility to renew your ID Card before the expiration date and you must inform the RMV and the U.S. Post Office of any address change. **As an ID Card holder, you are solely responsible for its safekeeping, renewal, and replacement.** Please check the expiration date printed on your ID card and remember to renew before this date. The RMV offers an Internet feature that allows you to verify your ID card status and your renewal options online.

Your ID Card is valid for five years, unless it is your first ID Card which expires on your fifth birthday after the date of issue, or until the end of your authorized stay in the U.S. (whichever comes first). You may renew your ID Card up to one year before the expiration date or up to four years after the expiration date.

**Eligible customers may renew their ID Cards online two straight renewal periods** and must renew in person every third renewal period (once every 15 years). To be eligible, your ID Card photo must be less than 14 years old and have been taken after your 21st birthday.

You are not eligible to renew online if:

- You need to change your name
- You do not have an SSN
- You have not established lawful presence
- You are requesting a first time issuance of a REAL ID Massachusetts ID Card
- You have a REAL ID Massachusetts ID Card marked "Limited Term"

If you are not eligible to renew online, visit any full service or limited service RMV Service Center (see *Appendix C* for locations and business hours). Each time you renew, you will have to supply your SSN or updated Social Security Denial Notice (not more than 60 days old).

**Please note that at RMV Limited Service Centers (as opposed to RMV Full Service Centers), you can pay your renewal fee by check or credit card only.**



If a new photo is required, but your appearance has been temporarily changed due to medical treatment, you can obtain a duplicate ID Card and keep your current photo for one year if you present certification from a licensed physician. You will then need to renew your ID Card with a new photo after one year.

**Turning 21?** If you choose to renew your ID Card before your 21st birthday, you will receive a vertical ID Card with the words “Under 21” printed on it. However, if you renew your ID Card on or after your 21st birthday, you will receive a standard horizontal ID Card that does not have the words “Under 21” printed on it.

## Change of Address or Name

If you hold a Massachusetts learner’s permit or driver’s license or ID, the law requires you to notify the RMV of any address change within 30 days of the change. Go to [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) to complete the transaction online, call the RMV’s Contact Center, or visit an RMV Service Center and give your new address. You should also notify the U.S. Post Office of any address change within 30 days. When you give the RMV your new address, you can write your new address using permanent ink on the back of the license or ID in the area provided, or you can pay \$25 to obtain a duplicate license with your new address.

**You must notify the Social Security Administration any time you change your name.**

If you change your name, you must report the change promptly to the RMV so that all your license and vehicle records can be updated. Also, you must obtain a new driver’s license bearing your new name and signature. This transaction costs \$25 and must be done in person at a service center. Your full legal name, including full middle name, must be recorded as shown on your passport, birth certificate, or documents demonstrating lawful presence. For a REAL ID Card, you must present a legal document as proof of your name change (such as a marriage license, a divorce decree, or a court document). For a Standard Massachusetts Card, no documentation is required.

## Change of Gender Designation

If your gender identity no longer matches the gender designation printed on your Massachusetts Driver’s License or ID Card, you may be able to amend your license or ID. You may change your gender designation using the *Massachusetts Gender Designation Change Form* and a license application. You do not need a medical or social worker signature. If you have also changed your name, it should be indicated in the Change of Information section of the license application. A duplicate card costs \$25. You must turn in your license or ID containing the other gender designation.

You do not need to provide proof of sex reassignment surgery, an amended birth certificate, or proof of a court-approved name change.

## Voter Registration

If you are legally eligible to vote, you can register when you conduct a permit, license, or ID transaction at a full service or limited service RMV Service Center. All licensing transaction forms contain a section in which you can indicate if you wish to register to vote or update your current voter registration.

**You must be a U.S. citizen and at least 16 years old to register to vote.**

**You must be at least 18 years old to be eligible to vote.**

You can choose to register with a political party or with one of the political designations on file at the State Elections Office. If you do not want to register with a particular political group, you can select "UNENROLLED" status. If you register or change your affiliation, your information will be forwarded first to the Secretary of State's Central Voter Registry and then to your local election office, which will send you a confirmation notice in the mail.

**For more information on registering to vote or the election process, call the State Election Line at 1-800-462-VOTE or 617-727-2828.**

## Veteran's Indicator

If you are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces and were honorably discharged, you can choose to have the word "Veteran" printed on your license or ID card. The Veteran's Indicator can be added when you apply for, renew, or order a duplicate permit, license, or ID card. There is no additional fee for the Veteran's Indicator. If your license or ID card is not eligible for renewal, you can obtain a free duplicate with the Veteran's Indicator. Regular transaction fees apply for other transactions. One of the following documents must be presented as proof of honorable discharge:

- A DD-214 that indicates honorable discharge
- A DD-215 that indicates honorable discharge
- An Honorable Discharge form

The information on the form must be typed (not handwritten).

## Organ and Tissue Donor Program

When you apply for a Massachusetts driver's license or identification card, you will have the opportunity to become an organ and tissue donor. By registering as an organ and tissue donor with the RMV, you will be entered into the Massachusetts Donor Registry, which is legal consent for donation. However, you should also share your decision to donate with your family and friends so that they know about your decision to become an organ and tissue donor.

**You can register as an organ donor, or change your organ donor status, anytime on [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv).**

Even if you are currently a registered donor, you still need to check "yes" on question one of the license or ID card renewal form in order to remain in the donor registry.

**If you have any questions, please contact one of the organ donor organizations listed on the next page.**

**For more information on organ and tissue donation:**

**Visit [www.neob.org/faq.htm](http://www.neob.org/faq.htm) or [www.unos.org](http://www.unos.org)**

**Call New England Organ Bank at 1-800-446-6362**

**Call LifeChoice Donor Services at 1-800-874-5215**

Every day, 17 people in the United States die waiting for organ transplants. Currently, there are over 120,000 total patients waiting for an organ transplant in the United States. Thousands more await life enhancing tissue transplants.

**When you use the Internet to renew your license or ID, or order a duplicate license or ID, you will have the choice to give \$2 to the Organ and Tissue Donor Registration Fund. This \$2 will be added to the renewal or duplicate fee.**

**Note:** The RMV is required by law to provide certain information identifying organ and tissue donors to federally-designated organ procurement organizations and other federally registered non-profit eye and tissue banks serving the Commonwealth.

### **Organ Donor FAQs** (see [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv) for more FAQs)

- Q. What does the heart symbol on my license/ID represent?
- A. It indicates that you are in the Massachusetts Donor Registry and have consented to organ/tissue donation.
- Q. Can I be an organ/tissue donor if I don't have the heart symbol on my license/ID?
- A. Yes. You can register as an organ/tissue donor anytime on [www.mass.gov/rmv](http://www.mass.gov/rmv). You don't need to get a new license/ID. Your license/ID won't have the heart symbol, but your name will be in the Donor Registry's database. When it is time to get a new license/ID, the heart symbol will then be printed on it.
- Q. What is the Massachusetts Donor Registry?
- A. The Donor Registry is a database that contains the names of everyone who has signed up to be an organ and tissue donor at the RMV. The database is checked (via computer) when necessary. This eliminates the need to look for a donor card or a license that could be misplaced or lost.
- Q. Do you need to carry a donor card with your license (in addition to the heart symbol)?
- A. No, you do not need to carry a donor card if you have the heart symbol on your license. The heart symbol indicates that you are in the Massachusetts Donor Registry and have consented to organ/tissue donation. The Donor Registry is checked whenever an individual becomes a potential candidate for donation.
- Q. Will it cost my family anything if I donate organs/tissues?
- A. Organ and tissue donation is completely free. A donor's family is not charged.

