

Overseas driver licences

Converting to a New Zealand licence

If you have a valid overseas driver licence you can convert it to a New Zealand licence.

A **valid** overseas licence means your licence must not be suspended, disqualified or revoked in the country of issue and must be either current or expired within the last 12 months.

You can drive in New Zealand using an overseas car licence for 18 months, or 12 months for an overseas motorcycle or truck licence. If you'll be in New Zealand longer than this, you'll need to convert your licence if you want to keep driving.

How to apply to convert your licence

You must apply at a specialist overseas conversion site.

To find your closest specialist site go to www.nzta.govt.nz/overseas-conversion-site

You'll need to:

- fill out an *Application for conversion of an overseas driver licence (DL5)* form. This form is available from the agent or online at www.nzta.govt.nz/form-DL5
- present evidence of your identity (see Factsheet 20 *Identification for driver licensing*)
- present your overseas driver licence
- present a translation from an approved source (if your overseas driver licence isn't in English)
- present evidence that your overseas licence is valid if:
 - it's from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan or Tonga, or
 - it's from an exempt country BUT your evidence of identity is from a non-exempt country
- provide a medical certificate (if required)
- provide high-quality, colour photocopies of all the original documents you've provided, as listed above (including any translations).

The agent will process your application, check your identification, take your photo* and a sample signature for your licence, check your eyesight and arrange an appointment for any tests required.

You'll need to pay the appropriate fees with your application.

*When your photo is taken you must not wear sunglasses, a hat, any head coverings or anything else that might obscure your face or prevent the photo from being a good likeness. The only exception is if the item is worn for religious or medical reasons and, if so, you must supply a signed statement confirming this. However, the photo must still show the face from forehead to chin and be a good likeness.

Translation required if licence not in English

If your overseas driver licence isn't in English, you must provide an original translation from an approved source together with your physical driver licence.

The approved sources are:

- a diplomatic representative at a high commission, embassy or consulate, or
- the authority that issued your overseas licence, or
- a translation service approved by NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi (NZTA).

An international driving permit (issued in accordance with a United Nations Convention on road traffic) may be acceptable as a translation.

To find an approved translator go to www.nzta.govt.nz/translators

Eyesight requirements

You'll need to pass an eyesight check at the agent.

If you don't pass the check, you'll need to present a satisfactory eyesight or medical certificate. The certificate must be issued by a New Zealand-registered optometrist or health practitioner, and be no more than 60 days old. You can present a certificate instead of doing the eyesight check if you prefer.

If you have sight in only one eye, or have only one eye (monocular vision) you'll need to present an eyesight certificate.

Tests required

All drivers must know the road rules, what the road signs mean and how to drive safely. You can find out more in *The official New Zealand road code*.

To prove that you're familiar with our road rules and can drive safely, some people need to sit theory and practical driving tests. The tests will depend on the country your licence is from.

Exempt countries

Some countries require similar driving skills and have similar licensing systems to New Zealand's. These countries are considered **exempt** countries:

- Australia
- Austria
- Belgium
- Canada
- Croatia
- Denmark
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece
- Hong Kong*
- Ireland
- Italy
- Japan
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Norway
- Portugal
- South Africa
- South Korea
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- United Kingdom
- United States of America

**Hong Kong is recognised as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*

Non-exempt countries

If your licence is not from one of the countries above, your licence is from a **non-exempt** country.

Car or motorcycle licence

If you're converting a car or motorcycle licence (New Zealand class 1 or 6), you don't have to sit any theory tests.

You'll only need to sit a practical driving test if you've held your licence for *less than 2 years*.

If your driver licence doesn't have an issue date on it, you may need to provide a document from your licensing authority that includes an issue date to confirm how long you've held the licence. You can choose to sit the practical test if you don't want to provide a document.

Converting a car licence

What it costs

Exempt country - car licence	Cost
Overseas conversion application fee	\$52.10
<i>If you've held your overseas licence for less than 2 years, you'll also need to pay a test fee of \$59.90.</i>	

Booking your test

If you need to sit a test, you can book it when you apply.

If you miss your test time, fail your test or if your test is terminated, you'll need to pay another test fee when you rebook.

Changing or cancelling a test for a car licence

If you change or cancel your test, you may need to pay a fee.

Practical tests

If you change or cancel it:	and you do it:	then you'll pay:
more than 2 full working days <i>before</i> the date of your test	online	nothing
	at an agent	\$16.40
<i>within</i> 2 full working days of your test	online or at an agent	\$59.90

Converting a motorcycle licence

What it costs

Exempt country - motorcycle licence	Cost
Overseas conversion application fee	\$28.30
<i>If you've held your overseas licence for less than 2 years, you'll also need to pay a test fee of \$59.90.</i>	

Changing or cancelling a test for a motorcycle licence

It's free to change, cancel or rebook your test. Please do it as far in advance as possible so someone else can book the test time.

Converting a learner or restricted

If you're converting a learner or restricted licence, the tests and fees will be slightly different. To check the fees you'll pay go to www.nzta.govt.nz/overseas-conversion-fees

Converting a truck licence

If you're converting a truck licence (New Zealand classes 2-5), you'll have to pass a theory test.

You'll also need to sit a practical driving test if:

- you've held your overseas licence for less than 2 years, or
- your overseas licence is from Croatia, Hong Kong or South Korea.

What it costs

Exempt country - truck	Cost
Overseas conversion application fee	\$29.50
Theory test fee	\$45.70
Total	\$75.20
<i>If you've held your overseas licence for less than 2 years, or your licence is from Croatia, Hong Kong or South Korea, you'll also need to pay a test fee of \$59.90.</i>	

Booking your test

You can book your theory test when you apply. If you need to sit a practical test, you can book that once you've passed your theory test. You can book it at any driver licensing agent or at www.nzta.govt.nz/online

Changing or cancelling a test for a truck licence

It's free to change, cancel or rebook your test. Please do it as far in advance as possible so someone else can book the test time.

Licence from exempt country but ID from non-exempt country

To prevent people from presenting fraudulent overseas licences so they're exempt from taking tests, you must provide extra evidence in some circumstances.

If your overseas licence is from an exempt country, but your evidence of identity is from a *non-exempt* country, you'll need to provide evidence that your licence is valid. For example, if your licence is from Japan, but your passport is from Saudi Arabia, you'll need to provide evidence.

You must provide this evidence when you apply at a specialist overseas conversion site. Go to our website to find out what evidence you'll need to provide. www.nzta.govt.nz/valid-evidence-exempt

You'll get a New Zealand licence

Once you've applied and passed any theory tests that were required, we'll send you a New Zealand driver licence.

If you still need to pass a practical test, your New Zealand driver licence will have a supervisor condition on it. This New Zealand licence over-rides your overseas driver licence, and you must only drive with a supervisor next to you in the front seat until you've passed your practical driving test.

A supervisor is a person who:

- holds a current full New Zealand driver licence for the class of vehicle, and
- doesn't have a supervisor condition on their New Zealand licence, and
- has held their full New Zealand driver licence for at least 2 years OR has held an equivalent overseas driver licence for at least 2 years.

If you're converting a motorcycle licence, you'll get a learner licence instead of a supervisor condition. See *Converting a motorcycle licence* on page 3.

NON-EXEMPT COUNTRIES

If your licence is from a non-exempt country, you must pass a theory test and a practical driving test.

You need to apply at a specialist overseas conversion site, and pass your theory test.

When you've passed the theory test, you'll get a New Zealand driver licence with a supervisor condition.

This New Zealand licence over-rides your overseas driver licence, and you must only drive with a supervisor next to you in the front seat until you've passed your practical driving test.

A supervisor is a person who:

- holds a current full New Zealand driver licence for the class of vehicle, and
- doesn't have a supervisor condition on their New Zealand licence, and
- has held their full New Zealand driver licence for at least 2 years OR has held an equivalent overseas driver licence for at least 2 years.

If you're converting a motorcycle licence, you'll get a learner licence instead of a supervisor condition. See *Converting a motorcycle licence*.

You then need to pass your practical driving test. You can book this at any driver licensing agent or at www.nzta.govt.nz/online

Once you've passed your practical test, you'll get a New Zealand driver licence without a supervisor condition.

Converting a car licence

What it costs

Non-exempt country - car licence	Cost
Overseas conversion application fee	\$52.10
Theory test fee	\$45.70
Total when you apply	\$97.80
Practical test fee	\$59.90

If you miss your test time, fail your test or if your test is terminated, you'll need to pay another test fee when you rebook.

Changing or cancelling a test for a car licence

If you change or cancel your test, you may need to pay a fee.

Theory tests

If you change or cancel it:	then you'll pay:
more than 2 full working days <i>before</i> the date of your test	\$16.40
<i>within</i> 2 full working days of your test	\$45.70

Practical tests

If you change or cancel it:	and you do it:	then you'll pay:
more than 2 full working days <i>before</i> the date of your test	online	nothing
	at an agent	\$16.40
<i>within</i> 2 full working days of your test	online or at an agent	\$59.90

Converting a motorcycle licence

What it costs

Non-exempt country - motorcycle licence	Cost
Overseas conversion application fee	\$93.10

You don't need to pay any extra test fees.

It's free to change, cancel or rebook your test. Please do it as far in advance as possible so someone else can book the test time.

Converting a truck licence

What it costs

Non-exempt country - truck licence	Cost
Overseas conversion application fee	\$85.50

You don't need to pay any extra test fees.

It's free to change, cancel or rebook your test. Please do it as far in advance as possible so someone else can book the test time.

Learner or restricted licence

If you're converting a learner or restricted licence, the tests and fees will be slightly different. To check the fees you'll pay go to www.nzta.govt.nz/overseas-conversion-fees

Licence from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan or Tonga

To prevent people from presenting fraudulent overseas licences you must provide extra evidence if your licence is from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan or Tonga.

NZTA understands that the Afghanistan government isn't currently issuing driver licensing documents. If your Afghanistan licence is in booklet format, you'll need to provide evidence that the booklet licence is still valid. If your licence is in another format, you may need to provide evidence that it's valid if it looks different to the format we expect.

India and Pakistan don't have centralised licensing authorities. Licences from different provinces and regions look different and have different details on them, which makes it hard to tell if they're valid.

NZTA is also aware of online schemes selling fraudulent Tongan driver licences. By requiring evidence of validity with the application we can make sure that any Tongan licences presented are real licences.

If your licence is from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan or Tonga, go to our website to find what evidence you'll need to provide. www.nzta.govt.nz/valid-evidence-non-exempt

EXEMPT AND NON-EXEMPT COUNTRIES

Converting a motorcycle licence

If you're converting a motorcycle licence and need to pass a practical test, you'll get a learner motorcycle licence.

You must follow all the conditions of a New Zealand motorcycle learner licence until you've passed the practical riding test.

Motorcycle learner licence conditions

- You must only ride a LAMS-approved motorcycle (for more information go to www.nzta.govt.nz/LAMS).
- You must not carry passengers on the motorcycle or in a sidecar.
- You must not ride between the hours of 10pm and 5am.
- You must not tow another vehicle.

Theory test available in multiple languages

Theory tests are also available in these languages:

- Arabic
- Chinese (simplified and traditional)
- Filipino
- Gujarati
- Hindi
- Korean
- Te reo (Māori)
- Punjabi
- Samoan
- Thai
- Tongan.

If one of these languages is appropriate, but you have trouble reading, then you may be able to use a reader to read the test in English. Talk to the staff at the specialist overseas conversion site if you need to use a reader.

If none of these languages are appropriate, then you may be able to use an interpreter.

The interpreter should be an affiliate or full member of:

- the New Zealand Society of Translators and Interpreters (NZSTI), or
- the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).

They'll need to present their ID card when they interpret the test for you.

If you can't use a member of the NZSTI or NAATI, you can provide someone else to interpret the test for you. They must be over 18 years of age, and present a passport or New Zealand driver licence when interpreting the test. Your theory test will be closely supervised at all times.

Preparing for a practical driving test

Our practical driving tests assess your ability to demonstrate your knowledge of road rules and safe driving practices.

Make sure you prepare well for the test. If you don't pass, you'll need to wait for another test time.

For more information about the tests and how to prepare go to www.nzta.govt.nz/practical-tests

On the day of your test

Make sure you have your driver licence with you for the test.

The testing officer will look over your vehicle before the test to ensure it's roadworthy and meets all the requirements. They'll check things like the tyres, indicators and brakelights.

For a full list of things the testing officer will be checking, go to www.nzta.govt.nz/on-the-day

Age limits for New Zealand licences

In New Zealand there's a minimum age before you can hold a driver licence class. There are different minimum ages for learner, restricted and full licence classes.

Minimum age for licence class/stage	
Class	Age (years)
Car or motorcycle	
Learner licence	16
Restricted licence	16½
Full licence	18
Full licence (with approved course certificate*)	17½
Truck	
Learner or full licence	18

If you're under 18 years of age, you can only convert your overseas licence to the equivalent age-related New Zealand licence class.

If you successfully complete an approved advanced driving course* and present the course certificate when you apply to convert your overseas licence, the minimum age for a full car or motorcycle licence is reduced to 17½ years of age.

*Approved advanced driving courses include Street Talk and Defensive Driving for cars, and competency-based training and assessment (CBTA 6F) courses for motorcycles.

Medical requirements

You need to present a medical certificate with your application if:

- you're 75 years of age or older, or
- you're applying for a class 2, 3, 4 or 5 licence, or
- you have a medical condition that affects your ability to drive safely.

It must be completed by a New Zealand registered health practitioner and must not be more than 60 days old. This could be your usual doctor (GP), a registered nurse or nurse practitioner, or a specialist if appropriate.

The medical certificate must state that you're fit to drive safely, or indicate conditions that will enable you to drive safely.

What about motorcycles and heavy vehicles?

Different types of vehicles are grouped into classes.

- Class 1 covers cars, vans and utilities.
- Classes 2-5 cover heavy vehicles such as trucks.
- Class 6 covers motorcycles.

Most people sit theory and practical tests for a class 1 car licence. You'll sit different tests for a motorcycle or truck licence.

NZTA audits overseas licences

NZTA audits applications where overseas licences are converted to New Zealand licences.

If you used a fraudulent overseas licence, or provided false or misleading information in your application, this is an offence under s44 of the Land Transport Act 1998. You could be fined up to \$10,000, and NZTA could revoke your New Zealand licence.

Where can I find out more?

Go to www.nzta.govt.nz/overseas-conversions



This factsheet is a general guide only. It doesn't replace legal advice, and your exact requirements will depend on current legislation.

Make sure you have the most up-to-date version of this factsheet by checking www.nzta.govt.nz/factsheets

www.nzta.govt.nz

0800 822 422

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi,
Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442