

Hello everyone!

The topic for today's class, February 25, 2022, is **“Driver's License”**

Those of you have been participating in this class for a while may recall we covered this topic last summer. But, with some of you currently in the process of obtaining a driver's license, let's revisit the subject and help each other understand how to get a driver's license in California.

We will participate in two activities:

1. Small Group Conversation

- Take a practice test!
Scroll to the next two pages to find a sample test from the California DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles)

2. Big group: Questions and Comments

- Let's discuss our experiences getting a driver's license.
 - When did you get your license?
 - Did you have any difficulties?
 - What advice would you give?
 - Did you pass the written test the first time?
 - What was the driving test like?



Vocabulary words for this topic are highlighted in the color green and definitions are listed at the end of this document.

Here is a practice test for taking the written test (from the dmv.ca.gov website)



1. You are about to make a left turn. You must signal continuously during the last ____ feet before the turn.

- A) 50
- B) 75
- C) 100

2. Which of the following statements about blind spots is true?

- A) They are eliminated if you have one outside mirror on each side of the vehicle
- B) Large trucks have bigger blind spots than most passenger vehicles.
- C) Blind spots can be checked by looking in your rear-view mirrors.

3. You have been involved in a minor traffic collision with a parked vehicle and you can't find the owner. You must:

- A) Leave a note on the vehicle.
- B) Report the accident without delay to the city police or, in unincorporated areas, to the CHP.
- C) Both of the above.

4. Unless otherwise posted the speed limit in a residential area is ____.

- A) 20 mph
- B) 25 mph
- C) 30 mph

5. You may legally block an intersection:

- A) When you entered the intersection on the green light.
- B) During rush hour traffic.
- C) Under no circumstances.

6. When parking uphill on a two-way street with no curb, your front wheels should be:

- A) Turned to the left (toward the street).
- B) Turned to the right (away from the street).
- C) Parallel with the pavement.

7. With a Class C driver's license a person may drive:

- A) A **3-axle vehicle** if the **Gross Vehicle Weight** is less than 6,000 pounds.
- B) Any 3-axle vehicle regardless of the weight.
- C) A vehicle pulling two trailers

8. To turn left from a multilane one-way street onto a one-way street, you should start your turn from:

- A) Any lane (as long as it is safe).
- B) The lane closest to the left curb.
- C) The lane in the center of the road.

9. If you are involved in a **traffic collision, you are required to complete and submit a written report (SR1) to the **DMV**:**

- A) Only if you or the other driver is injured.
- B) If there is property damage in excess of \$1,000 or if there are any injuries.
- C) Only if you are at fault.

10. Roadways are the most slippery:

- A) During a heavy downpour.
- B) After it has been raining for a while.
- C) The first rain after a **dry spell**.

Vocabulary words for “Getting a Drivers License”

blind spots - an area where a person's view is obstructed.

rear-view mirrors - a small angled mirror fixed inside the windshield of a motor vehicle, enabling the driver to see the vehicle or road behind.

unincorporated areas - An unincorporated community is a general term for a geographic area having a common social identity without municipal organization or official political designation (i.e., incorporation as a city or town).

CHP -stands for “California Highway Patrol.” A division of the police that patrols the highways to enforce traffic laws.

residential area - A residential area is a land used in which housing predominates, as opposed to industrial and commercial areas. These include single-family housing, multi-family residential, or mobile homes.

rush hour traffic - A rush hour is a part of the day during which traffic congestion on roads and crowding on public transport is at its highest. Usually at peak commute times (8-9am, 5-6pm)

pavement - an outdoor floor or surface covering roads and walkways like sidewalks.

3-axle vehicle -a 3 axle vehicle has 3 axles. An axel supports the cars weight. Examples of a 3 axle vehicle would be many straight trucks with a pair of rear axles which carries the extra weight of the cargo, a Greyhound bus, and most tractor units for semitrailers.

Gross Vehicle Weight - The Gross Vehicle Weight Rating is basically the maximum total safe weight of your vehicle, counting the curb weight (the weight of our vehicle when empty), plus the weight of your passengers, fuel, and any accessories added to the vehicle.

traffic collision - A traffic collision, also called a motor vehicle collision, car accident, or car crash, occurs when a vehicle collides with another vehicle, pedestrian, animal, road construction etc.

DMV – stands for “Department of Motor Vehicles.”

dry spell - a prolonged period of dry weather, no rain or precipitation.

Here is a good explanation for how to obtain a driver's license from the "Living in the US" website:

Living in the US website

<https://www.internations.org/go/moving-to-the-us/living#culture-and-social-etiquette>

Getting a US Driving License

Driving is the most popular and often the easiest option for getting around in the US. However, you will only be allowed to do so for a limited time with your foreign driving permit. In this guide, you will find all you need to know about getting a US driving license.

Before we begin, it is important to note that, like with many other things in the US, different states have different rules for driving and transportation. And while most of the regulations and procedures are usually similar, they are not universal. Therefore, for state-specific information, you will need to visit the website or get in touch with the relevant state agency responsible for transportation.

Using Your Foreign Driver's Permit

Visitors to the United States can typically continue using their foreign license for a while as long as it is written in English. However, if this is not the case, you will apply for an International Driving Permit from your country of origin. The permit serves as a translation of your original license so it is important to have them both on you whenever you're driving.

And while tourists and visitors can benefit from this arrangement for one year, if you establish residency in the US, depending on the state you are living in you only have 30 to 90 days to get your US driving license. In most cases, this means that you will have to apply for a new driver's license as if you were getting it for the first time. However, some countries have reciprocity agreements with the US that allows their citizens to simply exchange their original license to the American one.

How to Apply for a US Driving License

The majority of expats that wish to obtain a driving license in the US will have to go through the full application process. The details of the procedures, like the documents you need to present and fees you need to pay, will differ from state to state but the general steps are usually the same.

Step 1: Get Your Documents Ready

Before you go to the local branch of Department of Motor Vehicles, make sure you have all the right documents on you. Typically, at least some of the following documents are required for application:

- A form of ID that has your name, picture, and your date of birth on it (passport)
- Your Social Security Number or a proof that you cannot obtain one
- Proof of lawful presence in the US (visa, permanent resident card, citizenship certification, etc.)
- Proof of residence in that state (state ID, utility bill, bank statement, etc.)
- Your international driver's license

Passport photo (in some cases this will be taken during the application process)

You will then need to fill out an application form with your personal details.

The legal age for driving varies throughout the country, so make sure that you are eligible to apply for a license. However, if you are 21 or older, this will not be a problem.

Step 2: Pay Your Fees

The fees for a driver's license, once again, depend on the state you are residing in. Some states charge a one-time fee that can be anything from 30 to 90 USD, while others might charge you a small sum (5 USD or so) every year. Depending on the state this step can also come in later, as in some places you are charged for application and in others, for issuing the document.

Step 3: Take Your Tests

In order to obtain your license, you will need to pass both a written and a driving test.

Written tests include 20 to 50 questions about the traffic rules and regulations of the state. The tests might be timed or not and you might have an option to take the test in your native language as well. You can study your state's DMV handbook and practice taking the test online.

Once you passed the written test, you will have to schedule your practice exam. Apart from driving, expect to be asked to show your parking and reversing skills and the knowledge of vehicles and its controls. The exam can take from 30 to 40 minutes.

If you fail to pass the practice exam the first time, some states will require you to wait a few days or week before you can try again. There might be additional fees for extra tests that you take. Also, in some places, three failed attempts mean that you have to restart the application process all over again.

Step 4: Get Your Vision Tested

While the law does not require you to pass a thorough medical exam to get a driver's license, you do need to get your vision tested before you are certified to drive. You can usually do it at your local DMV office or get a medical professional to issue you a vision test report.

If you need glasses or contacts in order to drive, a special restriction might be placed on your license. Drivers with very low vision might also get additional restriction that will only allow them to drive during daytime or if they are wearing special lenses.

This step might also come in earlier, before you take your practical exam.

Step 5: Get Your License

Once all the documents are submitted and the exams are passed, you will get issued a temporary license that will be valid 30 to 90 days, depending on the state. You will get your permanent license mailed to your address.

Driver's license in the US can serve as a form of an ID that you can use to vote or prove your legal age or, in some cases, even board a domestic flight.

In most states, driver licenses are valid for eight years, but it varies. Some states require a renewal after four years, while others let you keep your license until you turn 65. You can check the license renewal regulations of your state online.