

Section 6: License Types



Whenever you drive, you must carry a valid driver's license or learner's permit with you. Any misuse of your driver's license or learner's permit is illegal. You could be fined, sentenced to jail, or your license may be suspended.

In this section you'll learn about:

- ▶ Learner's Permit
- ▶ Driver's License
- ▶ Commercial Driver's License
- ▶ School Bus Driver's License
- ▶ Motorcycle Learner's Permit
- ▶ Motorcycle Driver's License
- ▶ International Driver's License

Learner's Permit

A learner's permit allows you to operate a motor vehicle when a licensed driver at least 21 years of age is seated in the front passenger seat. The driver with you must hold a valid driver's license, be alert and able to assist you while you are driving. The licensed driver with you may be age 18, 19 or 20 if he or she is your legal guardian, brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, stepbrother or stepsister. For more information about obtaining a learner's permit, refer to the Parents in the Driver's Seat (DMV 16) publication available at www.dmvNOW.com and DMV customer service centers.

Driver's License

A driver's license allows you to operate any vehicle or small truck less than 26,001 pounds that is exempt from commercial driver's license (CDL) requirements. For more information about obtaining a driver's license, refer to the publication Obtaining a Virginia Driver's License or Identification Card (DMV 141) available at www.dmvNOW.com or DMV customer service centers.

Commercial Driver's License

A commercial driver's license (CDL) allows you to operate tractor-trailers, passenger buses, tank vehicles, school buses for 15 or more occupants (including the driver), or vehicles carrying hazardous materials. For more information about obtaining a CDL, refer to the Virginia Commercial Driver's Manual (DMV 60), available at www.dmvNOW.com or any DMV customer service center.

School Bus Driver's License

If you wish to operate a school bus designed to carry 15 occupants (including the driver), you do not need to obtain a commercial driver's license. However, you will need to take the commercial driver and school bus tests to obtain the school bus endorsement on your driver's license. You will be restricted to driving a bus designed to carry 15 occupants (including the driver). This restriction will be printed on your license. For information about licensing requirements to operate larger school buses, refer to the Virginia Commercial Driver's Manual (DMV 60).

Motorcycle Learner's Permit

A motorcycle learner's permit allows you to operate a motorcycle after 4 AM and before midnight. You may operate the motorcycle only when supervised by a person who is at least 21 years of age, licensed to operate a motorcycle, and able to assist you while they are supervising from another motorcycle or other vehicle riding along with you. No one, other than the operator, can be on the motorcycle. You must always wear an approved helmet while operating a motorcycle in Virginia. For more information, refer to the Virginia Motorcycle Operator Manual (DMV 2), available at www.dmvNOW.com or DMV customer service centers.

Motorcycle Driver's License

If you wish to operate a motorcycle in Virginia, you must pass the driver's license two-part knowledge exam, the motorcycle knowledge exam and the motorcycle road skills test. If you already hold a driver's license, you may add a Class M to your license. If you do not hold a driver's license, you may obtain a driver's license restricted to a Class M that only allows you to operate a motorcycle. For more information, refer to the Virginia Motorcycle Operator Manual (DMV 2).

International Driver's License

An international driver's license is not a valid driver's license and does not allow you to drive. It is only a foreign translation of your existing valid driver's license to be used when you are traveling outside of the U.S. These permits are issued by your local AAA, except to persons whose driving privilege is suspended or revoked.

If you are visiting the U.S. from a foreign country, you may drive using your driver's license issued by your home country. Your home country driver's license should be accompanied by a translation of the license.

International driver's licenses marketed by private sector businesses are not valid and do not allow you to legally operate a motor vehicle. Sale of any document claiming to be a driver's license is a Class 1 misdemeanor.