



## **Before you start to drive, you must:**

- hold a valid, provisional driving licence for Great Britain or Northern Ireland
- make sure that any vehicle you drive is roadworthy and properly taxed and insured

If you want to practise your driving with an accompanying driver, the accompanying driver must be over the age of 21 and must have held (and still hold) a full licence for three years.

As a learner driver you must display 'L' plates in a conspicuous position on the front and rear of the vehicle you are driving.

### **Minimum age you can take a test.**

You can take your theory test once your provisional licence becomes valid.

Normally, for car drivers, the earliest date your provisional licence can become valid is your 17th birthday, however you can apply for the licence up to three months before your 17th birthday.

So, if you apply for your provisional licence before you are 17 you will still have to wait until your birthday before you can take your theory test.

If you are receiving disability living allowance at the higher rate your provisional licence will come into effect when you are 16, but you can apply for it within three months of your 16th birthday.

If you are a learner driver you must take and pass your theory test before you book your practical test. If you already have a driving licence you might not have to take another theory test if you want to start driving a different vehicle.

### **UK licence holders.**

You will need to take a theory test if you want a licence for a new category of vehicle, for example, if you have a car licence and you want a motorcycle licence you will need to take a theory test.

If, however, you want to upgrade within a vehicle category you will not normally need to take a theory test, for example, if you have a full automatic car licence and you want a manual car licence you will not have to take a theory test.

It is your responsibility to make sure you have the correct licence for the vehicle you are driving. If you are unsure if you need to take a theory test please contact the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) or the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

### **Foreign licence holders.**

If you hold a valid Community licence and you are visiting Great Britain, you can drive any vehicle for as long as your licence remains valid. The appropriate full entitlement for the vehicle you wish to drive must be shown on your licence.

The EEA countries are as follows:

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Republic of Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom

Outside Europe:

If you hold a full driving licence issued outside the EEA it may be possible to exchange it for an equivalent British licence. You should contact the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) to find out if you can exchange your foreign licence.

If you cannot exchange your foreign licence you will have to apply for a British provisional licence and take a theory and practical test.