

Life Skills for Adulthood: Learning to Drive

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Getting your Learner Licence

In New Zealand you can get your learner licence when you turn 16 years old.

The first step to doing this is to learn the road rules. You can do this by:

- Reading the Road code. You can buy the Road Code from most bookstores.
- Learning through online modules (<https://drive.govt.nz/learner-licence/interactive-road-code>)
- Doing practice tests on the AA website or free quizzes on <https://www.drivingtests.co.nz/roadcode/car/all/35/>

When you feel you are ready to sit the actual test:

- The test will cost \$96.10
- Find out where your local testing offices are. You can sit these tests at VTNZ or AA.
- Make an appointment
- You will need to fill out an application

- Give proof of your identity (As this will be your learners licence, you won't have a NZ drivers licence to use as your form of ID. You will need to bring a current NZ Passport and if you don't have that, you may need to bring multiple forms of identification. So, if you have a student ID card and a birth certificate, bring those. You can find the full list of what identification documents you can bring here: <https://www.nzta.govt.nz/driver-licences/getting-a-licence/identification/>)
- The agent will take a photo of you on the day
- You will be asked for your signature
- You will need to pass an eye exam
- There will be 35 questions. You need to get at least 32 of them correct to pass.
- However, if you do not pass, your application fee covers a second attempt at resitting the test. You will be charged another fee if you need to sit it a third time or more. You can only sit it twice in one day. If you need to sit it a third time, you will need to wait at least 10 working days.
- If you pass, you will be given a temporary paper licence. Your actual licence will be sent to you in the mail.

While you are a learner driver:

- You are required to have a fully licenced driver in the passenger seat at all times. They must have had their full licence for at least 2 years.
- You must have L plates on your car both in the front and back.

For more information:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/driver-licences/getting-a-licence/licences-by-vehicle-type/cars/learners-licence/how-to-get-a-learner-licence/>

Getting your Restricted Licence

You can sit your restricted 6 months after you pass your learners.

When you are ready for the test:

- The test will cost \$167.50
- You can book your test online or in person.
<https://online.nzta.govt.nz/licence-test/>
- Fill out an application. If you booked your test online, you need to make sure you complete your application well before the time of your test. The application will take at least half an hour to do. It's a good idea to go in and make your application on a different day to your test so that it is done well in advance.
- Give proof of identity. You can use your learner licence.
- The agent will take a photo of you on the day
- You will be asked for your signature
- You will need to pass an eye exam
- You need to take your learner licence with you. You cannot drive without this.
- The test will take about an hour
- Your car needs to be up to WOF standard. There will be a safety check as part of the test.
- Try to make sure the passenger seat is also clean for the testing officer.
- The practical test includes:
 - left and right turns at intersections
 - left and right lane changes
 - parallel parking
 - three point turn
 - merging
 - straight line driving (two lanes and multiple lanes)
 - entering and exiting roundabouts.

- Critical errors include:
 - left and right turns at intersections
 - left and right lane changes
 - parallel parking
 - three point turn
 - merging
 - straight line driving (two lanes and multiple lanes)
 - entering and exiting roundabouts.

Receiving three critical errors over the course of your test will result in a fail. Receiving more than one critical error too early in the test may also result in a failed test.

- Immediate fail errors include:
 - Speeding
 - Collision
 - Failing to follow instruction
 - Driving dangerously
 - The instructor has to intervene
 - Failing to stop or give way
- After the test is finished, the testing officer will give you feedback and let you know if you passed
- If you passed you will be given a temporary licence while your actual licence gets sent in the mail
- However, as with the learner test, if you do not pass, your application fee covers a second attempt at resitting the test. You will be charged another fee if you need to sit it a third time or more.
- If it's helpful, think about the test more like a practice. If you pass you get your licence and that's great. But if you don't, you get told exactly what you need to do differently.

While you are on your restricted licence:

- You can only drive on your own between 5am and 10pm
- At any other time you are required to have a fully licenced driver who has had their licence for two years (a supervisor) in the passenger seat
- You are also required to have a supervisor if you wish to drive with other passengers unless they are:
 - Legally your partner (e.g. a spouse)
 - A child or dependent (someone who is financially dependent on you and for whom you are their primary carer)
 - Your parent or guardian
 - Relatives that live with you and are on a benefit.

For more information on restricted licences:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/driver-licences/getting-a-licence/licences-by-vehicle-type/cars/restricted-licence/how-to-get-a-restricted-licence/>

Getting your Full Licence

- You can get your full licence a year and a half after getting your restricted unless you complete a defensive driving course. In which case you can get your full licence one year after your restricted.
- If you are over 25 years old, you only need to have held your restricted licence for 6 months before you can go for your full, or 3 months if you've completed the defensive driving course.
- The process to getting your full licence is very similar to getting your restricted.
- The test will cost \$98.90
- You must fill out an application.
- Book a test time.
- Give proof of identity. You can use your restricted licence.
- The agent will take a photo of you on the day.
- You will be asked for your signature.
- You will need to pass an eye exam.

- If you completed the defensive driving course, you will need to show your certificate as proof.
- You need to take your Restricted licence with you. You cannot drive without this.
- The test will take about 30 minutes
- As with the restricted test, your vehicle needs to be up to WOF standard, and this will be checked prior to driving.
- While you are driving you will be asked to identify hazards around you. These might include:
 - Other vehicles driving around you or about to pull out of a parking space
 - Pedestrians
 - Cyclists
 - Children playing on the footpath or near the road
 - Road workers
 - Off leash animals
 - Objects or debris on the road, maybe fallen out of another vehicle or left behind from an accident.
 - The test will also look at:
 - Turning
 - Changing lanes
 - Entering and exiting roundabouts
 - Indicating
 - Following distance
 - How you respond to identified hazards.
- It's a good idea to practice identifying hazards and then explaining what you're doing in response to them. For example, if you see a cyclist, you might maintain awareness of them and give them enough space. If you see a child playing near the road, you might slow down in case they suddenly run out onto the road.

For more information on getting your full licence:

<https://www.nzta.govt.nz/driver-licences/getting-a-licence/licences-by-vehicle-type/cars/full-licence-2/>

Driving Lessons

If you're looking for driving lessons that list Autism or other learning difficulties as a specialty or area of focus:

- **Kapiti:** <https://driving101.co.nz/>
- **Auckland:** <https://www.polodriving.nz/drivers-with-learning-difficulties>
- **West Auckland:** <https://drivingschool.aa.co.nz/Instructors/Rina-Capila>
- **Palmerston North, Christchurch and Bay of Plenty:** <https://www.excellencedriving.co.nz/driving-simulator-training.html>
This company uses simulators prior to taking drivers onto the road. You can read more about it on their website.