

Frequently Asked Questions – Plastic Card & National Driver Licence Service (NDLS)

What is happening to the driving licence?

The way we manage driving licences in Ireland is about to change. From 19 January 2013, the Road Safety Authority (RSA) will have responsibility for driving licences in Ireland and a National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) will deliver the service. As part of this new system, the current paper driving licence and learner permits will begin to be replaced by credit card-sized, plastic licences in an EU-wide change to upgrade all driving licences. The aim of the NDLS is to deliver a secure, efficient, customer-focused service of the highest possible standard.

What exactly will be changing?

From 19 January 2013, all first time learner permits, first time driving licences will be issued in plastic credit-card sized format instead of paper

At present, learner permit and driving licence applications are handled by local authority Motor Taxation Offices and this will still be the case for much of 2013. The service will be transferred to the Road Safety Authority's new National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) by September 2013.

Until the transfer is complete, Motor Taxation Offices will still process all applications and the new-style licence will be produced and delivered by a specialist company. It is important to note, though, that even though Motor Taxation Offices will process the applications until September 2013, they will not be able to issue driving licences over the counter from January 2013. Instead it will be posted out to the driver.

Why has 19 January 2013 been chosen for the changeover?

Under EU law, Ireland, along with all other EU member states, must introduce a new credit card sized driving licence by 19 January 2013. While some EU countries already have a plastic card licence format, they are not all the same - there are over 100 different styles of licence across EU countries. The new card being issued will be standardised across all EU member states.

Who does the change apply to from 19 January 2013?

- Those who have passed their driving test and are applying for their first driving licence
- Those who are renewing their learner permit/ driving licence
- Those who are replacing their learner permit/ driving licence
- Those who are exchanging a foreign driving licence for an Irish driving licence.

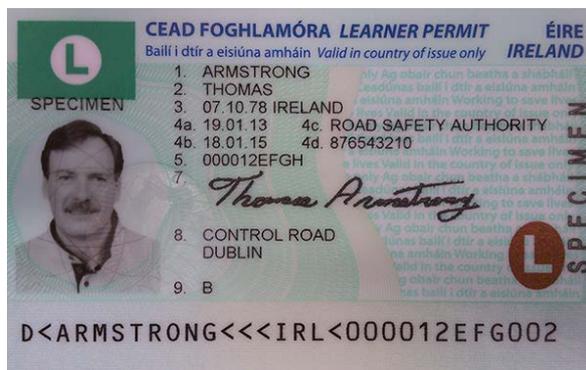
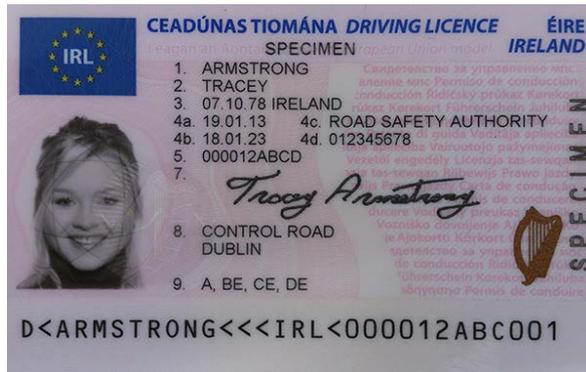
In Ireland, the longest period a licence lasts is ten years so it follows that every Irish licence holder will hold a new-style licence by January 2023.

From what date will applications received be processed with a new Plastic Card Licence?

If a driver falls into one of the above categories, anyone who applies for a licence or learner permit after 12th January will receive the new version.

What will the new learner permit/ driving licence look like?

The new learner permit/ driving licence will have a credit-card sized format.



Licence Features

1. Surname
2. First Name
3. Date and Place of birth
4. a Date of issue, b. Date of Expiry, c. Issued by, d. Driver Number
5. Licence Number
6. Photograph
7. Signature
8. Address
9. Categories.
10. Date Issued from
11. Date Issued to
12. Additional Information / Restrictions
13. Administrative information
14. Optional for information in relation to licence or Road safety

Where do I find my driver number on my licence?

Your driver number is a 9 digit number that stays with the licence holder throughout their driving history. It appears in field 5 of your paper licence and in field 4d of the new plastic card licence or permit.

What categories appear on the front of the licence permit.

Please note on the front of the licence / permit in Field no. 9 not all categories are noted, only the highest in each sub categories.

e.g.. **A** on the front indicates the driver may have **A, A1** and **AM** included in the back.

BE on the front indicates the driver may have **B, BE** and **W**.

Unlike A and B, more details of categories C and D are shown on the front of the licence.

What should i do while i'm waiting for my new card? E.g. if i'm stopped by a member of An Garda Siochana and asked to produce my licence?

As is currently the case, if a member of An Garda Síochána asks you to produce a licence and your licence application is being processed, you will have an opportunity to produce your licence at a Garda station within 10 days.

How do i apply for the new licence?

From January to September 2013, anyone applying for a learner permit or driving licence will do so through the local Motor Tax Office as before. However, because the plastic card is produced separately, it will not be possible to get your licence over the counter in the Motor Tax Office. It will be posted out to you directly from the plastic card producer. Only the following may apply for the new plastic card licence.

- Those who have passed their driving test and are applying for their first driving licence
- Those who are renewing their learner permit/ driving licence
- Those who are replacing their learner permit/ driving licence
- Those who are exchanging a foreign driving licence for an Irish driving licence

Is there a new application form?

Yes, both the Learner Permit and Full Licence forms have been revised. They will be available online to download from (insert LINK). It will also continue to be available from your local Motor Tax office.

Will I be able to continue to apply for a learner permit/ driving licence through my local Motor Tax Office?

Yes, the Motor Tax Office will continue to handle applications until September 2013. However, there will not be a facility to issue any licences between 12th January and 19th January as this is the period in which the switch over from the production of a paper licence to the production of a plastic car licence takes place. There will be no over-the-counter facility available under any circumstances.

It is therefore vital that if your licence is due for renewal that an application is submitted to the local Motortax office in good time and in advance of the 12th January 2013.

How much will the new plastic card learner permit/ driving licence cost?

The cost of a ten year licence will be €55 from January 1st. A three-year licence fee will be €35 and a one-year licence will be €25. The cost of a Learner Permit is €35. Changes to Existing Licences / Permits eg. 'New Category' added will cost €35.

Licences for the over 70s will remain free of charge.

How will this new system make a difference? / What are the benefits of this new-style driving licence?

The new plastic card driving licence will have a number of benefits. It will be:

- Modern, safer because of high-level security features;
- recognisable because it will be a standard format throughout the EU states;
- convenient to carry and less likely to be damaged because it is a neat size and made of polycarbonate.

Also, the licence will have a microchip in it which will, from January 2014 contain all the information relating to the licence. This will provide additional security and protection against fraud. The microchip will enable the licence to be read by special card readers which will be managed by the RSA and will be available to An Garda Síochána.

What information will be stored on the microchip on the card?

The card will have a chip on it, the data it holds relates to the production of the card and not to the holder. By January 2014 the data on the face of the card will also be contained on the chip to provide an additional layer of security.

Will the chip contain data about traffic offences, penalty points or disqualifications?

The card will have a chip on it, the data it holds relates to the production of the card and not to the holder. By January 2014 the data on the face of the card will also be contained on the chip to provide an additional layer of security. At present there are no plans to put any other information on the chip.

How long will it take for the old driving licences to be replaced by the new credit card sized licences?

From 19 January all new licences and renewals will be credit card sized. As all old paper licences are valid for a maximum of 10 years, it follows that all old paper licences should be replaced by 2023.

I currently have a driving licence. Can I apply for a plastic card driving licence on the 19 January 2013?

No. You can only get the new licence when your licence is due for renewal.

I just got my driving licence renewed recently. Do I need to get a new one?

No. After 19 January 2013, only those who are applying for a learner permit or a driving licence or those whose licence has been lost or has expired should apply for the new-style licence. All other licences issued before that date will be in paper format but will still be valid until their expiry date.

I currently hold a full driving licence which is valid for another 9 years. Will I be able to change this and get one of the new cards before my renewal date?

No, the New Plastic Card Licence is being phased in over a period of ten years.

Only the following may apply for a Plastic Card licence from the 12th January:

- Those who have passed their driving test and are applying for their first driving licence
- Those who are renewing their learner permit/ driving licence
- Those who are replacing their learner permit/ driving licence
- Those who are exchanging a foreign driving licence for an Irish driving licence.

My licence expires on 4 January 2013. Can I wait till after the 19 January to get the new one?

As it is an offence to drive a vehicle on a public road without being the holder of a valid licence authorising you to drive the vehicle it is not advised to wait to renew the licence.

Will my existing paper learner permit/ driving licence continue to be valid until its expiry date?

Yes. You can apply for the new licence when your current one expires. It will continue to be valid until its expiration date.

Can this card be used as a form of identity for air flights etc.?

The Road Safety Authority believes that the structure of the card and the process for issuing it will make the new driving licence a suitable form of secure identification.

The Authority has briefed the relevant agencies and airlines of the safety features of the cards. However it is up to each organisation to decide on the form of identification it requires.

Will the new learner permit/ driver licence continue to be valid for the normal periods?

Yes, the majority of drivers will not have any changes. However, for those driving trucks and/or buses the validity period of the licence for those categories will be reduced to five years.

Learner permits will continue to be valid for a period of two years or one year.

Driver licences for the lower categories i.e. cars and motorcycles will continue to be valid for ten years or for a specified period based on the age of the applicant as detailed below:

- If the applicant is 60 or under 60, they can apply for a 10 year licence,
- If the applicant is between the ages of 61 and 66, they can apply for a licence that will expire when they reach the age of 70,
- If the applicant is between the ages of 67 and 69, they can apply for a 3-year licence,
- If the applicant is 70 years of age or over, they can apply for either a 3 year or a 1 year licence (subject to certification of fitness to drive by a doctor).

Driver licences for the higher categories (HGV) trucks and buses will only be valid for a five year period

For more information, please visit <http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Licensed-Drivers/Driving-licence/About-your-license/>

Can I apply for a learner permit/ driving licence online?

Not presently. It is envisaged that this service will become available in late 2014 following a once off face-to-face identity validation. However, the learner permit and driving licence application forms are available to download from www.ndls.ie.

Will people still need to get a separate international driving licence?

Yes, there are no changes to the issue of international permits

Is the new learner permit/ driving licence less susceptible to fraud?

Yes, because there are enhanced security features on the card.

Can I sign up as an organ donor on the new-style licence?

Yes, the card will have a code giving this information once you have indicated on the driving licence/learner permit application form that you wish to be a donor.

What will the role of the RSA be under the new driver licensing service?

The RSA will have overall responsibility for the licensing service from January 2013. Motor Taxation Offices will continue to deliver the service up to September 2013 at which time the RSA will start to deliver the service through the new National Driver Licence Service (NDLS). A public information campaign will be launched at this time to make the public aware of the changes.

Is there anything else I need to know?

It is our intention that driving licence applications received in January 2013 will be processed as efficiently as possible. However, it is possible that during the first few weeks processing applications may be delayed due to the implementation of the new system. We would therefore ask that those who have no immediate need to renew or replace their licence do not apply until there is a need to do so.

Are there changes to Licence Category rules coming in at the same time as the introduction of the new Plastic Card Licence?

Yes there are a number of changes:

- The description of categories changes from EB, EC, ED etc to BE, CE, DE etc <http://www.rsa.ie/Documents/Learner%20Drivers/Third%20Directive/categories.pdf>
- Full licences issued after the 19 January 2013 in bus and truck categories will expire after five years, as opposed to the current ten year expiry date. A medical report will be needed with every renewal of a truck or bus licence
- The age for taking out a licence for a truck covering current licence categories, C and CE will increase from age 18 to 21. The current age of 18 will continue to apply to those taking out a licence under Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) rules. CPC rules apply to those drivers who drive or intend to drive professionally.
- The age at which a person may get a licence for a bus covering current licence categories, D and DE is to be increased from age 21 to 24. The current ages of 21 for (D, DE) will continue to apply to those taking out a licence under Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) rules. CPC rules apply to those drivers who drive or intend to drive professionally.
- From the 19 January 2013, every new BE licence or learner permit holder cannot draw a trailer whose weight is greater than 3,500kg DGWW

- Introduction of new motorcycle category A2, changes to age restrictions and to the way riders can obtain a category
- Endorsements stamped on licence is discontinued

For more information, please visit <http://www.rsa.ie/en/RSA/Licensed-Drivers/Driving-licence/About-your-license/>