

Driving a minibus

For more information go to www.direct.gov.uk/driving





1. Car driving licences held since 1 January 1997

If you want to drive a minibus you will need to apply for a minibus licence (category D1) using a D2 application pack unless you meet the conditions in section 3 and 4.

2. Car driving licences held before 1 January 1997

If you had full entitlement to drive cars before 1 January 1997 – shown as group A (B for automatics) or have categories B and D1 **not for hire or reward** – you can drive a minibus provided:

- The minibus has a maximum of 16 seats and is not being used for hire or reward.

To drive a minibus which has 9 or more passenger seats for **hire or reward** you will normally need Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) entitlement (category D1 or D). To get this you must meet higher medical standards and take a further driving test.

Hire or reward includes any payment in cash or kind by (or on behalf of) passengers which gives them a right to be carried.

However, if you drive a minibus for an organisation under the Minibus or Community bus permit scheme, you will NOT need a category D1 or D licence even if a charge is made to passengers – see section 3 for further details.

Rules from 1 January 1998

Your minibus entitlement will remain valid in the UK and on temporary visits abroad until the age of 70. When you reach the age of 70 you will need to renew your D1 & D1+E entitlement to continue driving minibuses. When your renewal is due we will send you an application form in order to apply.

If your minibus entitlement is renewed you will normally be granted a category D1 and D1 + E licence for 3 years which will allow you to drive minibuses, not for hire or reward, in the UK and on temporary visits to other EU/EEA countries. See page 4 for more details about driving abroad.

Your car licence will expire when you reach the age of 70. You can surrender your licence and renew your car entitlement early (up to 90 days before your 70th birthday). If you passed your car test prior to 1 January 1997 your licence may also include your D1 entitlement. If you wish to hold these entitlements past your 70th birthday, you must fill in a D2 application form and provide a 'Medical Examination Report' (D4) which a doctor has to fill in.



Medically restricted licences

In general, car licences have to be renewed when drivers reach the age of 70 but younger drivers with restricted medical licences may have to renew earlier. If you have a medically restricted licence you should note that you can still drive non-commercial minibuses on a voluntary basis without being subject to the higher medical standards until you reach the age of 70.

Will licences be accepted abroad?

Yes, during temporary visits to other EU/EEA countries, but please note that if you drive under permit (see section 4), minibuses used for hire or reward cannot be driven outside the United Kingdom unless the driver has **passed a test** for category D1 or D.

Drivers who become permanently resident in another EU/EEA country may find that their entitlement to drive category D1/D1+E (not for hire or reward) minibuses may not be acceptable. **You should get advice from the licensing authority of the new country. However, Northern Ireland will accept all GB driving licence entitlements.**

3. Driving a minibus without D1 entitlement

If your car licence does not allow you to drive minibuses, there are certain circumstances where you may still be able to do so.

You may drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats provided you can meet all conditions below:

- (i) **you drive on behalf of a non-commercial body for social purposes but not for hire or reward (unless operating under a permit) see section 4;**
- (ii) **you are aged 21 or over;**
- (iii) **you have held a car (category B) licence for at least 2 years;**
- (iv) **you are providing your service on a voluntary basis;**
- (v) **the minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers. Minibuses up to 4.25 tonnes will be permitted in certain circumstances (see below); and**
- (vi) **you do not tow a trailer.**

Note: There is no specified method of calculating the weight of specialist equipment such as tail lifts or wheelchair security fittings, but there is an allowance of 750kg for the extra equipment for minibuses which are intended for the carriage of passengers with disabilities or wheelchair users.



This would cover minibuses with a weight of 4.25 tonnes and would be comparable with the weight threshold which new drivers of cars/light goods vehicles are permitted to drive.

When driving a minibus under these conditions you may not receive any payment or consideration for doing so other than out of pocket expenses or tow any size trailer; you may only drive minibuses in this country.

Drivers aged 70 or over will need to make a special application which involves meeting higher medical standards.

4. Minibus and community bus permits

Minibus and Community bus permits are issued to organisations concerned with education, religion, social welfare, recreation or other activities of benefit to the community. Further information is available in the booklet 'Passenger Transport Provided by Voluntary Groups' available from Traffic Area Offices.

Minibus permits

Minibus permits allow certain organisations to make a charge without having to comply with the full public service vehicle operator licensing requirements and without the need for their drivers to have PCV (category D1 or D) entitlement. The services must

be provided for their own members or for groups of people whom the organisation serves. The service must not be provided to members of the general public and the charges made must be on a non-profit basis.

Community bus permits

Community bus permits are issued to bodies wishing to run a local bus service on a non-profit basis. Members of the general public can be carried in the minibus.

Car driving licences held before 1 January 1997

Drivers who first held a licence to drive cars prior to 1 January 1997 will continue to be able to drive minibuses under the Permit Schemes provided their entitlement to drive minibuses (category D1 – not for hire or reward) remains in force.

Car driving licences held after 1 January 1997

Drivers who first held a licence to drive cars after 1 January 1997, and the drivers referred to above who have not renewed their minibus (D1 – not for hire or reward) entitlement, may drive a permit minibus provided the conditions at section 3 are met.

The permit arrangements apply only in the UK – you cannot take a permit minibus abroad if it is used for hire or reward unless you hold either PCV category D1 or category D entitlement.



(iii) Having passed a PCV test before 10 September 2008, and driving under a bus operators licence, a minibus permit, or community bus permit and any of the following conditions:

- Driving on a regular service where the route doesn't exceed 50km
- Not engaged in the carriage of passengers, or
- Driving a vehicle of a class included in sub-category D1.

You can drive at age 20 after passing a PCV driving test and Driver CPC initial qualification.

For further advice you can contact the Driving Standards Agency by phoning 0300 200 1122 or by email at drivercpc@dsa.gsi.gov.uk

Note 2

You need category D entitlement to drive an articulated bus (for example, a 'bendibus'). You can get more details from us.

Note 3

If you passed your test for category B or B automatic before 1 January 1997 your licence will already show C1, C1E (8.25 tonnes), D1, D1E (not for hire or reward) as entitlement.

If you have any questions about driving licences, you can find more details on the website at www.direct.gov.uk/driverinfo. You can also contact us in the following ways.

Phone (Customer Enquiries):

0300 790 6801 (lines are open between 8am and 7pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 2pm on Saturdays).

Fax: 0300 123 0784 (from the UK),
+44 1792 786369 (from abroad).

*If you are deaf or hard of hearing and have a textphone, you should phone **0300 123 1278**. This number will not respond to an ordinary phone.*

If you change your name, address or vehicle, please notify DVLA immediately. Failure to do this could cost you a £1,000 fine.



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