

3. Motor vehicle documentation, learner and restricted driver requirements

Documents

Driving licence. You **MUST** have a valid signed driving licence for the category of vehicle you are driving. You **MUST** inform the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) if you change your name and address.

Law RTO 1981 Art 3

Holders of non-European Community licences who are now resident in the UK may only drive on that licence for a maximum of 12 months from the date they become resident in this country.

To ensure continuous driving entitlement

- a UK provisional licence should be obtained and a driving test(s) passed before the 12-month period elapses, or
- in the case of a driver who holds a licence from a country which has been designated in law for licence exchange purposes, the driver should exchange the licence for a UK one.

MOT. Cars and motorcycles **MUST** normally pass an MOT test (vehicle test) four years from the date of the first registration and every year after that. You **MUST NOT** drive a vehicle without displaying a vehicle test certificate, when it should have one. Exceptionally, you may drive to a pre-arranged test appointment or to a garage for repairs required for the test. Driving an unroadworthy vehicle may invalidate your insurance.

Law RTO 1995 Arts 61, 63, 63A, 65 & 69

Insurance. To use a motor vehicle on the road, you **MUST** have a valid insurance policy. This **MUST** at least cover you for injury or damage to a third party while using that motor vehicle. Before driving any motor vehicle, make sure that it has this cover for your use, or that your own insurance provides adequate cover. You **MUST NOT** drive a motor vehicle without insurance. Also, be aware that even if a road traffic collision is not your fault, you may still be held liable by insurance companies.

Law RTO 1981 Art 90

Uninsured drivers can now be automatically detected by roadside cameras.

The types of insurance cover are indicated as follows.

Third-party insurance – this is often the cheapest form of insurance, and is the minimum cover required by law. It covers anyone you might injure or whose property you might damage. It does not cover damage to your own motor vehicle or injury to yourself.

Third-party, Fire and Theft insurance – similar to third-party, but also covers you against your motor vehicle being stolen, or damaged by fire.

Comprehensive insurance – this is usually the most expensive but the best insurance. Apart from covering other persons and property against injury or damage, it also covers damage to your own motor vehicle, up to the market value of that vehicle, and personal injury to yourself.

Registration certificate. Registration certificates (also called harmonised registration certificates) are issued for all motor vehicles used on the road, describing them (make, model, etc.) and giving details of the registered keeper. You **MUST** notify the DVA in Coleraine as soon as possible when you buy or sell a vehicle, or if you change your name or address. The buyer and seller are responsible for completing the registration certificates. The seller is responsible for forwarding them to the DVA. The procedures are explained on the back of the registration certificates.

Law RV(R&L)R Part IV

Vehicle Excise Duty (VED). All motor vehicles used or kept on public roads **MUST** display a valid Vehicle Excise Duty disc (tax disc) displayed at all times. Even motor vehicles exempt from duty **MUST** display a tax disc at all times.

Law VERA sects 29 & 33

Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN). This is a notification to the DVA that a vehicle is not being used on the road. If you want to keep a vehicle untaxed and off the public road you **MUST** declare SORN – it is an offence not to do so. You then won't have to pay any road tax for that vehicle for a period of 12 months. You need to send a further declaration after that period if the vehicle is still off the public road. The SORN will end if you sell the vehicle and the new owner will become immediately responsible.

Law RV(R&L)R reg 26 sch 4

Production of documents. You **MUST** be able to produce your driving licence and counterpart, a valid insurance certificate and (if appropriate) a valid MOT certificate, when requested by

a police officer. If you cannot do this you may be asked to take them to a police station within seven days.

Law RTO 1981 Arts 180 & 180A

Learner drivers

Learners driving a car **MUST** hold a valid provisional licence. They **MUST** be supervised by someone at least 21 years old who holds a full EC/EEA licence for that type of car (automatic or manual) and has held one for at least three years.

Laws MV(DL)R reg 12 & RTO 1981 Art 3

Vehicles. Any vehicle driven by a learner **MUST** display red L plates. Plates **MUST** conform to legal specifications and **MUST** be clearly visible to others from in front of the vehicle and from behind. Plates should be removed or covered when not being driven by a learner (except on driving school vehicles.)

The speed limit for vehicles displaying L plates is 45 mph (72km/h), except goods vehicles, buses and coaches on a motorway.

Laws MV(DL)R reg 12, RTO 1981 Art 19 & MV(SLRE)R reg 2

You **MUST** pass the theory test (if one is required) and then a practical driving test for the category of vehicle you wish to drive before driving unaccompanied.

Law MV(DL)R reg 30

Restricted drivers

After passing the driving test for a motor car or a motorcycle, you must display amber R plates for a period of one year from the date of passing the test. The plates **MUST** conform to legal specifications and **MUST** be clearly visible to others from in front of the vehicle and from behind. Plates should be removed or covered when not being driven by a restricted driver. The maximum permitted speed for any vehicle displaying R plates is 45 mph (72km/h), whether or not the vehicle is being driven by a restricted driver.

Laws RTO 1981 Art 19A & MV(PR)R

4. The road user and the law

Road traffic law

The following list can be found abbreviated throughout the Code. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide, but a guide to some of the important points of law. For the precise wording of the law, please refer to the various Orders and Regulations (as amended) indicated in the Code. Abbreviations are listed as follows.