

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.

Most of the provisions apply on all roads throughout Northern Ireland. A road includes a public road, any part of a public road and any bridges or tunnels over or through which a public road passes, and any street, carriageway, highway or roadway to which the public has access (RTO 1995 Art 2). It is important to note that references to 'road' therefore generally include footways, footpaths, and cycle tracks and many roadways and driveways on private land (including many car parks). In most cases, the law will apply to them and there may be additional rules for particular paths or ways. Some serious driving offences, including drink-driving offences, also apply to all public places, for example public car parks.

Cronically Sick & Disabled Persons (NI) Act 1978	CSPDA
Criminal Justice (NI) Order 1994	CJO
Motor Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations (NI) 1999	CUR
Motor Vehicles (Construction & Use) (Amendment No.5) Regulations (NI) 2003	CU(A)R
Motor Vehicles (Constructions & Use) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2005	CU(A)R
Horses (Protective Headgear for Young Riders) (NI) Order 1990	H(PHYR)O
Horses (Protective Headgear for Young Riders) Regulations (NI) 1992	H(PHYR)R
Motor Cycles (Eye Protectors) Regulations (NI) 2004	MC(E)P)R
Motor Cycles (Protective Headgear) Regulations (NI) 1999	MC(PH)R
Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (NI) 1996	MV(DL)R
Motor Vehicles Driving Licences (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2003 (4 sets of Regulations)	MVDL(A)R
Motor Vehicles (Invalid Carriages) Regulations (NI) 1999	MV(IC)R
Motor Vehicles (Prescribed Restrictions) Regulations (NI) 1996	MV(PR)R
Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits) Regulations (NI) 1989	MV(SL)R
Motor Vehicles (Speed Limit Restriction) (Exemption) Regulations (NI) 1998	MV(SLRE)R
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations (NI) 1993	MV(WSB)R
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts by Children in Front Seats) Regulations (NI) 1993 and 2007	MV(WSB)R
Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2007 and 2008	MV(WSB)R
Motorways Traffic Regulations (NI) 2008	MTR
Road Traffic (NI) Order 1981, 1995 or 2007 (as indicated)	RTO
Road Traffic Offenders (NI) Order 1996	RTOO
Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order 1997	RTRO
Road Vehicles Lighting (Amendment) Regulations (NI) 2007	RVL(A)R
Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations (NI) 2000	RVLR
Road Vehicles (Registration & Licensing) Regulations 2002	RV(R&L)R
Road Traffic (New Drivers) (NI) Order 1998	RT(ND)O
Road Vehicles (Traffic) Regulations 1933	RV(T)R
Roads (NI) Order 1993	RO
Roads (Restriction of Waiting) Order (NI) 1982	R(RW)O
Road Vehicles (Display of Registration Marks) Regulations 2001	RV(DRM)R
Smoking (NI) Order 2006	SO
Smoke-Free (Exemptions, Vehicles, Penalties & Discounted Amounts) Regulations (NI) 2007	SF(EVPDA)R
Traffic Signs Regulations (NI) 1997	TSR
Vehicle Excise and Registration Act 1994	VERA
Zebra Pelican & Puffin Pedestrian Crossing Regulations (NI) 2006	PCR

Orders and regulations from 1988 can be viewed on the Office of Public Sector information website (www.opsi.gov.uk). Orders and regulations prior to 1988 are only available in their original print format which can be obtained from The Stationery Office as detailed inside the back cover.

5. Penalties

Parliament sets the maximum penalties for road traffic offences. The seriousness of the offence is reflected in the maximum penalty. It is for the courts to decide what sentence to impose according to circumstances.

The penalty table on page 125 indicates some of the main offences and the associated penalties. There is a wide range of other more specific offences which, for the sake of simplicity, are not shown here. The penalty points and disqualification system is described below.

Penalty points and disqualifications

The penalty points system is intended to deter drivers and motorcyclists from following unsafe motoring practices. Certain non-motoring offences, e.g. failure to rectify vehicle defects, can also attract penalty points. The court **MUST** order points to be endorsed on the licence according to the fixed number or the range set by Parliament. The accumulation of penalty points acts as a warning to drivers that they risk disqualification if further offences are committed.

Law RTOO Arts 49 & 50

A driver or motorcyclist who accumulates 12 or more penalty points within a three-year period must be disqualified. This will be for a minimum period of six months, or longer if the driver or motorcyclist has previously been disqualified.

Law RTOO Art 40

For every offence which carries penalty points the court has a discretionary power to order the licence holder to be disqualified. This may be for any period the court thinks fit, but will usually be between a week and a few months.

In the case of serious offences, such as dangerous driving and drink-driving, the court **MUST** order disqualification. The minimum period is 12 months, but for repeat offenders or where the alcohol level is high, it may be longer. For example, a second