

Graduated Licensing—Licensing for Drivers 15–18

Limited Learner Permit

If you are at least 15 years of age and have completed an approved driver education course that meets North Carolina requirements and can present a Driving Eligibility Certificate (issued by the public school system), or a high school diploma or its equivalent, you may apply for a Level One Limited Learner Permit to operate vehicles requiring a Class C License.

- You must be at least 15 years old but less than 18 years old and reside in North Carolina.
- You must present a certificate showing you have passed an approved driver education course consisting of at least 30 hours classroom instruction and six hours behind-the wheel instruction that meets North Carolina requirements before you can take the test for a learner permit.
- You must pass written, sign and vision tests.
- During the first six months, a level one permit authorizes you to drive between the hours of 5 a.m. and 9 p.m., while accompanied by your supervising driver.
- Six months from level one issuance, you are eligible to drive anytime with a supervising driver.
- You must hold this permit for 12 months prior to applying for a Limited Provisional License.
- You will be given a Driving Log to be completed detailing a minimum of 60 hours of operation. Daytime or daylight driving can be performed from sunrise to sunset and as long as daylight exists. Nighttime or night driving can be performed after sunset and within the hours that sunlight or daylight does not exist.
- All passengers must be restrained by seat belt or child safety seat.
- No one except the driver and the supervising driver are allowed in the front seat.
- You are not permitted to use a mobile telephone or other additional technology associated with a mobile telephone while operating a motor vehicle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area. Exception: You can use it to call the following regarding an emergency situation: an emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office or a health clinic; a public or privately owned ambulance company or service; a fire department; a law enforcement agency; your parent, legal guardian or spouse.

NOTE: *Before graduating to level two, you must have no convictions of motor vehicle moving violations or seat belt/mobile telephone infractions within the preceding six months.*

SUPERVISING DRIVER: *A supervising driver must be a parent, grandparent or guardian of the permit/license holder, or a responsible person approved by the parent or guardian. A supervising driver must hold a valid driver license and must have been licensed for at least five years.*

Level Two Limited Provisional License

- Drivers must be at least 16 years old, but less than 18.
- You may drive without supervision from 5 a.m. until 9 p.m. and at any time when driving directly to or from work or any volunteer fire, rescue or emergency medical service, if you are a member.
- You must hold this license at least six months prior to applying for a Full Provisional License.
- You will be given a Driving Log to be completed detailing a minimum of 12 hours of operation. At least six hours must occur during nighttime hours. Daytime or daylight driving can be performed from sunrise to sunset and as long as daylight exists. Nighttime or night driving can be performed after sunset and within the hours that sunlight or daylight does not exist. The log must be signed by the supervising driver and submitted to the Division at the time of application for the Full Provisional License.
- All passengers must be restrained by seat belt or child safety seat.
- Supervising driver must be seated beside the driver.
- The number of passengers allowed in the vehicle under the age of 21 is restricted to ONE when the driver of the vehicle is the holder of a level II, OR if all passengers under the age of 21 are members of the driver's immediate family or members of the same household as the driver, there is no "under 21" limit. If the supervising driver is in the car, this restriction does not apply.
- You are not permitted to use a mobile telephone or other additional technology associated with a mobile telephone while operating a motor vehicle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area. Exception: You can use it to call the following regarding an emergency situation: an emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office, or a health clinic; a public or privately owned ambulance company or service; a fire department; a law enforcement agency; your parent, legal guardian or spouse.

NOTE: Before graduating to level three, you must have no convictions of motor vehicle moving violations or seat belt/mobile telephone infractions within the preceding six months.

SUPERVISING DRIVER: A supervising driver must be a parent, grandparent or guardian of the permit/license holder, or a responsible person approved by the parent or guardian. A supervising driver must hold a valid driver license and must have been licensed for at least five years.

Level Three Full Provisional License

- The restrictions on level one and level two concerning time of driving, supervision and passenger limitations do not apply to a Full Provisional License.
- If you are under the age of 18, you are not permitted to use a mobile telephone or other additional technology associated with a mobile telephone while operating a motor vehicle on a public street or highway or public vehicular area. Exception: You can use it to call the following regarding an emergency situation: an emergency response operator; a hospital, physician's office, or a

health clinic; a public or privately owned ambulance company or service; a fire department; or a law enforcement agency; your parent, legal guardian or spouse.

New Residents Between the Ages of 15 and 18 Years

If you are a new resident moving into North Carolina and are 15 but less than 18 years old and have a learner permit, a restricted license or an unrestricted license, you should contact your local driver license office to determine which type of license or learner permit you are eligible to apply for.

The Provisional Licensee

Drivers under age 18 are provisional licensees. Because these drivers have a much higher crash rate, special laws apply to them. If you are a driver under age 18:

- You must present a certificate showing you have passed an approved driver education course consisting of at least 30 hours classroom instruction and six hours behind-the-wheel instruction that meets North Carolina requirements before you can take the test for a learner permit or license.
- The DMV reviews your driving record more closely and may contact you if you have certain types of traffic convictions or crashes.
- It is unlawful for a provisional licensee to drive a motor vehicle after or while consuming any amount of alcohol or drugs — a conviction of such a violation will result in a one-year license revocation.
- A parent or legal guardian must sign for a minor.
- You are not permitted to use a cellphone.
- You are not permitted to operate a vehicle while manually entering multiple letters or text as a means of communicating or read any electronic mail or text message.
- Every person occupying a vehicle in motion must have a safety belt properly fastened when the vehicle is in motion.

Thinking Of Dropping Out?

Driver license applicants less than 18 years old must have a Driving Eligibility Certificate, high school diploma or its equivalent to be eligible for a North Carolina driving permit or license. The Driving Eligibility Certificate must be signed by the applicant's school administrator who certifies that the applicant is currently enrolled in school and making progress toward a high school diploma; or that substantial hardship would be placed on the applicant or the applicant's family if he or she does not receive a driver license. The steps in graduated licensing must still be followed even if the Driving Eligibility Certificate is issued due to hardship conditions. North Carolina does not issue a hardship driving permit or license.

DMV must revoke the driver license of any person under age 18 when it receives notice from the proper school authority that the person is no longer eligible for a Driving Eligibility Certificate. This revocation remains in effect until the person's 18th birthday unless a Driving Eligibility Certificate, high school diploma or GED Certificate is obtained.

Lose Control/Lose Your License

A loss of license will occur if a student receives a suspension for more than 10 consecutive days or receives an assignment to an alternative educational setting due to disciplinary action for more than 10 consecutive days. This suspension remains in effect for 12 months or until a Driving Eligibility Certificate is obtained.

Restrictions

For safety reasons, a driver license may be limited or restricted. Examples:

- A driver may only be permitted to operate a motor vehicle while wearing corrective lenses.
- A driver who passes the license examination may be issued a driver license restricted to using equipment necessary to safely operate the motor vehicle.

If your license is restricted, you must only drive within the limits of the restriction; otherwise you are considered to be driving without a license.

Required Documents

(Any Document Reflecting Alteration Will Not be Accepted)

Requirements are based on North Carolina General Statutes 20-7 and 20-11.

If you are applying for a driver license, a learner's permit or an ID card **for the first time** in North Carolina, you will need to provide proof of your full name and date of birth, your NC residence address, provide your social security number (SSN) or documentation indicating your legal presence in the U.S. You will need to provide proof of vehicle liability insurance when applying for a driver license. The insurance policy must reflect your name.

Applicants under Age 18 Applying for a Driver License or Learner's Permit:

If you are under age 18, you must provide either a Driving Eligibility Certificate, proof of graduation from high school, or submit a GED. You must also provide proof of completion of a driver education course which consists of 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours behind wheel instruction.