

## CHAPTER 1: NON-COMMERCIAL LEARNER'S PERMIT INFORMATION

This chapter will provide the information you need to know about obtaining a Pennsylvania learner's permit. The areas addressed include:

- Applying for a Learner's Permit
- Tests

### APPLYING FOR A LEARNER'S PERMIT

You must obtain a learner's permit before you operate a motor vehicle in Pennsylvania. You will need to take and pass the Vision, Knowledge and Road Tests to get your driver's license.

**When you are 16 years of age or older, please follow the steps listed below in order to get your non-commercial learner's permit. You cannot apply for your permit before your 16th birthday.**

1. Complete the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) found on our website at [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us) under the Forms and Publications link at the top of the page.
2. Your health care provider must complete the back of the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180). The form must be completed by a Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.), Medical Doctor (M.D.), Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (C.R.N.P.), Physician's Assistant (P.A.) or a Doctor of Chiropractic (D.C.), no earlier than six (6) months prior to your 16th birthday. All information must be completed.
3. If the Driver License Examiner cannot determine whether the information on the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) meets medical standards, your learner's permit may be delayed. You may be required to undergo additional medical examinations. If you have a condition that seriously impairs your ability to drive, you may be required to get a dual control learner's permit and learn to drive with a certified instructor.
4. If you are under 18 years of age, your parent, guardian, person in loco parentis or spouse who is 18 years of age or older must complete the Parent or Guardian Consent Form (DL-180TD) also found on our website at [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us) under the Forms and Publications link at the top of the page. **If the parent/guardian cannot accompany the applicant, the DL-180TD must be signed by the parent/guardian in the presence of a notary.** Proper identification is required and if last names are different, verification of relationship is needed. If you are over 18 years of age, you must present two (2) proofs of residency:
  - Current Utility Bills (water, gas, electric, cable, etc.).  
(Note: Bills for mobile, cellular and pagers will **not** be accepted.)
  - Tax Records.
  - Lease Agreements.
  - W-2 Form.
  - Current Weapons Permit (U.S. Citizens only).
  - Mortgage Documents.

After studying the manual and following the steps listed above, **bring the items listed below to the Driver License Center** when you are ready to take your Knowledge Test:

- Your completed Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180). **Do not mail this form.** If under 18 years of age, also bring your completed Parent or Guardian Consent Form (DL-180TD).
- Proof of date of birth and identification. These documents must be originals (photocopies will **not** be accepted). The only acceptable proof of identification can be found on the back of the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180).
- Your Social Security card (card must be signed).
- Your check or money order made payable to Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) for the correct amount. **Cash, debit or credit cards cannot be accepted.**

**Please Note: Forms of identification that may be used to prove your date of birth are listed on the back of the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) along with the fees. (All birth certificates/certification of birth must be state issued).**

At the Driver License Center, your vision will be tested. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, please bring them with you. You will then take the Knowledge Test on signs, laws, driving rules and safe practices described later in this manual. After passing the Knowledge Test, the examiner will give you a learner's permit, which is valid for one (1) year. When you receive your learner's permit, you may begin to practice driving.

If you fail the Knowledge Test, the examiner will return the Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) and your Parent or Guardian Consent Form (DL-180TD) to you. You may take the Knowledge Test only one time on any day regardless of test location. Keep your forms in a safe place since you must bring them with you when you are tested again. The Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) is valid for one (1) year from the date of your physical examination; however, the physical examination date may not be more than six (6) months prior to your 16th birthday.

If you are under the age of 18, you are required to complete at least 65 hours of behind-the-wheel skill-building including no less than 10 hours of nighttime driving and five (5) hours of bad weather driving before taking your Road Test. This training will help teach you the skills necessary to become a good, safe driver.

**REMEMBER:** A licensed driver who is at least 21 years of age or a spouse, guardian or parent who is at least 18 years of age and holds a driver's license must ride with you in the front seat of your vehicle at all times. In addition, drivers under the age of 18 cannot have more passengers in the vehicle than the number of seat belts.

After you have waited the mandatory six (6) months from your permit issue date and have a signed certificate of completion for the 65 hours of skill-building, you may take your Road Test. If your learner's permit expires or if you do not pass your road test after three (3) tries, you may obtain an Application to Add/Extend/Replace/Change/Correct Non-Commercial Learner's Permit (DL-31).

If you are using your learner's permit for driving outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, please check with your insurance company and the other state's Department of Transportation to make sure your learner's permit is valid.

If any information on your learner's permit is not correct, bring proof of the correct information to the examiner when you come to the Driver License Center for testing.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER INFORMATION**

The Department is required by law to obtain your Social Security number, height and eye color under the provisions of Section 1510(a) and/or 1609(a)(4) of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code. The information will be used as identifying information in an attempt to minimize driver's license fraud. Your Social Security number is not part of your public driver's record. Federal law permits the use of the Social Security number by state licensing officials for purposes of identification. Your Social Security number will not be printed on your learner's permit or driver's license.

## **PENNSYLVANIA VISION STANDARDS**

You may have poor vision in either eye and still be able to obtain a driver's license; however, you may be required to wear glasses or contact lenses, be restricted to daylight driving or be allowed to operate only vehicles equipped with side mirrors.

If your vision fails to meet the vision standards, the examiner will give you a Report of Eye Examination Form (DL-102). You should have an optometrist, ophthalmologist or family physician test your vision and complete this form. When the form is completed, you may return to the Driver License Center to continue testing.

## WHO NEEDS A PENNSYLVANIA DRIVER'S LICENSE?

- Foreign License Holders: Pennsylvania honors a valid foreign driver's license with an international driving permit for a period of up to one (1) year. If the foreign license and/or international driving permit expire before one (1) year, the individual must apply for a Pennsylvania learner's permit to continue to drive in this state. All holders of foreign licenses must apply for a Pennsylvania learner's permit if they wish to obtain a Pennsylvania driver's license. Reciprocity agreements exist with the countries of France and Germany allowing for the transfer of a valid non-commercial driver's license without Road or Knowledge testing; however, a Vision Test will be administered. (Transfer of a driver's license from Puerto Rico, France or Germany cannot be completed the same day.)
- People living in Pennsylvania who are at least 16 years of age and want to drive a motor vehicle.
- People who just moved into Pennsylvania and are establishing Pennsylvania residency - if you hold a valid driver's license from another state or Canada, you must get a Pennsylvania driver's license within 60 days after moving to Pennsylvania and surrender your out-of-state driver's license.
- People in the United States Armed Forces whose legal address is in Pennsylvania - this includes members of the reserve components stationed in Pennsylvania, who must get a driver's license to operate a non-military vehicle.

## JUNIOR LEARNER'S PERMIT INFORMATION

Your learner's permit will be valid for one (1) year from the issue date printed on your initial learner's permit. During this time, there are certain limitations on your driving privilege if you are under 18 years of age. They are:

- You may only drive under the supervision of a licensed driver who is at least 21 years of age or a spouse, guardian or parent who is at least 18 years of age and holds a driver's license. The supervising driver must sit in the front seat.
- You may not carry more passengers than seat belts available in the vehicle you are driving.

## JUNIOR DRIVER'S LICENSE INFORMATION

Like the junior learner's permit, there are some limitations to the junior driver's license. They are:

- You may not drive between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., unless your spouse, guardian or parent, who is a licensed driver and is at least 18 years of age is with you.

However, you may drive between 11 p.m. and 5 a.m., if you are involved in public or charitable service, a member of a volunteer fire company or employed during those hours. In these cases, you must carry a notarized affidavit or certificate of authorization from your employer, supervisor or fire chief indicating your probable schedule of activities. This notarized affidavit should be kept with your driver's license.

- You may not carry more passengers than seat belts available in the vehicle you are driving.
- You may not carry more than one (1) passenger under the age of 18 who is not an immediate family member unless one (1) of your parents or guardians is in the vehicle with you. After the first six (6) months of driving on a junior license, the limit is increased to no more than three (3) passengers under the age of 18 who are not immediate family members unless one (1) of your parents or guardians is in the vehicle with you. The increased limit does not apply to any junior driver who has ever been involved in a crash in which you were partially or fully responsible or who is convicted of any driving violation.
- You will receive a mandatory 90-day suspension if you accumulate six (6) or more points or are convicted of driving 26 miles per hour (mph) or more over the posted speed limit.
- You may get a regular driver's license after you have held a junior driver's license for one (1) year, if you meet the following conditions:
  - Have passed a driver training course approved by the PA Department of Education.
  - Have **not** been involved in a crash for which you are partially or fully responsible for one (1) year.
  - Have **not** been convicted of any violation of the Pennsylvania Vehicle Code for one (1) year.

- Have the consent of your parent, guardian, person in loco parentis or spouse, who is at least 18 years of age.

If you meet these requirements, you may apply for a regular driver's license by submitting an Application for Change from a Junior Driver's License to a Regular Non-Commercial Driver's License (DL-59). Your junior driver's license will automatically become a regular driver's license when you turn 18 years of age.

## WHAT CLASS OF DRIVER'S LICENSE DO YOU NEED?

In Pennsylvania, driver's licenses are issued specifically for the class and type of vehicle you operate. Therefore, the class of driver's license you should have depends specifically upon the type of vehicle you operate. Generally speaking, the majority of applicants for a Pennsylvania driver's license will be operators of regular passenger vehicles, pick-up trucks or vans. **This manual is designed to provide the information you need to get a non-commercial Class C driver's license, which is the class that covers these types of vehicles.**

## CLASSES OF DRIVER'S LICENSES

- **CLASS A (minimum age 18):** Required to operate any combination of vehicles with a gross weight rating of 26,001 pounds or more, where the vehicle(s) being towed is/are in excess of 10,000 pounds. Example: Recreational Vehicle, when the towing vehicle is rated at 11,000 pounds and the vehicle towed is rated at 15,500 pounds (total combination weight of 26,500 pounds).
- **CLASS B (minimum age 18):** Required to operate any single vehicle rated in excess of 26,000 pounds. Example: Motor homes rated at 26,001 pounds or more.
- **CLASS C (minimum age 16):** A Class C driver's license will be issued to persons 16 years of age or older, who have demonstrated their qualifications to operate any vehicles, except those requiring a Class M qualification, and who do not meet the definitions of Class A or Class B. Any firefighter or member of a rescue or emergency squad who is the holder of a Class C driver's license and who has a certificate of authorization from a fire chief or head of the rescue or emergency squad will be authorized to operate any fire or emergency vehicle registered to that fire department, rescue or emergency squad or municipality (emergency use only). The holder of a Class C license is authorized to drive a motor-driven cycle with an automatic transmission and cylinder capacity of 50 CC's or less or a three-wheeled motorcycle with an enclosed cab.
- **CLASS M (minimum age 16):** A Class M driver's license will be issued to those persons 16 years of age or older who have demonstrated their ability to operate a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle. If a person is qualified to operate only a motorcycle or motor-driven cycle, he/she will be issued a Class M driver's license. If you test on a motor-driven cycle, an "8" restriction will appear on our driver's license. This restriction prohibits you from operating a motorcycle. If you test on a three-wheeled motorcycle, a "9" restriction will appear on your driver's license. This restriction prohibits you from operating a two-wheeled motorcycle. Please refer to the Pennsylvania Motorcycle Operator's manual (PUB 147) or the Mopeds, Motor-Driver Cycles and Motorcycles Fact Sheet located on PennDOT's Driver and Vehicles Services Website in the Motorcycle Information Center.
- **COMMERCIAL CLASS A, B or C:** Drivers who need a commercial driver's license should obtain the Pennsylvania Commercial Driver's Manual (PUB 223), which contains detailed information necessary to prepare for the tests. This manual is available on PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services Website in the Commercial Driver Information Center.

## TESTS

### KNOWLEDGE TEST

The Knowledge Test will measure your knowledge of traffic signs, Pennsylvania's driving laws and safe driving practices. The Knowledge Test can be given in oral form and in Spanish, upon request, at all Driver License Centers across the commonwealth. If you fail the Knowledge Test, you will be permitted to retake the test the following business day. **This test needs to be successfully completed before you can receive a valid learner's permit.**

The Knowledge Test consists of 18 multiple choice questions. You must answer 15 questions correctly to pass the test. Possible driving situations are available on our Web site ([www.dmv.state.pa.us/centers/TeenDriversCenter.shtml](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/centers/TeenDriversCenter.shtml)) under the Teen Driver Information Center and the online version of this manual under the Teen Driver Information Center.

### ROAD TEST

Appointments must be made to take the Non-Commercial Road Test. When you are ready to take the Road Test, you may schedule your Road Test via the Driver and Vehicle Services Web site at [www.dmv.state.pa.us](http://www.dmv.state.pa.us). If you do not have access to the Internet, you can schedule your driver's test by calling 1-800-423-5542.

If you are under the age of 18, you must wait the mandatory six (6) months from your permit issue date and have a signed Parent or Guardian Certification Form (DL-180C) for the 65 hours of skill-building before making your road test appointment.

**You will need to present the following items to the examiner prior to taking your Road Test:**

(All items must be valid and for the vehicle you are using for your Road Test.)

- Your valid learner's permit.
- The completed certificate for 65 hours of behind-the-wheel training, if you are under the age of 18.
- The valid registration card for the vehicle you plan to drive for the Road Test.
- Proof that the vehicle is currently insured.
- The valid driver's license of the person, who is at least 21 years of age or a parent, guardian or spouse, who is at least 18 years of age, accompanying you to the Driver License Center.

**If you do not bring the original documents (not copies) listed above, you will not be given the test.**

Before the test begins, a driver license examiner will check to see that your vehicle has a valid registration card, current insurance, valid state inspection sticker and, if required, a valid emissions sticker. The lights, horn, brakes, windshield wipers, turn signals, mirrors, doors, seats and tires on your vehicle will also be checked to make certain they operate properly and meet safety standards. If it is determined any part of your vehicle is unsafe or does not meet state inspection requirements, you will not be allowed to take the Road Test. If your vehicle is equipped with seat belts, make sure they are clean and ready for use. You and the examiner will be required to wear them during the Road Test.

If your vehicle passes this inspection, the examiner will test you to see if you can drive safely.

You will fail the Road Test if you drive dangerously, violate the law, cause a crash, do not follow the examiner's instructions or make too many driving errors.

**The examiner may ask you to do the following prior to taking the Road Test:**

- **Vehicle Controls:** Operate horn, lights (parking lights, high and low beam headlights, turn signals), windshield wipers, parking (emergency) brake, 4-way flashers (hazard lights), defroster, etc. Failure to properly operate any of the vehicle controls will result in a failure of the Road Test.
- **Parallel Park:** Park your vehicle midway between two (2) uprights in a space that is 24 feet long and eight (8) feet wide. Your entire vehicle must be completely inside the space, and you cannot make contact with any of the uprights to the rear or front of your vehicle, or go up onto or over the curb. You have three (3) attempts to successfully park your vehicle.

Note: Vehicles equipped with Advanced Parking Guidance Systems (self parking vehicles) can be used for testing; however, the self parking feature must be turned off and is not permitted to be activated during the Road Test.

The examiner will be your only passenger during the Road Test. When the Road Test begins, you will be told where to drive and what maneuvers to make. **Close attention will be paid to the way you approach and obey warning signs, stop signs and traffic lights.** The examiner will note how you control your vehicle, use turn signals to communicate with other drivers or use any other vehicle controls that may become necessary during the test.

**IF YOU PASS THE ROAD TEST**, you will receive your 15-day temporary driver's license at that time. You will receive your permanent driver's license in the mail within 15 days. Acceptable forms of identification at the Photo License Centers are:

- Pennsylvania Learner's Permit
- Certification of United States Citizenship
- Pennsylvania Photographic Identification Card
- Photographic Military Identification Card
- Pennsylvania Vehicle Registration Card
- Photographic Bank Identification Card
- Voter Registration Card
- Valid Passport
- Certification of Naturalization
- Photographic Employee Identification Card
- Weapons Permit (U.S. Citizen only)
- Pennsylvania Photographic Welfare Card
- Photographic School Identification Card
- Medicaid Card

Upon successful completion of your Road Test, you will be issued a temporary driver's license, which is valid for 15 days. The product can be used by any business to validate your name, age, address, etc., just as a permanent driver's license. Your permanent driver's license will be mailed to you within the 15 days. Upon the receipt of your permanent driver's license, you will need to destroy your temporary license.

**YOU WILL FAIL THE ROAD TEST FOR:**

**(These are some examples of possible reasons for failing the Road Test)**

- Inability to operate any vehicle controls
- Making errors in safe driving practices
- Causing a crash
- Violating any traffic laws (e.g., failing to obey a stop sign)
- Failing to follow instructions given by the examiner
- Not using turn signals
- Driving dangerously or recklessly

If you are under the age of 18 and fail the Road Test, you will be required to wait seven (7) days before you can retake the Road Test. This delay in retaking the test will give you time to practice and to improve your driving skills. You have three (3) chances with each learner's permit to pass the Road Test before the expiration date of the learner's permit. After the third failure, you must reapply to extend your learner's permit.

If you do not pass your Road Test after three (3) tries or if your learner's permit expires, you may obtain an Application to Add/Extend/Replace/Change/Correct Non-Commercial Learner's Permit (DL-31). If you have not taken or successfully completed the Road Test within three (3) years of your physical examination date, you must start over with another Non-Commercial Learner's Permit Application (DL-180) and retake the Knowledge Test.