

CALIFORNIA DRIVER LICENSE

****Helpful Department of Motor Vehicles Resource – New to California:**

<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/special-interest-driver-guides/new-to-california/>

Who is eligible for a driver license or ID?

Any F, M or J nonimmigrant may apply for a driver license or ID as long as he or she is in lawful status and presents the necessary supporting documents required to verify legal presence in the United States. All nonimmigrant applicants must wait a minimum of 10 calendar days from the date of entry into the US before applying for a driver's license or ID.

What documentation must a nonimmigrant present to the DMV?

In general, the nonimmigrant should present:

- ❖ Passport
- ❖ I-94 print out – <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/i94/#/home>
- ❖ Form I-20 (F visa) or Form DS-2019 (J visa)
- ❖ Social Security number or Social Security Administration letter of ineligibility.

Does a nonimmigrant need a Social Security Number (SSN) to apply for a driver license or ID?

No. A nonimmigrant does not need an SSN; however, the nonimmigrant will need to go thru the application process to obtain an SSN. Follow the instructions on how to apply for a social security card as described on the SSA Web site at <https://www.ssa.gov/ssnumber/>. If the nonimmigrant is ineligible for an SSN, he or she will receive a decision letter stating that ineligibility. The nonimmigrant must present this SSA letter when applying at the DMV office to fulfill the SSA requirement.

Can a nonimmigrant apply for a driver license if his or her Form I-20 has expired?

Yes. However, the nonimmigrant should consult with the DMV office and DSO (International Student Advisor) before applying for a driver license. The DMV requires a nonimmigrant to present supporting documentation, such as an Employment Authorization Document (EAD), validating the duration of stay in the country. All documents should reflect the nonimmigrant's program start date and end date in the US or approved practical training (OPT) period.

What are the requirements for an accompanying spouse and/or dependent?

The accompanying spouse and/or dependent applying for a driver license or state ID should present supporting documentation from the principal nonimmigrant (F-1 or J-1) to reflect the duration of status, as well as their own. The DMV will look for consistency between the spouse/dependent duration of status and that of the primary visa holder. It is advisable (and, in some states, required) that the principal nonimmigrant accompanying his or her spouse and/or dependent applying for a driver license and present supporting documentation to validate the duration of status.

How to apply for a driver license:

- ❖ Visit a DMV office (make an appointment at <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/> for faster service)
- ❖ Complete application form DL 44 (An original DL 44 form must be submitted)
- ❖ Give a thumb print
- ❖ Have your picture taken
- ❖ Provide your social security number or ineligibility letter from SSA
- ❖ Verify your birth date and legal presence
- ❖ Provide your true full name
- ❖ Pay the application fee
- ❖ Pass vision exam
- ❖ Pass traffic laws and sign test. There are 36 questions on the test. You have three chances to pass (a sample test can be viewed on the DMV website)

If you have a license from another country, you will be required to take a driving test. If you have a license from another state, the driving test can be waived.

To take your driving test, you will need to:

- ❖ Make a driving test appointment (driving test are not given without appointments). You may also call 1-800-777-0133 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday – Friday, to make a driving test appointment
- ❖ Provide proof of financial responsibility
- ❖ California Insurance Requirements

You have three chances to pass the driving test. If you fail, you may practice for a while, and then make another appointment. There is no waiting period, but you must make an appointment. If you fail to successfully complete the driving test on the first attempt, you must pay a \$6 fee for each additional driving test that is administered under an application for an original driver license.

After you pass your driving test you will be issued an interim license valid for 60 days until you receive your new photo license in the mail. Double-check your address before you leave DMV and tell the DMV representative if you have moved or if your address is incorrect. If you have not received your license after 60 days, call 1-800-777-0133 and they can check on the status for you. Have your interim license with you to provide information when requested.