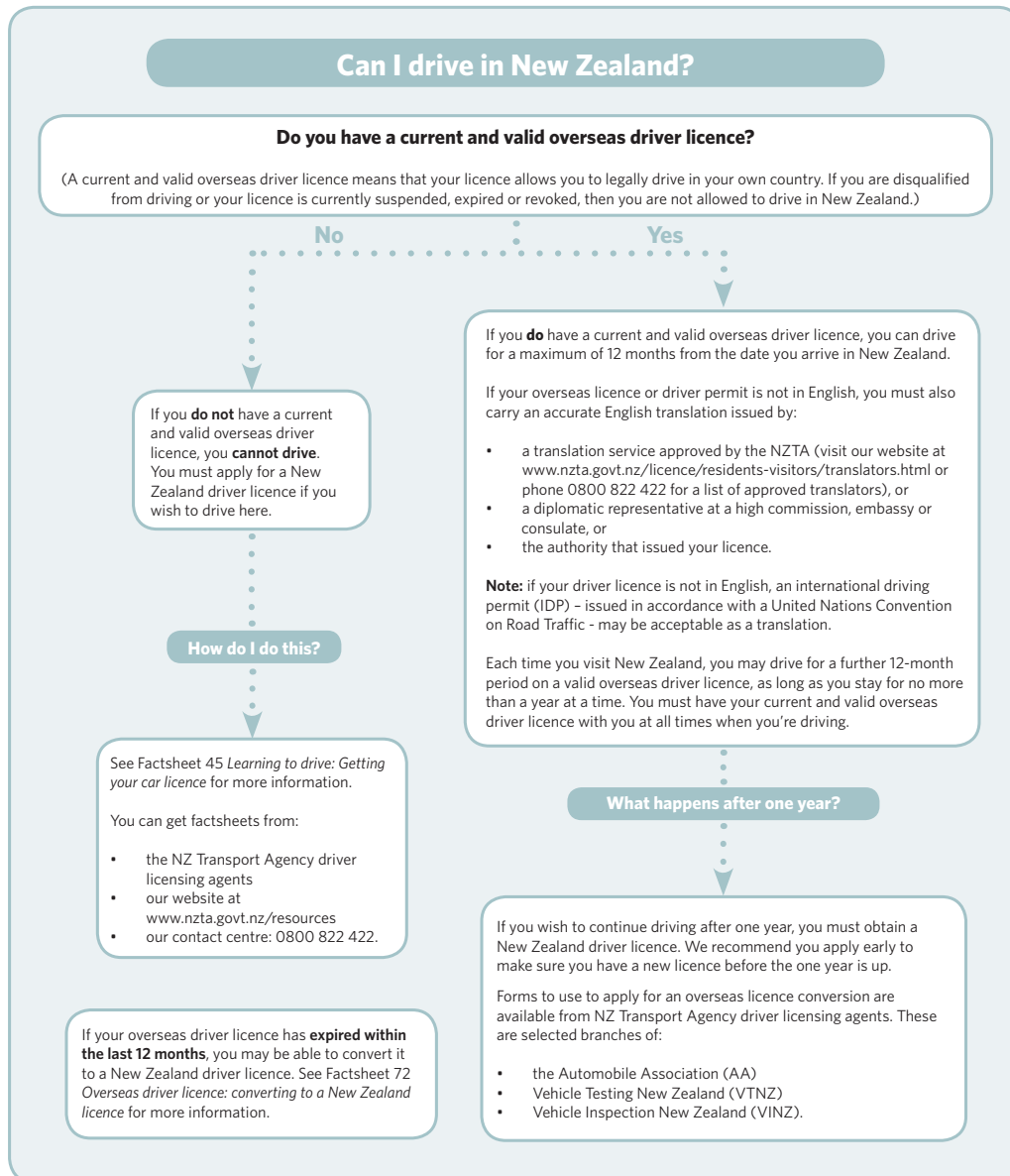


# New residents and visitors - driving in New Zealand

The information in this factsheet applies to licences for cars, motorcycles and heavy motor vehicles.



## Questions and Answers

### What happens if I only have an International Driving Permit?

You cannot drive in New Zealand or convert to a New Zealand licence if you only have an International Driving Permit on its own. You must have a current and valid overseas licence if you wish to drive in New Zealand. If you wish to convert to a New Zealand licence, your overseas licence must be current or have expired within the last 12 months.

### What happens if I don't get a New Zealand driver licence?

If you have been in New Zealand for more than one year and have not obtained a New Zealand driver licence you'll be considered unlicensed and you must not drive. You could be charged by the police if you are caught driving (see the section 'Action police can take') and you may have any insurance claims declined.

## Can I drive to earn money?

If you want to earn a living from driving you will probably have to convert your overseas licence to a New Zealand driver licence first, and you may also need to get a driver licence endorsement.

You will certainly need to do so if you want to deal with the public or carry dangerous goods. For example, before you can earn money carrying passengers, driving a tow truck or working as a driving instructor or testing officer, you must complete courses, pass exams and be cleared by a police check in New Zealand.

You can find out more on our website at [www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/driving-nz.html](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/driving-nz.html) or by calling our contact centre on 0800 822 422.

## What happens if my licence is suspended or I am disqualified while driving in New Zealand?

If you're using an overseas driver licence to drive in New Zealand and are then suspended or disqualified from driving by a New Zealand court, you can no longer use your overseas driver licence to drive in New Zealand. If you want to drive in New Zealand (after your disqualification or suspension has ended), you will need to get a New Zealand driver licence.

## Can I drive on my overseas alcohol interlock licence?

If you have an overseas alcohol interlock licence and wish to drive in New Zealand, it is recommended that you apply for a New Zealand licence through the graduated licensing system.

## What else do I need to know?

### Carry your licence when you're driving

In New Zealand, you must have your overseas driver licence with you at all times when you're driving. If your overseas driver licence is not in English, you must carry an acceptable English translation issued by:

- a translation service approved by the NZ Transport Agency (a full list of acceptable translation services is available on our website at [www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/translators](http://www.nzta.govt.nz/licence/residents-visitors/translators)), or
- a diplomatic representative at a high commission, embassy or consulate, or
- the authority that issued your overseas driver licence

**Note:** an international driving permit - issued in accordance with a United Nations Convention on road traffic - may be acceptable as a translation.

### Action police can take

You can find out about action the police can take in Factsheet 55 *Driving offences and their penalties*. Action the police may take includes the following:

- Roadside licence suspension

Roadside licence suspension means the police immediately seize and suspend a driver's licence at the roadside. In addition to any other charges, the driver is banned from

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driving for 28 days. This can happen if you:

- are caught driving at more than one-and-a-half times the legal alcohol limit
- refuse to supply a blood sample to be tested for excess blood alcohol
- are caught driving at more than 40km/h above a permanent speed limit (other than by speed cameras)
- are caught for a drink drive offence and you have had a previous drink drive conviction in the last four years.

For more information on roadside licence suspension, see Factsheet 62, *Suspension of your licence at the roadside*.

- Roadside vehicle impoundment

Roadside vehicle impoundment means the police can seize and impound a vehicle for 28 days. A fee has to be paid before the vehicle is released. This can happen if you:

- race other drivers or perform any other street-racer stunts (wheelies, unnecessary displays of speed, etc)
- are caught for a drink drive offence where you have two or more previous drink drive convictions in the last four years
- drive while disqualified
- drive while your licence is suspended or revoked
- are caught driving after having been forbidden to drive by police, and before obtaining a current licence (eg you are unlicensed, or your licence has expired, or you are required to reinstate your licence after a licence suspension or disqualification and the Police have stopped you and forbidden you to drive).

For more information on roadside vehicle impoundment, see Factsheet 63 *Impoundment of your vehicle at the roadside*.

## Where you can find out more

If you've moved to New Zealand to live or are here for a short stay, read the brochure *What's different about driving in New Zealand?* This gives you brief advice on aspects of driving in New Zealand that you may be unfamiliar with. It's written in English and has sections translated into German, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Gilbertese, Samoan, Tongan, Tuvaluan, Bislama, Solomon Islands, Thai and Arabic.

Phone our contact centre on 0800 822 422 to order a copy, or visit the Resources and Manuals section of our website at [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz).

Drivers who are new to our roads, people learning to drive and people wanting to gain a new licence class must make use of the appropriate version of *The official New Zealand road code*. (There are different versions for cars, motorcycles and heavy vehicles.) *The official New Zealand road code* contains information you need to know to get a driver licence. It also has lots of information to help drivers be safe and courteous on the road.

You can get copies of *The official New Zealand road code* from bookstores, driver licensing agents and some public libraries.

### Contact details

- Call our contact centre: 0800 822 422.
- Visit our website: [www.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.nzta.govt.nz).
- Email us: [info@nzta.govt.nz](mailto:info@nzta.govt.nz).
- Write to us: NZ Transport Agency, Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442.