

Getting a Massachusetts Driver's License



Obtaining a Massachusetts Driver's License will give you the ability to drive a car in the United States. If you are at least 18 years of age and have not had your right to operate a vehicle taken away, you can apply for a license to drive a passenger vehicle. As an international student, you would most likely be interested in getting a **Class D** (passenger) license. If you are between the ages of 16 and 18, there are additional regulations for obtaining a permit and license.

Applying for a Class D Permit

A Class D Permit is the first step required to earn a license. A permit gives you the ability to practice your driving skills as long as you have a licensed driver age 21 or older, with at least 1 year of driving experience in the United States, in the passenger seat with you. IT IS ILLEGAL TO DRIVE ALONE IF YOU ONLY HAVE A PERMIT. To get your permit, you must bring the following three *original* documents to the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV):

- A Social Security Number (SSN) *OR* an acceptable Denial Notice form the Social Security Administration
- Document proving Lawful Presence (passport with visa, I-94, and I-20 *OR* DS-2019)
- Document proving Massachusetts Residency showing your name and address (such as a bank statement less than 60 days old, cell phone/utility bill less than 60 days old, or a current lease)
 - If you are interested in applying for a driver's license that qualifies as a REAL ID that can be used to enter federal facilities, you will need 2 documents proving Massachusetts Residency

Before going to the RMV, **start the process online** by going to www.mass.gov/ID and clicking on "Get Ready Online!".

Upon arrival at the RMV, you will fill out a Class D, M, or D/M License and ID Card Application (available at the RMV) and pay the \$30 application fee (cash, check, or credit card). You will also be required to take an eye exam. From there, you will be required to take the written test. To pass, you must answer at least 18 of the 25 questions correctly. It is recommended you read and fully understand the Massachusetts Driver's Manual before taking the test. You can find a copy of the manual here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/drivers-manuals>.

NOTE: RMV regulations require that visa holders must have proof of at least 12 months total of legal presence in the US in order to be eligible to apply for a Massachusetts Learner's Permit or License. This mean you must have at least 1 year between the "Program Start/End Dates" on your I-20 form, or the "Form Covers Period: From- To" dates on your DS-2019. You must also have a minimum of 30 days remaining in the US to be eligible for a permit or license (based on I-20 or DS-2019 end date, or your OPT/STEM OPT EAD Card end date).

Applying for a Class D License

You can apply for a license at any time as long as you are over 18 and have a Class D permit by scheduling a road test. To take the road test, you must schedule online ahead of time and show up at the designated location for your appointment. More information can be found by going to <https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-registry-of-motor-vehicles> and clicking on "Online Service Center", then "Schedule a Road Test" under "Additional".

For the road test, you must have a sponsor with you who is at least 21 years old, has at least one year of driving experience in the United States, and possesses a valid U.S. driver's license. *Foreign license holders are not eligible to be sponsors.* If you do not have a sponsor, you can have a driving school sponsor you for a fee. Additionally, you must bring:

- A completed Class D Road Test Application
- Your valid Class D Permit
- A Vehicle (with valid registration and inspection sticker)

NOTE: You MUST use a vehicle that has an emergency hand break between the driver and front passenger seats. The vehicle cannot have any special features that will assist you with the test, such as back-up cameras and sensors. If you bring a vehicle that does not meet the requirements, you will not be allowed to take the test and must reschedule.

Once you pass the road test, your permit will be stamped and signed by the examiner. You must bring the signed permit, a completed Class D, M, or D/M License and ID Card Application, and the appropriate fee to the RMV to get your license. As of July 1st, 2014, the fee for a road test is \$35 and the fee for a Class D License is \$50.

RMV Location and Hours

The **Worcester** RMV branch is located at 611 Main Street. Hours are Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

Driving Schools

While you are not required by law to take driver education classes through a certified driving school, it can help you to learn U.S. driving rules and expectations. Additionally, it could help to reduce your insurance premiums, and you can use a driving school to sponsor your road test for a fee. Local driving schools include:

- Best Driving School Incorporated, 508-754-2378, <http://www.bestdrivingschoolinc.com/>
- Central Mass Safety Council (CMSC), 508-835-2333, <https://centralmasafety.org/>
- Gilmore's Driving School, 508-829-5500, <http://www.gilmoreschool.org/>

Converting a U.S. License from another State

If you have a valid license from another state in the U.S. that has not yet expired, you **must** convert your license to a Massachusetts license once you become a resident of Massachusetts. To do so, you must bring the same documents listed in *Applying for a Class D Permit* as well as your out-of-state license. Your out-of-state license must be surrendered to the RMV. At the RMV, you will be required to fill out a Class D, M, or D/M License and ID Card Application and pay the \$115 conversion fee. If you have a temporary license from another state, you cannot convert your out-of-state license, and must take the full written and road tests to drive in Massachusetts.

Converting a U.S. License from another Country

If you are licensed in Canada, Mexico, South Korea, Germany, France, Taiwan, or one of the U.S. Territories, you may convert your license upon becoming a Massachusetts resident without taking the written or road test. If you are not from one of these countries, you must take the full written test, road test, and eye exam to obtain a Massachusetts license.

Driving with a Foreign License

It is possible to drive with a foreign license in Massachusetts if you are at least 16 years of age, you have a valid license from your home country, you are driving the same type of car you are licensed to drive in your home country, and your license has not been suspended or revoked. You must also have an International Driving Permit in addition to your license, or another acceptable form of English translation, every time you drive. If you are here on an F-1 or J-1 visa and you will be at WPI for more than one year, you are highly encouraged to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license if you plan to drive a car as you have established residency in Massachusetts. If you choose to use your Foreign License, you should also bring your passport and a copy of your most recent I-94 each time you drive. You can find more information here: <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/driving-in-massachusetts-on-a-foreign-drivers-license>.

For more information, visit the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles at
<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massachusetts-registry-of-motor-vehicles>.