



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 four *original* documents to the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV):

- Document proving Date of Birth (such as a Certificate of Attendance from the International House)
- Document proving Signature (such as a passport with visa, I-94, and I-20 *OR* DS-2019)
- Document proving Massachusetts Residency (such as a bank statement or cell phone bill less than 60 days old, or a lease that was signed less than 12 months ago)
- A Social Security Number (SSN) *OR* an acceptable Denial Notice form the Social Security Administration.
If presenting a Denial Notice, you must also bring:
 - Proof of visa status
 - I-94
 - Current non-U.S. Passport

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: http://www.massrmv.com/Portals/30/docs/dmanual/Drivers_Manual.pdf.

NOTE: RMV regulations require that visa holders must be authorized to stay in the United States for more than 12 months into the future from the RMV application date in order to be eligible to apply for a Massachusetts Learner's Permit or License. This would be based on either your "Program End Date" on your I-20 form, "Form Covers Period - To" date on your DS-2019, or your end date on your OPT EAD card.

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 by phone or online ahead of time and show up at the designated location for your appointment. More information can be found here: <http://www.massrmv.com/LicenseandID/RoadTestScheduling.aspx>.

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. 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/>
- Laporte & Carey's Auto Driving School, 508-756-7476, <https://www.laportesdrivingschools.com/>

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.

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.

Driving with a Foreign License

Legally, a *foreign visitor* from one of the countries listed in the 1949 Road Traffic Convention list can drive with their foreign license for up to one year from the date of arrival in the United States, provided that the license is readable in English. However, this rule is designed for short-term visitors only. According to the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles website, ***“While you may drive in the United States with your valid foreign license from one of the countries listed in Appendix A of the Driver's Manual for up to one year from the date you entered the country as a visitor, you must still apply for a Massachusetts license when you establish residency in the Commonwealth”***. 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 your I-94 each time you drive along with an International Driving Permit if you have one. You can find more information about driving with a foreign license and a list of the countries with the one-year privilege here: http://www.massrmv.com/Portals/30/docs/dmanual/appendix_a.pdf.

For more information, visit the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles at www.massrmv.com