

HOW TO OBTAIN A DRIVER'S LICENSE



You Will Need:

- ☐ A valid passport
- ☐ I-94 Print-out (either original or retrieved from www.cbp.gov/I94)
- ☐ I-20
- ☐ A valid Social Security Card or **denial letter** from Social Security Office**
- ☐ Proof of Residence Address (e.g. utility bill or bank statement received in the mail with your address printed on it). If you live on campus, the Office of Residential Life can issue you a letter stating your address.

Obtaining a Massachusetts Driver's License will give you the ability to drive a car in the United States. As an international student, you would most likely be interested in getting a Class D (passenger) license. In order to be eligible for a standard driver's license or REAL ID card, you need to provide valid, verifiable immigration documents as well as proof that you have been granted a legal stay in the United States for a total of at least 12 months. If eligible, the validity of your driver's license or ID card will be the same as your remaining length of stay in the United States.

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 U.S. in the passenger seat with you. It is illegal to drive alone if you only have a permit. To get your permit, [fill out the online form](#) and see a list of required documents to bring to the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV).

Registry of Motor Vehicles – Watertown, MA

Watertown Mall
550 Arsenal Street
Watertown, MA
(857) 368-8000 or (800) 858-3926
M-F 9am-5pm

Upon arrival at the RMV, you will 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. The test is available in 27 different languages if you do not wish to take the test in English. 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.

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. 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. The road test costs \$35. 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 U.S., and possesses a valid U.S. driver's license. Foreign license holders are not eligible to be sponsors. Additionally, you must bring:

- A completed Class D Road Test Application
- Your valid Class D permit
- A vehicle

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.

Important: The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) will issue licenses to those who have been granted a legal stay in the United States for at least 12 months **and** have at least 30 days remaining in their stay in the United States. They will use the [SAVE system](#) to verify lawful presence and duration of status, and licenses will be valid from the date of issue until the date that SAVE brings back showing the end of their approved stay in the United States. For F-1 students, this should be the expiration date of the I-20. For J-1 Exchange Visitors, this will be the expiration date of the DS-2019. Licenses cost \$10 per year with a maximum validity of 5 years (\$50).

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 can help to reduce your insurance premiums. Local driving schools include:

- Newton Auto Driving School
- Perfection Driving School

Online Driving Test Prep

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.

Converting a U.S. License from another Country

If you are licensed in another country other than Canada, Mexico, or one of the U.S. Territories, you must take the full written test, road test, and eye exam. The process is similar to applying for a Class D Permit and Class D License.

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. However, this is designed for short-term visitors and not for students who are establishing residency. As an international student on a student visa, you are required to obtain a Massachusetts driver's license if you plan to drive a car.

NOTE: As a student, you can get a ticket for not having a proper Massachusetts driver's license as you are now considered as a Massachusetts resident.

Fees:

Application or Learner's permit exam: \$30

Road test: \$35

License fee: \$50

****All applicants are asked to show proof of a Social Security Number. If you do not have a Social Security Number you must obtain a "Denial Letter". A "Denial Letter" can be obtained by visiting any Social Security Office with your passport, I-94 card and I-20 and submitting an application. A representative should issue your "Denial Letter" immediately. You must apply for a driver's license within 10 days of receiving this letter. This is the closest Social Security Office:**

Social Security Office in Boston:

O'Neil Federal Building, Room 148

10 Causeway St.,

Boston, MA 02222

M-F, 9am-4pm

State ID Card

If you would like to have a form of identification other than your passport, but do not need a driver's license, you can apply for a non-driver identification card if you have never had a license before. The cost is currently \$25.00 for a State ID card.

Mass ID Requirements:

- You may not hold a valid license in MA or in any other state.
- You must have an identity document (bring your passport, I-20 and I-94).
- You must be able to prove MA residency.
- You must have a valid Social Security number or an acceptable denial letter (with an acceptable visa code).