



Understanding Driver's Licenses & Traffic Laws in New York State

Many residents rely on a New York State Photo Driver License or Non-Driver Photo Identification Card as secure identification for check cashing or credit purchases. It cannot be "borrowed" to buy alcoholic beverages by people under the legal purchase age. It is almost impossible to forge or alter. A New York State photo document may provide increased identification security for you, plus law enforcement and driver safety advantages for everyone.



To apply for a driver license, you must complete an application, pass a vision test and a written test, and pay application and license fees. Most drivers also must complete an approved 5-hour classroom training course and pass a road test. For more information about how to apply for and receive a driver license, read the New York State Driver's Manual (MV-21), Motorcycle Operator's Manual (MV-21MC), or the Commercial Driver License Manual (CDL-10) available at any motor vehicle office.

If you do not drive, you may qualify for a Non-Driver Photo Identification Card from the Department of Motor Vehicles. The DMV Non-Driver ID Card has the same personal identification information, photo, signature and special safeguards against alterations as a photo driver license. You cannot hold a New York State driver license or learner permit while also holding a non-driver ID card. Non-driver ID cards are available to any person, regardless of age, who can provide acceptable proof of name and age. Parental consent is required for applicants under 16 years old.

General Information about driving in New York State

All drivers must have a NYS driver license or valid driver license from another US state or Canada to drive in NYS. In most cases, you can drive in NYS if you have a valid driver license from another country (details below). The minimum driving age in NYS is 16. If you become a "resident" of NYS, you must get a NYS driver license within 30 days and surrender your out-of-state driver license. Normally, you cannot have a NYS driver license and a driver license from another state, but there are exceptions.

Definition of a Resident: Section 250 (5) of the Vehicle and Traffic Law defines the term "resident." The law defines a resident as a person who lives in NYS with the intent to make NYS a "fixed and permanent" place to live. To live in a house, a home, an apartment, a room or other similar place in NYS for 90 days is considered "presumptive evidence" that you are a resident of NYS. However, the DMV will not decide if you are a resident of NYS, if you must get a NYS driver license, or if you must register your vehicle in NYS. **Please Note: According to this law, students from other states or from other nations who attend school in NYS are normally not considered residents of NYS.**

Local NYS Department of Motor Vehicles: Monroe County

<p>Henrietta Branch Suburban Plaza 2199 E. Henrietta Road Rochester, NY 14623</p>	<p>Greece Branch Greece Ridge Center 152 Greece Ridge Center Drive Rochester, NY 14626</p>	<p>Irondequoit Branch Hudson – Titus Mall 545 Titus Ave. Rochester, NY 14617</p>
--	---	---

Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:30 - 4:30 (extended hours to 6:30 available); Phone: 1-585-753-1604

For More Information: Please visit the New York State DMV online at: <http://www.dmv.ny.gov>.

This handout has been gratefully adapted from New York's DMV online resources, by the ISO.

Drivers from other Nations

A valid driver license from another country is also valid in New York State. You do not need to apply for a NYS driver license unless you become a resident of NYS. According to NYS law, a resident of another country can get a NYS driver license. However, the DMV does not recommend this because:

- NYS recognizes your foreign driver license if you remain a resident of the nation that issued it.
- If you have a driver license from any nation except Canada, you must pass a written test, complete a 5-hour pre-licensing course and pass a road test to qualify for a NYS driver license.
- You must show a Social Security Card. If you are not eligible for a Social Security Card, you must provide a letter or form SSA-L676 from the US Social Security Administration (SSA) that states that you are not eligible. The SSA Letter or form must have been issued no more than 30 days before the date of your application. Find more specifics on the DMV's identification requirements page.
- When you receive your NYS driver license, you must surrender your foreign driver license to the DMV road test examiner. The local DMV office keeps your foreign driver license, and then destroys the license after 60 days. If you plan to return to your home country and use your foreign driver license, ask the road test examiner how to make sure that your foreign driver license is not destroyed. If you need to get your foreign driver license, go to the local DMV office where you applied for your NYS driver license.

International Driving Permit: An International Driving Permit is not a driver license. The permit only verifies that you hold a valid driver license in your home country. Your foreign driver license, not the International Driving Permit, allows you to drive in NYS. Contact the authorities in your home country to get an International Driving Permit. If you are not a resident of the US, you cannot apply for this document in the US. You are not required to have an International Driving Permit to drive in NYS, but the permit has value. The permit verifies, in several languages, that you have a valid foreign driver license. An officer who cannot read the language on your foreign driver license can read the permit.

Drivers from the US or Canada Who Move to New York State

NYS recognizes valid driver licenses held by residents of other US states, US territories and Federal districts and Canadian provinces. You can exchange an out-of-state driver license or Canadian driver license for a NYS driver license if: the driver license has your photograph, the driver license is not suspended or revoked, and the driver license has either been valid for at least 6 months or has expired in the past 12 months. The driver license that you exchange must show the date that your driver license was issued. The date is required to verify that the driver license was issued at least six months before you applied for a NYS driver license.

What is the seat belt law in New York State?

New York State law requires all front seat passengers to wear seat belts. Children under the age of 16 must wear seat belts when they are in the front seat or the back seat. Children under the age of four must ride in safety seats. Children aged 4 to 6 must ride in child restraint systems, correctly installed.

What should you do if you receive a traffic ticket in NYS?

The back of your traffic ticket contains information on how to answer the ticket. You must respond to the ticket to prevent a suspension of your driver license or driving privileges.

What must you do if you have an accident?

If you are in an accident, you are required by the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law to stop and exchange information with the involved drivers. If the accident caused property damage only, then you can just exchange information (driver license, insurance, and registration details). If a parked vehicle or other property is damaged, or if a domestic animal is injured, you must locate the owner or contact the police. If a person is injured or killed, you are required by the NYS Vehicle and Traffic Law to immediately notify the police. It is a crime to leave the scene of an accident that causes personal injury or death.