

Loss Prevention Standards

Driver Recruitment: Overseas Drivers

Introduction

This guide is intended to be used in conjunction with, and complement, your fleet insurance policy documentation. Use the information to evaluate your current overseas driver procedures, to highlight good practices and any potential deficiencies in them.

The rules around driving in the UK with a foreign (non-GB) licence are quite complex and it is important that fleet operators fully understand the implications of licence restrictions, prior to allowing a non-UK licence holder to drive on their behalf. Regardless of nationality, all drivers must comply with the UK minimum age requirements; generally, these are 17 years for cars and motorcycles, 18 years for medium sized vehicles and 21 years for large goods vehicles and passenger carrying vehicles.



Drivers from European Union Member States

Checking the driving licences of drivers from outside the UK is extremely important, as different restrictions apply to different countries. Licences should be checked very carefully, and if required, advice can be sought from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency ([DVLA](#)). The [GOV. UK. – Driving in Great Britain on a non-GB licence](#) website contains useful information about driving in Great Britain as a visitor or new resident. It can also be beneficial to contact the UK-based embassy of the country in which a licence was issued, to check that the licence is still current and valid. Embassies can also supply official translations of licences.

Under current European Union (EU) driving licence regulations, new resident EU member state drivers who have a Community licence can drive in this country on their existing licence for the periods set out below. Their Community licence has similar eligibility to the UK licence, and provided the licence remains valid they may drive in Great Britain as follows:

Ordinary Licence holders: Until aged 70 or for 3 years after becoming a resident whichever is the longer period.

Vocational Licence holders (Large Goods Vehicle and Passenger Carrying Vehicle - LGV & PCV): Until aged 45 or for 5 years after becoming resident, whichever is the longer period.

If you are aged over 45 (but less than 65) until your 66th birthday or for 5 years after becoming resident, whichever is the shorter period.

If you are aged 65 or over, for 12 months, after becoming resident.

Note: To continue driving after these periods, a UK licence must be sought.

A vocational licence (LGV & PCV) obtained in an EU or European Economic Area (EEA) country can be exchanged for a UK licence, subject to a fee and a medical report form. The date the licence was issued should be carefully checked as the previous driving experience gained by the prospective employee may not have been obtained in the UK.

The medical standards for obtaining a Community licence are similar to those that apply for a UK licence. Residents must report any change in medical conditions to the [DVLA](#).

If the Community licence was issued on the strength of a licence from a designated country (see below), it will be valid for driving in the UK for 12 months only but can be exchanged for a UK licence. If the Community licence was issued on the strength of a licence from a non-designated country, it will be valid for driving in the UK for 12 months only but cannot be exchanged for a UK licence.

Note: If you are in any doubt about entitlement to drive, contact the DVLA.

Visiting drivers to Great Britain can drive any vehicle for as long as their licence remains valid, providing they have a valid Community licence. In terms of which countries are member states, there are two separate groups; the EU and the EEA, both of which are treated equally.

European Union countries are:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

European Economic Area countries are:

Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

Switzerland is neither an EU nor EEA member but is part of the single market - this means Swiss nationals have the same rights to live and work in the UK as other EEA nationals.

Designated Countries

DVLA also has reciprocal arrangements in place for the following countries:

Australia, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Falkland Islands, Faroe Islands, Hong Kong, Japan, Monaco, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland and Zimbabwe.

Driving licences from these countries will be exchanged for a full British licence, providing the driver took and passed their test in one of these countries or an EU/EEA member state.

All other Countries

Drivers from all other countries cannot exchange a foreign licence for a UK licence. However, a visitor with a full, valid licence may drive a vehicle up to 3,500kg with up to 8 passenger seats in the UK for up to 12 months, as long as the licence or International Driving Permit remains valid. Drivers of medium sized and large vehicles are only entitled to drive vehicles that have been registered outside the UK, and which they have driven temporarily into the country.

Additional Qualifications

The management of work-related road safety is critical; therefore, employers must identify any additional qualifications and experience that may be required for an overseas driver, as part of the job description, including a basic knowledge of the English language and UK traffic law. Where the driving role requires additional skills and qualifications, such as ADR for the carriage of hazardous goods, fork lift truck driving, etc; a full assessment of the capabilities should be carried out and further training completed as required.

Endorsements and Convictions

Determining the convictions and endorsements on an overseas licence is not possible via a standard DVLA enquiry, and fleet operators are advised to utilise the services of an Association for Driving Licence Verification approved provider ([ADLV](#)).

Selection and Induction Procedures

As with any new employee, overseas drivers should be thoroughly selected and inducted into the business, as part of your normal procedures. This should include:

- Completion of a comprehensive driver application form
- Details of driving experience, previous driving incidents/crashes and reference checking from previous employers (where practical)
- An evaluation of the candidate's working knowledge of the English language (commensurate with the job description)
- An assessment of the candidate's knowledge of UK traffic law, including the Highway Code and when applicable driving hours and tachograph regulations
- For vocational driver's:
 - Evidence of completion of Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) and other qualifications required for the work activities
 - An assessment of the driver's medical condition. This should be either a full medical, a medical questionnaire or as a minimum the completion of medical questions on a driver application form
 - The completion of an in-vehicle driving assessment, by a competent person, carried out on the type of vehicle the applicant will be required to drive
 - A full induction, taking into consideration all types of vehicles to be driven and any ancillary equipment to be used and activities to be undertaken

Retention of Documentation

All vetting, induction and training information should be formally evidenced, and a record kept in the driver's employment file in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Additional Information

- [HSE – Driving at work: managing work-related road safety](#)

Further risk management information can be obtained from [Aviva Risk Management Solutions](#)

Please Note

This document contains general information and guidance and is not and should not be relied on as specific advice. The document may not cover every risk, exposure or hazard that may arise and Aviva recommend that you obtain specific advice relevant to the circumstances. AVIVA accepts no responsibility or liability towards any person who may rely upon this document.

