

## 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

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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 with DOB 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 lease or a printed bank statement with your address)
- 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. 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. You can find the manual here: <http://www.massrmv.com/rmv/dmanual/>

### Applying for a Class D License

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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. More information can be found here: <http://www.massrmv.com/rmv/roadtests/>. 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. 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. As of July 1st, 2019, the fee for a road test is \$35 and the fee for a Class D License is \$50.

*NOTE: You MUST use a vehicle that has an emergency hand break between the driver and front passenger seats. If you bring a vehicle with an emergency foot break, you will not be allowed to take the test and will be required to reschedule. The vehicle must also have a valid inspection sticker and be legally registered and insured.*

## **RMV Location and Hours**

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- Roslindale RMV, 4210 Washington Street, Roslindale, MA 02131
- Watertown RMV, 550 Arsenal St, Watertown, MA 02472

## **Driving Schools**

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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:

- Needham Driving School, 781-453-2800
- Perfection Driving School, 857-636-0155

## **Converting a U.S. License from another State**

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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**

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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**

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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. A list of countries with the one-year privilege can be found here:

<http://www.massrmv.com/rmv/dmanual/appendixA.pdf>. 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. For more information, visit the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles at [www.massrmv.com](http://www.massrmv.com) Revised 12/14*