

## 10. Driving in Ireland

There are a variety of issues you will need to be aware of if you plan to drive in Ireland on your return.

### Driver's Licence

#### Can I use my driver's licence if I am returning from a country covered by EC Regulations?

Yes. If you have a driver's licence from a country covered by EC regulations, you are entitled to use your country's driver's licence in Ireland. If your driver's licence is about to expire, you should apply to the Irish authorities to renew your driver's licence. You will not have to resit the driving test.

#### What countries are covered by EC regulations?

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, The UK

#### Can I use my driver's licence if I am returning from a country with which Ireland has an Exchange Agreement?

Yes. You can use your driver's licence up to 12 months after which time you must apply for an Irish driver's licence. Remember your driver's licence must be valid (it cannot be out of date) when you apply for an equivalent Irish licence. If your driver's licence has expired, you will have to re-sit the test.

#### What countries does Ireland have an Exchange Agreement with?

Australia, Gibraltar, Isle of Man, Japan, Jersey, South Africa, South Korea, Switzerland.

#### Can I use my driver's licence if I am returning from a country not covered by Exchange Agreements?

Yes. If you are not from any of the above countries, (for example, if you are from Canada, the United States or New Zealand) and you hold a national driving licence or an international driving permit from your own country, you may use this driver's licence to drive in Ireland for a maximum of 12 months. If you intend to remain in Ireland for longer than 12 months you must apply immediately for an Irish driver's licence.

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### How do I apply for a driver's licence?

To apply for a driver's licence, you must:

- Complete a driver theory test
- Apply for a provisional driving licence
- Complete your driving test in Ireland.

### How do I exchange my driver's licence for an Irish driver's licence?

You must complete an "Exchange of Driving Licence" Form (**Form D900**). These forms are available from your local Motor Taxation Office. Completed Forms should be sent to your local Motor Taxation Office.

### What documents do I need to provide?

- 2 identical passport photographs (you must sign the back of both photos)
- Your current driving licence (it must be valid)
- The appropriate fee (contact your local Motor Tax Office for more details)
- A medical report (if applicable).

### Do I need to get a medical report?

You must get your doctor to complete a medical report form (**Form D 501**) if you are applying for a driving licence for categories C, C1, D1, D, EC1, EC, ED1, or ED. You do not need this if you have previously provided a medical report that is still valid.

A medical report is compulsory for any driving category if you:

- are aged 70 or more or
- you suffer from any disabilities, epilepsy or alcoholism or if you regularly take drugs **or** medication that are likely to impair your ability to drive safely.

A registered practitioner should carry out your medical examination and then complete **Form D401**. This form is available from the Motor Tax Office or your local Garda station. You must sign the Declaration on the medical report form in the presence of the registered medical practitioner.

### Where can I get more information?

You can more information by ringing 1890 40 60 40 (from within Ireland) or by contacting the Driver Testing Section, Department of Transport. Government Buildings, Ballina, Co. Mayo. Tel: + 353 96 24200 Web: [www.transport.ie](http://www.transport.ie)

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### Motor Insurance

#### Do I need Motor Insurance to drive a vehicle in Ireland?

Yes. It is a legal requirement in Ireland to have motor insurance if you want to drive your car in a public place.

#### Should I bring details of my motor insurance abroad when I return to Ireland?

Yes. Some insurance companies will give a bonus to people who have a no-claims bonus from an EU country or another country with similar insurance laws, e.g. Australia, United States and Canada. However each case is assessed individually. You should bring details of your motor insurance record when you are returning to Ireland.

#### Where can I find out more information about motor insurance in Ireland?

Individual insurance companies have customer service departments that will give you information on their policy options. A useful service is the Insurance Information Service (IIS). This is an information and complaints telephone service, operated by the Irish Insurance Federation (IIF) to which many insurance companies in Ireland belong. Its purpose is to answer policyholders' questions and help resolve problems. For further information you should contact: Insurance Information Service, 39 Molesworth Street, Dublin 2. Tel: +353 1 676 1914 Web: [www.iif.ie](http://www.iif.ie)

### Tax on your vehicle

#### If I am importing my vehicle from another country into Ireland will I have to pay tax on it?

Yes. Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT), a percentage of the expected retail price of the imported vehicle, is chargeable on registration of the vehicle in Ireland. All motor vehicles in the state other than those bought in temporarily by visitors must be registered.

#### How do I pay Vehicle Registration Tax?

You can register the car and pay the Vehicle Registration Tax at a Vehicle Registration Office. Further information about Vehicle Registration Tax and locations of Vehicle Registration Offices around Ireland can be got from the central Vehicle Registration Office at: St John's House, Tallaght, Dublin 24. Tel: +353-1- 414 9777 Fax: +353-1- 414 9720 Web: [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie)

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### Motor Tax

#### What is Motor Tax?

Motor Tax is a separate charge from Vehicle Registration Tax. It is a legal requirement in Ireland to have motor tax if you want to drive your vehicle in a public place. The more powerful your vehicle, the higher the cost of your motor tax. Not only are you obliged by law to pay motor tax to drive your vehicle, you are also required to display evidence that you have paid on the windscreen of your vehicle. This is done by displaying your tax disc on the windscreen. Failure to display the disc is considered a motoring offence and will result in an on-the-spot fine issued by a traffic warden or a Garda.

#### Where can I find more information?

For more information or to apply for Motor Tax contact the Local Authority in your area. Details of Local Authorities can be got from:

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Custom House, Dublin 1. Telephone: + 353 1 888 2000 Web: [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)

### Vehicle Testing

#### What is an NCT and do I need one?

An NCT is a National Car Test. Since 2002 all cars four years old or more must be tested. Vehicles that pass the test will have to undergo repeat tests every 2 years. The test is aimed at improving road safety and enhancing environmental protection by ensuring the car meets minimum standards.

#### Where can I book a National Car Test and find out more information about it?

There are National Car Test centres all over the country. For information on your nearest NCT centre contact: Citywest Business Campus, Lakedrive 3026, Naas Road, Dublin 24. Tel: 1890 200 670 (from Ireland only) Fax: + 353 1 413 5996 Web: [www.ncts.ie](http://www.ncts.ie)

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### Speed Limits

#### Are speed limits in Ireland still signposted in miles?

No. Since the 20th of January 2005 all speed limits are signposted in kilometers per hour (kph).

#### What are the speed limits in Ireland?

Speed limits also changed on the 20th of January 2005.

There are a total of five different types of speed limits throughout Ireland:

#### 1. Town and city speed limits (50 km/h)

A speed limit of 50 kilometers per hour is in place in built-up areas (other than motorways or special speed limit zones).

#### 2. National road speed limits (100 km/h)

A speed limit of 100 kilometers per hour is in place on all national roads (including dual carriageways) throughout Ireland.

#### 3. Regional and local speed limits (80 km/h)

A speed limit of 80 kilometers per hour is in place on all regional and local roads (sometimes referred to as non-national roads).

#### 4. Motorway speed limits (120 km/h)

A speed limit of 120 kilometers per hour is in place for all mechanical vehicles on all motorways. You should note that learner drivers, vehicles under 50 cc, bicycles, pedestrians, animals and invalid carriages are not allowed on motorways in Ireland.

#### 5. Special speed limits (30 km/h or 60 km/h)

Special speed limits are sometimes applied to designated roads and zones (mainly, for example, on roads on the outside of built-up areas, around schools, etc.). Special speed limits are generally 30 km/h or 60 km/h.