STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 129

ROAD TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES

The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - -	*30th June 2026*
Coming into operation	*1st October 2026*

The Department for Infrastructure(**a**) makes the following Regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by Articles 5(3) and (4A), 5A(6), (7) and (8), 13B, 19C(1) and (2)(b) and 218(1) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981(**b**) and now vested in it(**c**).

Citation and commencement

1.—(1) These Regulations may be cited as the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) (Amendment No. 3) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and shall come into operation on 1st October 2026.

Amendment of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations

2.—(1) The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996(**d**) are amended in accordance with paragraphs (2) to (7).

(2) In regulation 21 (application for practical and unitary tests)—

(a) at the beginning of paragraph (1)(**e**) insert "Subject to regulation 21A,"; and

(b) in paragraph (2) for "such details and such fee" substitute "the details and fee specified in paragraph (1) and the details specified in regulation 21A(2), where applicable,".

(3) After Regulation 21 insert—

(**a**) Formerly the Department for Regional Development; *see* section 1(6) and (11) of, and Schedule 1 to, the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (2016 c. 5 (N.I.)). Pursuant to section 1(9) of that Act, the Department of the Environment was dissolved

(**b**) S.I. 1981/154 (N.I. 1); Article 5 was substituted by Schedule 1 to S.I. 1991/197 (N.I. 3) and paragraph 3 was amended by paragraph 3 of Schedule 3 to S.I. 1996/1320 (N.I. 10) and Article 44(1) of S.I. 2007/916 (N.I. 10) and paragraph (4A) is inserted by Article 16(2)(b) of 2016 c. 11 (N.I. 1); Articles 5A and 13B are inserted by Article 17(2) and 17(3) of 2016 c. 11 (N.I. 1) respectively; Article 19C was inserted by Schedule 1 to S.I. 1991/197 (N.I. 3) and paragraph (1) was substituted by paragraph 8 of Schedule 3 to S.I. 1996/1320 (N.I. 10)

(**c**) *See* Article 8(1)(b) of, and Part 2 of Schedule 5 to, the Departments (Transfer of Functions) Order (Northern Ireland) 2016 (S.R. 2016 No. 76)

(**d**) S.R. 1996 No. 542; relevant amending Regulations are S.R. 2003 No. 371, S.R. 2003 No. 516, S.R. 2008 No. 418, S.R. 2009 No. 14, S.R. 2011 No. 21, S.R 2012 No. 170, S.R. 2012 No. 451, S.R. 2015 No. 6, S.R. 2015 No. 357, S.R. 2016 No. 135

(**e**) Paragraph (1) was amended by S.R. 2008 No. 418, regulation 3(2)

"**Exemption from the requirements of Article 5(2ZA) of the Order**

21A.—(1) A person is exempt from the requirements of Article 5(2ZA) of the Order if at the time of making an application under regulation 21(1) he is entitled to claim carer's allowance(**a**).

(2) A person who is exempt under paragraph (1) and who wishes to take a practical test to be conducted by an examiner shall, in addition to the requirements in regulation 21(1), provide proof of entitlement to claim carer's allowance issued no more than 6 months prior to the date of application.".

(4) In regulation 27 (further requirements at tests)—

(a) in paragraph (7)(**b**) for the definition of "appropriate licence" substitute—

""appropriate licence" means a licence, other than an excepted provisional licence, which—

(a) is valid at the date of the test;

(b) bears the signature of the person who has submitted himself for the test; and

(c) is either—

(i) a provisional licence authorising the person submitting himself for the test to drive motor vehicles of the same class as the vehicle which he has provided for the test,

(ii) a full licence which by virtue of Article14(2) of the Order and regulation 14, authorises that person to drive motor vehicles of that class subject to the same conditions as if he were so authorised by a provisional licence,

(iii) a Great Britain licence corresponding to either of those licences, except in the case where the test is to be conducted in respect of a category B motor vehicle or a category A, A1 or A2 motor bicycle, and that test is not required by virtue of—

(aa) an order made under Article 41 of the Offenders Order (or section 36 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988); or

(bb) Article 6 of, or paragraph 6 or 9 of Schedule 1 to, the Road Traffic (New Drivers) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (or section 4 of, or paragraph 6 or 9 of Schedule 1 to, the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995), or

(iv) a Community licence, which by virtue of Article 42(5) of the Offenders Order, authorises that person to drive motor vehicles of that class subject to the same conditions as if the person were so authorised by a provisional licence; and".

(5) After Part IVA(**c**) insert—

(**a**) 1992 c. 7; *see* section 70 for the definition of "carer's allowance"; section 70 was amended by regulation 2(a) of The Deregulation (Carer's Allowance) Order (Northern Ireland) 2002 (S.R. 2002 No. 321), which substituted the words "carer's allowance" for "invalid care allowance".

(**b**) Paragraph (7) was amended by S.R. 2016 No. 135, regulation 3(2)

(**c**) Part IVA was inserted by S.R. 2011 No. 21, regulation 2(9)

"PART IVB

APPROVED PROGRAMMES OF TRAINING FOR DRIVERS OF CATEGORY B MOTOR VEHICLES OR MOTOR BICYCLES

Content of approved programmes of training

47I.—(1) For the purposes of Article 13(B)(1)(a)(**a**) of the Order the approved programme of training shall consist of—

(a) in the case of motor bicycles, the matters specified in Part 1 of Schedule 10C; and

(b) in the case of category B motor vehicles, the matters specified in Part 2 of Schedule 10C.

(2) To successfully complete the approved programme of training a person must—

(a) in the case of motor bicycles, complete the modules specified in Part 1 of Schedule 10C unless that module is optional;

(b) in the case of category B motor vehicles, complete the modules specified in Part 2 of Schedule 10C unless that module is optional;

(c) record the completion of each of the modules mentioned in sub-paragraph (a) or (b), as the case may be, in a logbook; and

(d) on completion of the relevant approved programme of training ensure that, as evidence of completion, the logbook is signed by an appropriate person in accordance with Article 19D(1ZA)(ii) of the Order.

Logbooks

47J.—(1) A logbook shall remain valid for a period of 2 years from the date on which it was signed by an appropriate person in accordance with Article 19D(1ZA)(ii) of the Order.

(2) The Department shall refuse to accept a logbook if, at the time it is produced to the Department under Article 5A(1) of the Order it is not valid.

Exemption from the need to produce a logbook

47K.—(1) Article 5A(1) of the Order shall not apply to a person who is required to pass a test of competence to drive by virtue of—

(a) an order under Article 41 of the Offenders Order (or section 36 of the Road Traffic Offenders Act 1988); or

(b) Article 6 of, or paragraph 6 or 9 of Schedule 1 to, the Road Traffic (New Drivers) (Northern Ireland) Order 1998 (or section 4 of, or paragraph 6 or 9 to Schedule 1 to, the Road Traffic (New Drivers) Act 1995).

(2) A person wishing to obtain a licence authorising him to drive a category A motor bicycle is exempt from the requirement to produce a logbook under Article 5A(1) of the Order if—

(a) before 1st October 2026 that person held, for a period of not less than two years, a full licence authorising him to drive a category A1 or A2 motor bicycle; or

(b) after 1st October 2026 that person successfully completes the approved programme of training for motor bicycles and obtains a licence authorising him to drive a category A1 or A2 motor bicycle.

(3) A person wishing to obtain a licence authorising him to drive a category A2 motor bicycle is exempt from the requirement to produce a logbook under Article 5A(1) of the Order if—

(**a**) Article 13B is inserted by Article 17(3) of 2016 (c. 11) (N.I. 1)

(a) before 1st October 2026 that person held, for a period of not less than two years, a full licence authorising him to drive a category A1 motor bicycle; or

(b) after 1st October 2026 that person successfully completes the approved programme for motor bicycles and obtains a licence authorising him to drive a category A1 motor bicycle.

Charge in connection with approved programmes of training and logbooks

47L.—(1) For the purposes of Articles 5A(1) and 13B(1) of the Order the Department shall make available the approved programmes of training and logbook.

(2) In accordance with Articles 5A(8) and 13B(2)(d) of the Order there shall be a charge of £17 for access to the relevant approved programme of training and logbook.".

(6) In Schedule 7(**a**) (specified requirements for practical and unitary test)—

(a) in Part 1(**b**) in paragraph A (eyesight), after "daylight" insert "or artificial light";

(b) in Part 2 in paragraph A (eyesight), after "daylight" insert "or artificial light"; and

(c) after Part 4, insert the Parts set out in Schedule 1.

(7) After Schedule 10B(**c**) insert Schedule 10C as set out in the Schedule 2 to these Regulations.

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Infrastructure on 30th June 2026

L.S.

Chris Hughes
A senior officer of the
Department for Infrastructure

(**a**) Schedule 7 was substituted by S.R. 2003 No. 371, regulation 2(3)
(**b**) Part 1 was amended by S.R. 2012 No. 170, regulation 3(32)
(**c**) Schedule 10B was inserted by S.R. 2011 No. 21, regulation 2(11)

SCHEDULE 1

Regulation 2(6)(c)

"PART 5

Unitary Test: Categories F, G, H and K

A. Eyesight

Read in good daylight or artificial light (with the aid of corrective lenses if worn) a registration mark fixed to a motor vehicle—

(a) where the registration mark contains letters and figures 79 millimetres high and 57 millimetres wide, the test shall be conducted at a distance of—

(i) in the case of a unitary test conducted in respect of a vehicle included in category K, 12.3 metres; and

(ii) in any other case, 20.5 metres;

(b) where the registration mark contains letters and figures 79 millimetres high and 50 millimetres wide, the test shall be conducted at a distance of—

(i) in the case of a unitary test in respect of a vehicle included in category K, 12 metres; and

(ii) in any other case, 20 metres.

B. Technical control of the vehicle

1. Start the engine of the vehicle.

2. Move away straight ahead or at an angle.

3. Turn right-hand and left- hand corners correctly.

4. Stop the vehicle in an emergency and normally and, in the latter case, bring it to a rest in an appropriate part of the road.

C. Behaviour in traffic

Overtake, meet or cross the path of other vehicles and take an appropriate course.

D. Vehicle safety checks

1. Describe how to perform a check on the condition and safety of one component of the vehicle in which the test is being conducted, chosen at the discretion of the person conducting the test, from the list of components specified in paragraph 3, and conduct an actual check on the condition and safety of a second component, similarly chosen from the list.

2. In the case of a disabled driver the requirements specified in paragraph (1) may be carried out by oral examination.

3. The list of components is as follows: tyres, steering, brakes, lights, reflectors, direction indicators, audible warning device, the power-assisted braking and steering systems, wheels, wheel nuts, mudguards, tracks, windscreen, windows and wipers, the air pressure in the braking system, air tanks for the braking system, the suspension and the liquids used in the braking system, steering system, engine or elsewhere in the vehicle as a coolant, lubricant, cleaner or otherwise.

E. Road Safety

In the case of categories F and K be fully conversant with the contents of the Highway code.

PART 6

Unitary Test: Categories F and G

1. Carry out manoeuvres involving the use of reverse gear (except in a case where the vehicle is not fitted with a means of reversing).

2. Indicate intended actions at appropriate times by giving appropriate signals in a clear and unmistakable manner.

3. Act correctly and promptly on all signals given by traffic signs and traffic controllers and take appropriate action in relation to signs given by other road users.

PART 7

Unitary Test: Category H

1. Indicate intended actions at appropriate times by giving appropriate signals in a clear and unmistakable manner.

In the case of a test taken on a vehicle with a left-hand drive or by a disabled person for whom it is impracticable or undesirable to give signals by arm, there shall be no requirement to give signals which cannot be given by mechanical means.

2. Act correctly and promptly on all signals given by traffic signs and traffic controllers and take appropriate action in relation to signs given by other road users.

3. Drive the vehicle backwards and cause it to face in the opposite direction by means of its tracks."

SCHEDULE 2

Regulation 2(7)

"SCHEDULE 10C

Regulation 47I(1)

Specified matters for the Programmes of Training

PART 1

MOTOR BICYCLES

1. Module 1 – The rider

2. Module 2 – Risk and hazard awareness

3. Module 3 – Riding on the road

4. Module 4 – Road sharing

5. Module 5 – Vulnerable and other road users

6. Module 6 – Speed awareness

7. Module 7 – All weather riding

8. Module 8 – Night time riding

9. Module 9 – Rider distraction and motorcycle technology

10. Module 10 – Eco-safe riding and the environment

11. Module 11 – Motorway riding (optional module)

PART 2

CATEGORY B MOTOR VEHICLES

1. Module 1 – The driver

2. Module 2 – The vehicle

3. Module 3 – The law

4. Module 4 – Risk and hazard awareness

5. Module 5 – Controls and checks

6. Module 6 – Driving on the road

7. Module 7 – Road sharing

8. Module 8 – Vulnerable and other road users

9. Module 9 – Speed awareness

10. Module 10 – Manoeuvring your vehicle

11. Module 11 – Driving in adverse weather

12. Module 12 – Night time driving

13. Module 13 – Driver distraction and in-car technology

14. Module 14 – Eco-safe driving and the environment

15. Module 15 – Motorway driving (optional module)”

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations amend the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 in order to facilitate the introduction of Graduated Driver Licensing and to introduce changes resulting from a review of the driving test.

Graduated Driver Licensing ("GDL") is designed to provide new drivers and riders with experience and skills over time and in low-risk environments. It will apply to learners and newly qualified drivers for category B motor vehicles (cars and light goods vehicles) and category A, A1 and A2 motor bicycles.

Regulation 2(2) and (3) provide for the exemption of certain people from the need to have held a provisional licence for not less than 6 months immediately before the date on which they are to take the practical test of competence to drive a category B motor vehicle.

Regulation 2(4) amends the definition of an "appropriate licence" to ensure that those holding a provisional licence issued in Great Britain (with a few exceptions) have no entitlement to be tested for category B motor vehicles or category A, A1 and A2 motor bicycles without completing the appropriate GDL process.

Regulation 2(5) provides for the introduction of the approved programmes of training and sets out what a person must do in order to complete the relevant programme of training. It also sets out the charge associated with obtaining the logbook which must be used to record the completion of the relevant approved programmes of training.

Regulation 2(5) further provides for exemptions from the need to complete a logbook in certain circumstances and sets out the period of validity of a logbook.

As a result of a GDL related review of the driving test, regulation 2(6) amends Parts 1, 2 and 5 of Schedule 7 to allow for the eyesight check to be carried out under artificial light although in practice that option will not be implemented immediately. It also reinserts Parts 5 to 7 of Schedule 7 which were previously omitted in error.

Regulation 2(7) inserts a new Schedule 10C which sets out the content of the relevant programmes of training.

An Explanatory Memorandum has been produced and is available from Driving, Vehicle and Road Safety Policy Division, Department for Infrastructure, 3rd Floor James House, 2-4 Cromac Avenue, Belfast BT7 2JA or online alongside this Statutory Rule at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr

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