STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 126

ROAD TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES

The Motor Vehicles (Specified Restrictions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Laid before the Assembly in draft

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 19AB(3), (5) and (11), 214(1) and 218(1) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981(**b**) and now vested in it(**c**).

Citation and commencement

1. These Regulations may be cited as the Motor Vehicles (Specified Restrictions) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and shall come into operation on 1st October 2026.

Amendment of the Motor Vehicles (Specified Restrictions) Regulations

2.—(1) The Motor Vehicles (Specified Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998(**d**) are amended in accordance with paragraphs (2) to (5).

(2) In regulation 2 (restrictions on drivers) for "Article 19A(1) and (3)" substitute "Article 19AB(3)".

(3) In regulation 3 (distinguishing mark) for "Article 19A(5)(a)" substitute "Article 19AB(5)(a)".

(4) For regulation 4 (non-application of Article 19A of the 1981 Order) substitute—

(**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 is dissolved

(**b**) S.I. 1981/154 (N.I. 1); Article 19AB was substituted by section 19(3) of 2016 c.11 (N.I.)

(**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. 1998 No. 380

"Non-application of Article 19AB(5) of the 1981 Order

4.—(1) Article 19AB(5) of the 1981 Order does not apply to—

(a) any person while driving a motor vehicle the maximum speed of which is restricted by the Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1989(**a**) to 45 miles per hour or less; or

(b) the holder of a driving licence granted under the 1981 Order by reason of a test of competence passed by him at a time when he held a licence or permit which, by virtue of an order made under the Motor Vehicles (International Circulation) Act 1952(**b**), entitled him to drive motor vehicles in Northern Ireland.

(2) Article 19AB(5)(a) of the 1981 Order does not apply to—

(a) any member of the Naval, Military or Air Forces of His Majesty, while in uniform and driving a motor vehicle which is the property of the Crown; or

(b) any member of the Police Service of Northern Ireland while driving a motor vehicle which is being used for police purposes.".

(5) For the Schedule (diagram of distinguishing mark to be displayed) substitute the Schedule set out in the Schedule 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**) S.R. 1989 No. 203
(**b**) 1952 c. 39

SCHEDULE Regulation 2(5)

“SCHEDULE Regulation 3

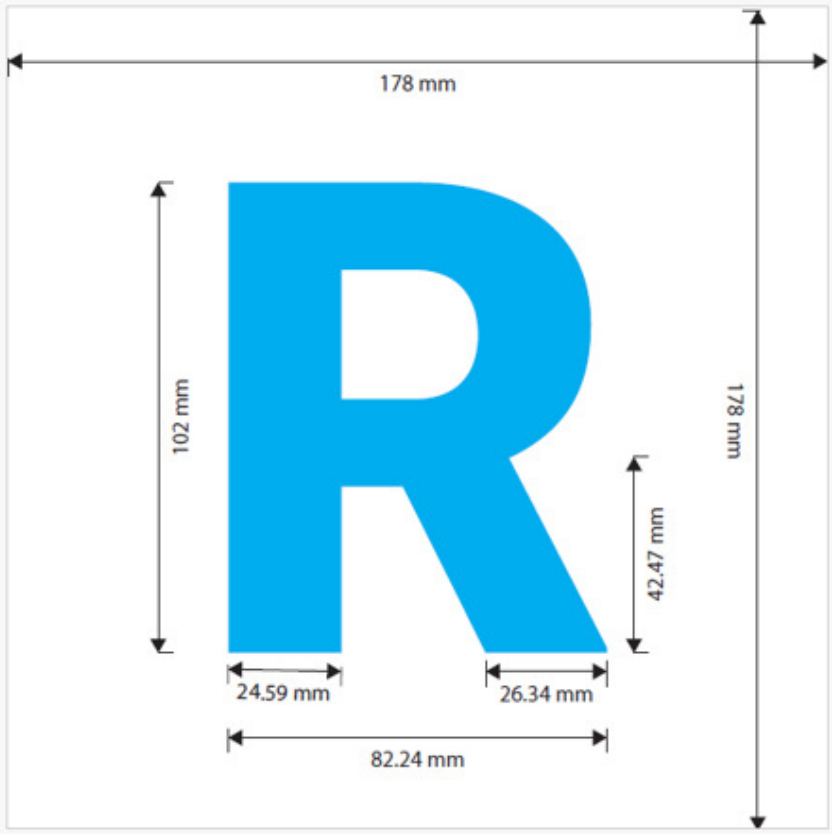
Restrictions for new driver period

PART 1

Diagram of distinguishing mark to be displayed during the first 6 months of the new driver period

Blue R on White Background

Colour: Cyan, White; **Font**: Roboto

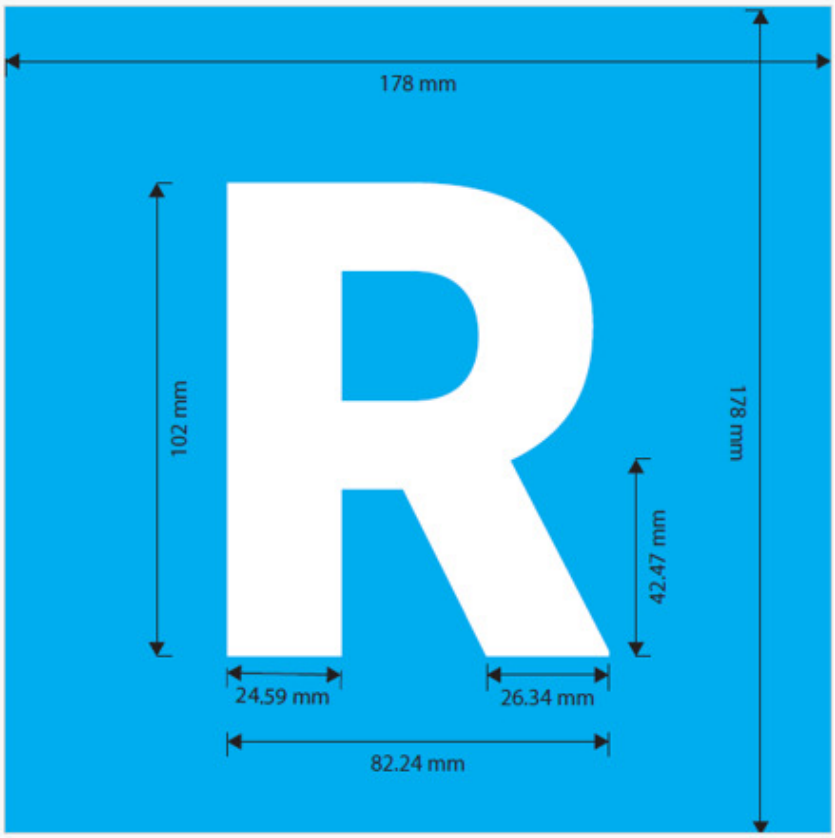


PART 2

Diagram of distinguishing mark to be displayed during the remaining 18 months of the new driver period

White R on Blue Background

Colour: White, Cyan; **Font**: Roboto



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EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Regulations)

These Regulations make amendments to the Motor Vehicles (Specified Restrictions) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998 ("1998 Regulations") as a consequence of the introduction on 1st October 2026 of Graduated Driver Licensing in Northern Ireland.

The Regulations update references in regulations 2 and 3 of the 1998 Regulations to reflect the introduction of revised restrictions for newly qualified drivers of categories A and B vehicles.

The Regulations also make consequential amendments to regulation 4 of the 1998 Regulations so that the non-application of both GDL Specified Restrictions, ie GDL "R" plates and passenger restrictions, apply to the same group of drivers and in the same circumstances as the non-application of the superseded Specified Restrictions applied, ie the amber "R" plates and 45mph speed limit. While regulation 4(2) does not cover the non-application of passenger restrictions to the drivers provided for, that non-application is covered by Article 19AB(7) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981. References to "Her Majesty" and to "Royal Ulster Constabulary" in regulation 4 have been updated to read "His Majesty" and "Police Service of Northern Ireland".

In addition, the Schedule to these Regulations substitutes new two stage post-test "R" plates for the amber "R" plate outlined in the Schedule to the 1998 Regulations.

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

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