STATUTORY RULES OF NORTHERN IRELAND

2026 No. 143

ROAD TRAFFIC AND VEHICLES

The Motorways Traffic (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026

Made - - - -	*8th July 2026*
Coming into operation- -	*1st October 2026*

The Department for Infrastructure(**a**) makes the following regulations in exercise of the powers conferred by Article 20(3) of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993(**b**) and now vested in it(**c**).

Citation and commencement

1. These regulations may be cited as The Motorways Traffic (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2026 and shall come into operation on 1st October 2026.

Amendment of the Motorways Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008

2. The Motorways Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008(**d**) are amended in accordance with regulations 3 and 4.

3. For regulation 1(2) substitute the following—

"(2) In these regulations—

"approved driving instructor" and "approved motorcycle instructor" means a person whose name is entered in the register established by Article 48(8) of The Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 2007(e);

"bus" means a motor vehicle constructed or adapted to carry more than 28 seated passengers (exclusive of the driver);

"bus lane" means the area of hard shoulder of a length of motorway specified in Schedules 1 and 2;

"central reservation" means that part of a motorway other than the hard shoulder which separates the carriageway used by vehicles travelling in one direction from the carriageway used by vehicles travelling in the opposite direction;

"certificate" means a document issued to an approved driving instructor or approved motorcycle instructor as evidence of registration as shown in Part 1 and Schedule 5 of The Motor Vehicles (Driving Instruction) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010(**f**);

(**a**) Formerly the Department for Regional Development; see section 1(6) and (11), and Schedule 1 to, the Departments Act (Northern Ireland) 2010 (2016 c. 5 (N.I.)). Pursuant to section 1(9) of that Act, the Department of the Environment is dissolved.
(**b**) S.I. 1993/3160 (N.I. 15)
(**c**) S.R. 1999 No. 481 Article 6(d) and Schedule 4 Part IV
(**d**) S.R. 2008 No. 135
(**e**) S.I. 2007/916 (N.I. 10) as amended by S.R. 2017 No. 117
(**f**) S.R 2010 No. 227

"excluded traffic" means traffic which is not traffic of Classes I or II in Schedule 1 to the Order;

"hard shoulder" means a part of the motorway adjacent to the carriageway designed to take the weight of a vehicle;

"motorway" means a road designated as a special road under Article 15 of the Order or under any statutory provision repealed by the Order and includes trunk roads to which Part III of the Order applies by virtue of paragraph 4 of Schedule 9 to the Order;

"the Order" means the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993;

"traffic sign" has the meaning assigned to it by Article 28 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997(**a**);

"verge" means any part of a motorway which is not a carriageway, a hard shoulder, or a central reservation; and

"weekday" means a day which is neither a Saturday nor a Sunday.".

4. For regulation 11 (vehicles not to be driven by learner drivers) substitute the following—

"**Vehicles driven by learner drivers**

11.—(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) and (3), a person shall not drive on a motorway a motor vehicle—

(a) in category AM, A1, A2, A, B, P or Q; or

(b) in sub-category C1 or D1 (not for hire or reward) if the provisional licence held by the person driving the vehicle was in force at a time before 1st January 1997,

if that person is authorised to drive that vehicle only by virtue of being the holder of a provisional licence.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply in relation to a vehicle if the holder of the provisional licence—

(a) has passed a test of competence prescribed under Article 5(3) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981(**b**) for the grant of a licence to drive that vehicle; or

(b) is in a vehicle in category B and is accompanied by an Approved Driving Instructor as defined in The Motor Vehicles (Driving Instruction) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010(**c**); or

(c) is on a vehicle in category A, A2 or A1 and is accompanied by an Approved Motorcycle Instructor, as defined in The Motor Vehicles (Driving Instruction) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2010, who, notwithstanding regulation 12(5A)(c) of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996(**d**), is supervising only the holder of the provisional licence and no other person.

(3) Paragraphs (2)(b) and (2)(c) shall not apply to the driver of a vehicle in category A1 or B until 1st April 2027 where—

(a) that person is authorised to drive that vehicle only by virtue of being the holder of a provisional licence; and

(b) the provisional licence was in force before 1st October 2026.

(4) In this regulation—

(a) the expression "in force" and expressions relating to vehicle categories shall be construed in accordance with regulations 2(2) and 3(2) respectively of the Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996; and

---

(**a**) S.I. 1997/276 (N.I. 2)
(**b**) S.I. 1981/154 (N.I. 1); Articles 5(3), 13(3) and 14(2) were substituted by Schedule 1 to S.I. 1991/197 (N.I. 3)
(**c**) S.R. 2010 No. 227 as amended by S.R. 2010 No. 367
(**d**) S.R. 1996 No. 542 as amended by S.R. 2011 No. 21 and S.R. 2012 No. 170

(b) "provisional licence", in relation to any vehicle, means a licence—

(i) granted under Article 13(3) of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981; or

(ii) which authorises its holder by virtue of Article 14(2) of that Order to drive all other classes of motor vehicle."

Sealed with the Official Seal of the Department for Infrastructure on 8th July 2026

(L.S.)

Liam McEvoy
A senior officer of the Department for Infrastructure

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

These Regulations amend The Motorways Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 to allow learner drivers and learner motorcyclists to learn on motorways under the instruction of an approved instructor.

The statutory rule also carves out provisions deferring motorway eligibility for certain existing provisional licence holders who held provisional licences prior to 1st October 2026 until 1st April 2027.

© Crown copyright 2026

Printed and published in the UK by The Stationery Office Limited under the authority and superintendence of Saul Nassé, Controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office being the Government Printer for Northern Ireland and the Officer appointed to print Acts of the Northern Ireland Assembly.

£6.40

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/id/nisr/2026/143

ISBN 978-0-33-802676-7

9 780338 026767