



# licences

## WHO'S YOUR SOBER BOB?

Sober Bob is someone willing to get you home safely: a mate, bus driver, taxi driver, mum, brother, girlfriend or uncle. Sober Bob is about planning how you get home before you go out. **Remember to ask yourself, 'Who's Your Sober Bob?'**

Your responsibilities are clearly stated throughout this handbook, and it is expected that you will use any vehicle that you operate with safety, efficiency, courtesy and common sense at all times.

Having a driver's licence will increase your opportunities for employment and recreational activities and can also give you independence. However, do not forget that it will also bring increased responsibilities. If you lose your licence by failing to meet your responsibilities, the consequences could be serious and many opportunities will disappear.

## Obligations of licence holders

Think of your licence as a 'contract' or an agreement between you as a driver and the rest of the community. The Motor Vehicle Registry and the Northern Territory Police administer this contract.

Your licence is also an important identity document and should be kept safe at all times. Do not abuse your licence or allow it to be misused. There are heavy fines if you fraudulently alter or use a licence, if you lend a licence to another person, or if you allow a licence to be used by another person.

Northern Territory roads are provided for drivers to use if they meet certain conditions.

Drivers must:

- show that they understand the road rules, most of which are written in this handbook in plain English

- show the skills necessary to drive safely
- obey the laws and drive responsibly
- pay a licence fee, which goes towards the administration of the licensing system
- show that they understand the community's concerns to reduce the impact of traffic on the environment and to use the road system efficiently.

The contract between you as a driver and the community can be broken by traffic offences that cause inconvenience, costs or suffering to others. These offences carry penalties such as fines, licence cancellation, disqualification or suspension. In extreme cases, the offence could lead to a prison sentence.

## The licensing system

The Northern Territory licensing system helps to make travel on our roads safer for all road users. It provides rules and conditions for licence holders and penalties for drivers who do not meet their responsibilities. The licensing system also ensures that licence holders have the required knowledge and skills to safely operate the vehicle they are licensed to drive or ride.

To drive on public roads in the NT you must be licensed and have the correct licence class for the type of vehicle you are driving.

To legally drive on public roads in the NT:

- you must have the right class of licence for the vehicle
- you must hold a current NT licence if you are an NT resident
- you must hold a current interstate licence if you are visiting from interstate
- if you are visiting from overseas, you must hold a current licence from your country, and if your licence is not in English you must also carry an International Driving Permit or an official English translation of your overseas licence.

You cannot drive on public roads in the NT if you have:

- a licence that is expired
- a licence that has been cancelled or suspended
- had your driving privileges withdrawn in the Northern Territory
- been disqualified from driving by a court of law in Australia or overseas.

**Heavy penalties apply for driving a vehicle without a licence.**

**If you have been in the NT for more than three months and wish to continue to drive, you must apply for an NT licence.**

#### **When your licence is checked**

Police can check your licence at any time, and they will also check that you have the correct licence when:

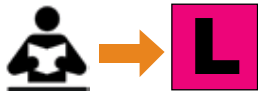
- you are involved in a crash, whether you were at fault or not
- you have been stopped because you committed a traffic offence
- you have been stopped for a random breath test either by a stationary breath testing unit or by a mobile breath testing unit.

#### **C class graduated licensing scheme**

The Northern Territory has a graduated licensing scheme for new drivers. The scheme prepares inexperienced drivers for a lifetime of safe and efficient driving.

New drivers are required to pass both the learner and provisional licence testing stages before obtaining a full licence.

A new driver will progress through four stages to obtain a full licence.

**Stage 1**

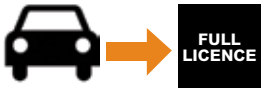
Pass the driver knowledge test to obtain a learner licence.

**Stage 2**

Practice driving, with supervision, for a minimum of six consecutive months.

**Stage 3**

Pass the driving test to obtain a provisional licence.

**Stage 4**

If you are under 25 years old, you will need to hold your provisional licence for at least two years before you can upgrade to a full licence. If you are 25 or older, your provisional licence needs to be held for at least one year.

If your licence is suspended or cancelled during your provisional period, you will need to spend a longer time with a provisional licence once your suspension is lifted, or you will need to start the provisional period again if your provisional licence is cancelled.

At the end of your provisional period you can apply for a full licence. Phone the MVR call centre on 1300 654 628 or renew your licence online using MVR Quick Pay at [www.mvr.nt.gov.au](http://www.mvr.nt.gov.au)

Remember that learning to drive well requires lots of experience that will only come with time and lots of practice in different driving situations and conditions.

Use every time you drive as an opportunity to learn, and try to continue practicing with an experienced driver as often as you can.

**Licence classes**

The NT has different licence classes for the various types of motor vehicles that use Northern Territory roads.

To be allowed to drive or ride you must hold the correct licence class for that vehicle.

The list below shows the type of vehicle you can drive under each class of licence.

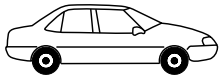
**Rider (R)**

- Any motorcycle or motor tricycle.

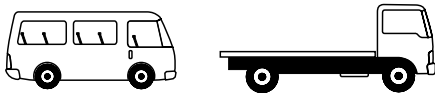


**Car (C)**

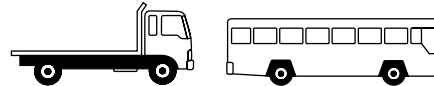
- A vehicle that is no more than 4.5t Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM), capable of carrying up to 12 people, including the driver.
- Holders of a C class licence may also drive some civil construction and agricultural vehicles.

**Light Rigid (LR)**

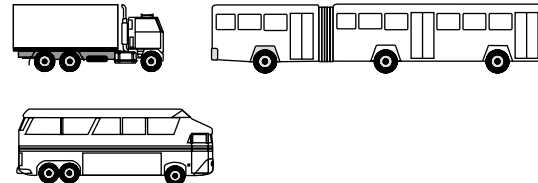
- A vehicle that is more than 4.5t (GVM) but no more than 8t (GVM).
- A vehicle capable of carrying more than 12 people, including the driver.
- Can tow a trailer of no more than 9t (GVM).
- Holders of an LR class licence can also drive any vehicle allowed by a C class licence.

**Medium Rigid (MR)**

- A vehicle that has two axles and is more than 8t (GVM).
- Can tow a trailer of no more than 9t (GVM).
- Holders of an MR class licence can also drive any vehicle allowed by an LR or C class licence.

**Heavy Rigid (HR)**

- A rigid vehicle that has three or more axles, more than 8t (GVM).
- Can tow a trailer of no more than 9t (GVM).
- Can drive articulated buses.
- Holders of an HR class licence can also drive any vehicle allowed by an MR, LR or C class licence.



### Heavy Combination (HC)

- A prime mover attached to a semi-trailer (plus any unladen converter dolly).
- A rigid vehicle towing a trailer of more than 9t (GVM).
- Holders of an HC class licence can also drive any vehicle allowed by a HR, MR, LR or C class licence.



### Multi Combination (MC)

- Any B-double or road train.
- Holders of an MC class licence can also drive any vehicle allowed by a HC, HR, MR, LR or C class licence.



## Medical fitness to hold a licence

All drivers and riders must be medically fit to drive a motor vehicle and are subject to personal and legal responsibilities and liabilities.

In reality, very few conditions prevent the issuing of a driver licence.

Northern Territory laws require all drivers or intending drivers to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles if they have any medical condition (including disability, mental illness or eyesight) that could affect their ability to safely and legally drive motor vehicles. Health professionals are also required to notify the Registrar if they believe a patient's medical condition could affect their ability to drive a motor vehicle.

The MVR is responsible for issuing, renewing, suspending or cancelling a person's licence (including a conditional licence), and decisions are based on a full consideration of relevant factors relating to health and driving performance.

If you have any questions about medical fitness to hold a licence, please contact the MVR on **1300 654 628** or consult your health professional for advice.

**A medical condition does not necessarily mean that you cannot be licensed.**

### Drivers with medical conditions

When you apply for a licence, you must state whether your medical condition could affect your driving. Depending on the condition, you may need to have an assessment of your 'fitness to drive' carried out by a health professional.

Certain medical conditions could require that you complete an on-road driving assessment with an Occupational Therapist who will assess your ability to drive in relation to your medical condition.

Many drivers with medical conditions find that they are allowed to drive, with conditions applied. For example, it is quite common for some drivers' licences to have a condition that they must wear glasses while driving or that they can only drive automatic vehicles.

### Driving and dementia

The gradual and permanent loss of mental functions caused by dementia will, over time, reduce a driver's ability to drive safely. In the early stages of this condition, doctors, family and friends should discuss alternative methods of transport for drivers showing signs of dementia.

Each person with dementia will have a different pattern and timing of their reduced ability to drive as their condition progresses, and some people may not need to stop driving immediately. Individual assessment and regular review are important, even though it is difficult to predict the point at which a person will no longer be capable of driving safely.

### Organ donation

The place to register your intention to be an organ donor is the Australian Organ Donor Register (AODR).

Organ donor information brochures are available at MVR outlets or from Medicare offices. You can also register online at [www.medicareaustralia.com.au](http://www.medicareaustralia.com.au) or call **1800 777 203** for a registration brochure.

If you would like more information before making your choice, please contact Donate Life NT (the organ donation agency for the Northern Territory) at [www.donatelife.gov.au](http://www.donatelife.gov.au) or phone **08 8922 8349**.

### How to obtain a class C learner licence

To obtain a class C learner licence in the NT you can either:

- pass a Driver Knowledge Test (DKT) at an MVR outlet
- enrol in the DriveSafe NT program (if you are between 16 and 25)
- complete another program approved by the MVR.

### Applying for a learner licence

You will need to lodge an application for a learner licence (Form L1) and satisfy the Evidence of Identity and Evidence of Residency (EOI and EOR) requirements before attempting a Driver Knowledge Test for the first time.

To apply for a learner licence you must:

- be at least 16 years of age
- provide evidence of your identity (prove who you are)
- provide evidence of your residency (prove that you live in the NT)
- pass an eyesight test
- complete all the relevant sections and any additional requirements of the application form (Form L1).

Details of the evidence of identity and residency requirements can be found at any MVR office or on the website at [www.mvr.nt.gov.au](http://www.mvr.nt.gov.au)

Once you have submitted your application for a learner licence and had your photo taken, these details will be recorded in the MVR database.

### **Driver Knowledge Test**

The first step to getting a class C learner licence is passing a Driver Knowledge Test (DKT).

You can attempt a DKT at MVR outlets in urban areas and police stations in remote communities. If you have enrolled in the DriveSafe NT program or another MVR-approved course, your DKT will be completed during that course.

To prepare for the DKT you should study this handbook carefully; all the information you need to pass the test is covered in it.

You can test your knowledge of the road rules by taking the practice DKT on the website at [www.mvr.nt.gov.au](http://www.mvr.nt.gov.au)

When studying this guide, be careful not to skip any sections. All the information in this guide is relevant to you.

### **Where to go for the Driver Knowledge Test**

A DKT can be taken at any MVR office in urban areas or at police stations in remote locations.

A DKT can be started up to one hour before closing at most MVR offices. In remote locations, contact the police station to arrange a suitable time to take a DKT.

On the day you go for the DKT, you need to provide a completed Licence Application Form (Form L1) and show acceptable evidence of your identity and residency. If your identity documents do not meet MVR requirements, you cannot attempt the DKT.



### How the Driver Knowledge Test works

The DKT consists of 30 questions, randomly selected from a question bank of approximately 300.

During the test you are not allowed to:

- receive any assistance
- refer to any resource materials that would help you to pass the test (such as this handbook, other books, notes, websites, mobile phones etc)
- use a mobile phone or other communication device
- speak or signal to any other person (except the registry officer when necessary)
- leave the test area.

People caught cheating will fail the test immediately and be banned from taking another DKT for two weeks.

### Unsuccessful Driver Knowledge Test

If you do not pass the DKT, you can try again as many times as you need to in order to pass it. You cannot attempt the DKT more than once per day.

The next time you attempt a DKT you will be given a different set of questions to answer.

You should only re-attempt the test when you are ready. To check if you are ready, test your knowledge by taking the practice Driver Knowledge Test on the website at [www.mvr.nt.gov.au](http://www.mvr.nt.gov.au)

### Applicants requiring assistance

#### *Special needs*

If you have special needs, such as a physical or mental impairment, you or your representative should discuss your needs for taking the test with the MVR before booking a DKT. This allows time for the necessary arrangements to be made for you on the day of the test.

#### *Difficulty reading and writing English*

If you have difficulty reading or writing English, you can choose to attempt a verbal (spoken) test, with or without an interpreter. You can book a verbal test through any MVR outlet in urban areas or police station in remote areas.

An interpreting service is provided by Interpreting and Translating Service NT (ITSNT).

If you are not an Australian resident or citizen, you may need to pay a fee directly to ITSNT for this service.

Arrangements for verbal testing services can be made by calling **1300 654 628**.

### Approved training providers

An approved training provider is a person or organisation that has been approved by the MVR to deliver competency-based driver training programs for licensing purposes throughout the NT.

If the outcome of the approved training course is a licence, the training provider will issue you a Statement of Attainment or Certificate of Competency when you

successfully complete it. Bring this to an MVR office within 12 months of the date of issue and you will be issued a licence upon payment of the prescribed fee.

All driving instructors delivering training must be registered and are bound by the Conditions of Registration and the Code of Practice for Driving Instructors in the Northern Territory.

### **DriveSafe NT urban program (16 to 25 years only)**

DriveSafe NT is a driver education, training and licensing program for Territory drivers aged 16 to 25 years. The program is available in Darwin, Alice Springs and Katherine.

DriveSafe NT equips young people with an essential knowledge of the road rules and safe driving practices and attitudes. It also gives them access to professional driver training to help them get their licence and be safer on our roads.

You can enrol in the DriveSafe NT program at Motor Vehicle Registry offices in Darwin, Katherine and Alice Springs, or by downloading the enrolment form from [www.nt.gov.au/drivesafent](http://www.nt.gov.au/drivesafent). An enrolment fee applies.

Enrolment in the DriveSafe NT program gives participants various subsidies towards their driver licence, including:

- all course materials (including participant pack, background information and fact sheets)
- a minimum of nine hours classroom-based theory education

- licence and testing fees
- ten subsidised driving lesson e-vouchers to help with the cost of driving lessons
- First@Scene, St John Ambulance NT online first aid course
- incentives to support supervised driving practice
- access to online tools to track and manage their driver education.

DriveSafe NT has been designed so that all elements of the program can be completed over a six-month period in line with the current minimum learner licence holding period. However, participants can take up to two years to complete the program.

DriveSafe NT participants are encouraged to take their time and get as much driving practice as they can before continuing to their provisional licence and completing the program.

You can still enrol in DriveSafe NT if you already have your learner licence, but to take advantage of all the program's benefits, you must commit to at least five months in the program before you attempt to qualify for a provisional licence.

For more information about the DriveSafe NT program visit [www.nt.gov.au/drivesafent](http://www.nt.gov.au/drivesafent), call **1800 121 411** or email [drivesafent@nt.gov.au](mailto:drivesafent@nt.gov.au)

## Licence restrictions for class C learners

As well as complying with all road rules and traffic laws, there are some additional requirements for class C learner licence holders:

- **Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC/BrAC):** Your BAC/BrAC must be zero. This means you must not have any alcohol in your system when you drive a vehicle.
- **Demerit points:** Your licence will be suspended if you incur five (5) or more demerit points within 12 months.
- **Displaying L plates:** L plates must be clearly displayed on the front and back of the vehicle. If towing a trailer, an L plate must also be displayed on the back of the trailer.
- **Licence:** You must carry your learner licence at all times while driving.
- **Licence class:** You can only learn to drive the type of vehicle allowed by your licence class.
- **Mobile phone:** You must not use any function of a mobile phone while driving, including hands-free or loudspeaker options.
- **Seatbelts:** You must make sure all people in the vehicle are wearing seatbelts or approved restraints.

- **Speed limit:** You must not drive faster than 80 km/h at any time, regardless of the sign posted speed limit, and you must observe the speed limit where it is below 80 km/h.
- **Supervision:** A person who has a full Australian licence (not a learner or provisional licence or an overseas licence) must sit next to you at all times.

You are allowed to tow a trailer on a class C learner licence.

## Learning to drive

### Driving lessons

How you are taught to drive is extremely important. For that reason, some lessons with a professional driving instructor who is aware of modern driving practices and training techniques could be helpful.

All professional driving instructors in the NT that provide driver training in return for payment must be registered. Driving instructors are bound by the Conditions of Registration and the Code of Practice for Driving Instructors in the Northern Territory.

For your own peace of mind, important factors in selecting a driving instructor include making sure the instructor holds Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance and is fully qualified to provide the training you seek.

It is important that you find a driving instructor you are comfortable learning with. If for any reason you are not comfortable with your chosen driving instructor, you can change instructors.

### Supervised driving practice

While you are a learner driver, it is strongly recommended that you get as much supervised driving practice as possible before going out on the road solo.

Even if you are having professional driving lessons you will benefit from supervised driving between your lessons. Ask parents, relatives or friends who are fully licensed to take you out to practice each new driving skill. That way, you can maximise the benefits from each paid lesson and minimise the cost of getting your licence.

The supervising driver must obey the following rules at all times while the learner is driving the vehicle (including parking practice):

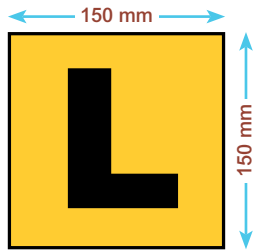
- hold a current full driver licence (not provisional)
- be seated immediately next to the learner
- fully supervise the learner and take responsibility for the learner's actions—the licensed driver is deemed to be the driver for most legal purposes

- professional driving instructors must have a blood/ breath alcohol concentration (BAC/BrAC) of zero
- fully licensed supervising drivers must have a BAC/ BrAC of lower than 0.05%.

Although there is no minimum number of supervised driving hours required before a learner can get their provisional licence in the NT, learners are encouraged to get as much practice as they can before moving on to driving unsupervised.

Learner drivers with 50 or more hours of supervised driving practice reduce their risk of crashing once they are on their Ps by about one third.

## L plate rules



L plates consist of a black letter 'L' against a yellow background. The minimum size for L plates is shown in the diagram.

L plates must be displayed and clearly visible on the **front and rear** of the vehicle (rear only for motorcycles).

If you are towing a trailer, an L plate must also be displayed on the back of the trailer.

The L plates must be easily seen by other road users and must not block or obscure the driver's view.

It is recommended that L plates are displayed vertically on the vehicle—not facing upwards on the bonnet or boot. Brackets for mounting L plates next to the number plate can be purchased at most automotive supply stores.

Roof-mounted L plates do not replace the L plates that must be displayed at the front and rear of the vehicle.

Where an L plate is displayed in the window of the vehicle, make sure that the angle of the window, any tinting or louvers on the window or anything on the outside of the vehicle (like spoilers or items in the tray of a ute) do not obscure other road users clear view of the L plate.

L plates must not be displayed when the driver of the vehicle is not a learner driver.



Appropriate placement of L plates on a car

## How to obtain a class C provisional licence

To obtain a class C provisional licence (your 'Ps') you must successfully complete a practical driving test. This is a formal assessment to confirm your driving ability meets the minimum requirements to drive unsupervised. The practical driving test is conducted by authorised examiners or MVR licence testing officers in urban areas or a police officer in remote areas.

Getting your provisional licence is based on your ability to demonstrate consistent low risk driving techniques and appropriate use of the 'system of vehicle control'. That means you must demonstrate:

- good observation skills
- good speed management
- good road positioning
- maintenance of good crash avoidance space to the front, rear and sides of the vehicle, including when stopped
- hazard perception skills
- certain low-speed manoeuvres

Further information about the driving test can be found in the 'Learner Drivers Guide' and 'A Guide to the Driving Test'. Both publications are available online at [www.mvr.nt.gov.au](http://www.mvr.nt.gov.au).

You must attempt your practical driving test at a location nearest to your usual place of residence. In special circumstances you can ask for an exemption from this requirement; for example, if you are studying or employed full time away from home.

To attempt a practical driving test you must have:

- held your learner licence for a continuous period of at least six months
- booked and paid for the test in advance
- your current NT learner licence with you
- a registered and roadworthy vehicle of the correct classification for the test.

**If either the driver or a passenger of the vehicle does not have a working seatbelt, the test cannot be conducted.**

## Licence restrictions for provisional class C drivers

In the Northern Territory, a provisional licence is for two years (one year if you are 25 or older).

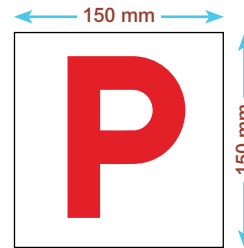
If at any time during your provisional period your licence is cancelled, the full provisional period starts all over again on reissue. If your provisional licence is suspended, the period of suspension will be added onto your provisional licence period.

In some cases, the courts could order an additional provisional period when the licence holder is convicted of certain traffic offences.

As well as complying with all road rules and traffic laws, there are additional conditions for provisional class C licence holders:

- **Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC/BrAC):** Your BAC must be zero. This means you must not have any alcohol in your system when you drive a vehicle.
- **Demerit points:** Your licence will be suspended if you incur five (5) or more demerit points within 12 months.
- **Displaying P plates:** P plates must be clearly displayed on the front and rear of the vehicle. The letter 'P' must not be hidden. If towing a trailer, a P plate must also be displayed on the back of the trailer.
- **Licence:** You must carry your provisional licence at all times while driving.
- **Mobile phone:** You must not use any function of a mobile phone or other communication device while driving, including hands-free or loudspeaker options.
- **Seatbelts:** You must make sure all people in the vehicle are wearing seatbelts or approved restraints.
- **Speed limit:** You must not drive faster than 100 km/h, regardless of the sign posted speed limit, and you must observe the speed where it is below 100 km/h.
- **Supervising a learner:** You must not supervise a learner driver.

### P plate rules



A P plate consists of a red letter 'P' against a white background. The minimum size for P plates is shown in the diagram.

P plates must be displayed and clearly visible at the **front and rear** of the vehicle (rear only for motorcycles).

The P plates must be easily seen by other road users and must not block or obstruct the driver's view.

It is recommended that P plates are displayed vertically on the vehicle—not facing upwards on the bonnet or boot. Brackets for mounting P plates next to the number plate can be purchased at most automotive supply stores.

Where a P plate is displayed in the window of the vehicle, make sure that the angle of the window, any tinting or louvers on the window or anything on the outside of the

You are allowed to tow a trailer when on a provisional licence.

For more information about how to obtain your class R motorcycle riders licence, you can also refer to the Motorcycle Riders' Handbook.

vehicle (like spoilers or items in the tray of a ute) do not obscure other road users clear view of the P plate.

If you are towing a trailer, a P plate must also be displayed on the back of the trailer.

P plates must not be displayed when the driver of the vehicle is not a provisional driver.



Appropriate placement of P Plates on a car

### If you pass your driving test in an automatic vehicle

If you pass your driving test in a vehicle with automatic transmission, you can only drive an automatic vehicle during the first 12 months of your provisional licence. You can drive a manual vehicle during this first 12 months if you are supervised by a full licence holder.

If you want to drive a manual vehicle unaccompanied before the 12-month period is up you must pass the driving test in a manual vehicle with a foot-operated clutch.

### Z BAC/BrAC (zero Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration) condition

After completing your provisional period, you must continue to observe the zero Blood/Breath Alcohol Concentration (BAC/BrAC) requirements for a further 12 months or until you turn 25, whichever is sooner.

### How to obtain a motorcycle class R riders licence

Applicants for a motorcycle riders learner licence can either choose to complete the METAL rider training program or attempt a Motorcycle Operator Skills Test (MOST) at selected MVR outlets.

The Motorcyclist Education Training and Licensing (METAL) program is a rider training program for people who want to get a motorcycle licence in the NT.

To book a place in a METAL course or to find out more about the program, contact an MVR office or visit the website at [www.mvr.nt.gov.au](http://www.mvr.nt.gov.au)