

Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy



Important2know

Before you have your first lesson, there are a few things you need to know and a few things you need to get done.

1 Get your provisional licence

If you are 17, or going to be soon and want to start taking Licence Module sessions, you'll need to apply for your Provisional Licence before you can legally go out on the road. It costs £50 from the DVLA. You can apply up to 3 months before your 17th birthday to make sure you have it in time to make the earliest possible start.

The easiest way to apply is online at direct.gov.uk where you'll also find information about applying for a licence, applying as soon as you turn 16 if you are disabled and legal information about driving in the UK with a foreign licence.

You can also apply by filling out a D1 form from your local Post Office (your local college might have a few in the student support area).

2 L plates (or D plates in Wales)

You won't be allowed to drive on public roads with a provisional licence without L plates, so if you're going to be practising between lessons in a parent's or friend's vehicle, you'll need a pair. They must be easily visible at the front and back of the car and they have to meet a legal

specification, so don't try to make them yourself. Your best bet is to buy magnetic ones that snap on and off the car easily. Most big supermarkets and specialist shops like Halfords will stock them.

3 Dressed and ready

When you come to your first lesson make sure you're wearing comfy clothes and practical shoes. Trainers are ideal. High-heels and flip-flops aren't! You need to be aware and alert, so don't have a big night out the day before. You can still be over the legal limit for alcohol the day after, so please make sure you're not. Let your driving coach know if you are unwell or taking medication, because some medicines can make you drowsy and unsafe to drive.

4 Eye tests

Before you start driving, it's important to make sure you can see clearly. The DVLA test for this is to check whether you can read a new-style number plate from 20 metres (that's about 5 car lengths). If you can't, you won't be allowed to drive. It's OK to be wearing your prescription glasses or contact lenses for your lessons and on your test. Just make sure you don't forget them.

5 Getting in some practice

Mercedes-Benz Driving Academy strongly recommends that you try to persuade a parent, guardian or family friend to take you out on the road for extra practise between sessions with your coach. After all, the more you practise, the better you'll get.

Legally, the person who accompanies you must be over 21 and have held a full EC/EAA car licence for at least 3 years. The good news is: if they're not a registered driving instructor, they're not allowed to charge you!

The car must be roadworthy, with a full MOT and fitted with L plates (D plates in Wales) and of course be correctly insured.

6 Mobile phones

It's illegal to use the phone while driving, it's also illegal for anyone who is supervising you whilst you're learning. So, if either of you need to send a text or make a call, pull the car over safely and switch the engine off first. Hands free kits are an option but can still be very distracting for new drivers, so it's still safer to pull over.

7 The theory test

Before you take the practical test, you'll need to pass the theory test. When you and your driving coach both think you're ready, you can book to take your theory test at your local test centre by clicking here to go to [direct.gov.uk/booktheorytest](https://www.direct.gov.uk/booktheorytest). Your theory test costs £31.

Here's how the two parts of the test work:

- **Hazard perception test**
You are shown 14 one-minute driving clips. In each clip there is at least one developing hazard. You must react in time by identifying it and clicking on it.
- **Multiple-choice Highway Code test**
You must answer at least 43 of the 50 questions correctly.
- You can get to grips with the Highway Code online here at [direct.gov.uk/en/TravelandTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm](https://www.direct.gov.uk/en/TravelandTransport/Highwaycode/index.htm)

8 Booking your practical test

You've completed your licence module sessions, your coach agrees you're ready and that you're a confident Purple Level driver and you've passed the theory test. Now, it's time to take the next step: booking your practical test.

You can book online at DirectGov here

(www.direct.gov.uk/en/Motoring/LearnerAndNewDrivers/PracticalTest/index.htm)

The test will cost between £62 and £75 depending on when you take it, and there will also be the cost of booking your driving coach and the car for the time before, during and after the test. The test isn't just about your driving and your eyesight: your examiner will also ask you a few questions about car safety and maintenance. For example, they might ask you how you'd check your headlights are working, or they might ask you to demonstrate how to check if your indicators are working correctly.

You need to listen to these questions carefully and be ready to answer or demonstrate your response correctly. Not knowing can mean you get a minor mark against you.