

## **How Do I Get a Driving Permit in California?**

*Costs, Time, Age Requirements, and More*

Getting your driving permit is exciting. Whether it's you or your teen making the big step, there are a few things you should know before legally getting behind the wheel. The application process of getting a driving permit can be intimidating—from knowledge tests to paying fees, there's a lot you should know before heading over to the DMV.

If you're wondering how to get a driver's permit in California, then follow this in-depth guide to learn about the California driving permit rules, age requirements, costs, time, and other factors associated with this process.

### **How to Get a California Driving Permit – Rules & More**

#### **California Driver's Permit Age Requirements**

In order to get a driving permit, you must be at least 15 ½ years of age. While 15 ½ is the minimum California driver's permit age, people of all ages can get a driver's permit. However, the California DMV categorizes new adult drivers and minor drivers into two different learning permit groups:

- 1) Provisional Instruction Permit
- 2) Instruction Permit

But are there other differences?

Short answer: Yes.

To better understand the application process of these two different, yet similar learning permits, let's take a more detailed look at each permit.

#### ***1) Provisional Instruction Permit (California Driver's Permit Age – Under 18)***

A provisional instruction permit is meant for new drivers between the ages of 15 ½ to 18 years of age. Since drivers who obtain this permit are younger and perhaps less life-experienced than those over 18, there are more restrictions.

#### ***Minors – California Driving Permit Rules:***

- Guardian supervision and assistance with the application process
- You can't drive alone
- A guardian or adult at least 25 years or older must sit in the passenger seat when you drive
- Must pass the knowledge exam with a minimum score of 38/46
- Insurance is required at all times within the vehicle

### ***Application Process:***

- A legal guardian must sign the [California Driver's License or Identification Card Application](#)
- A legal guardian must sign a form to be financially responsible for the young driver
- Visit your closest DMV
- Pass a knowledge test
  - 3 allowed attempts. Must be spaced 7 days apart from the last failed test. After 3 failed attempts, the application process restarts.
- Pass a vision test
- Provide your SSN and full legal name
- Bring birth certificate or US passport
- Bring documents for proof of residency
- Thumbprint, signature, and picture (taken onsite)

### **2) *Instruction Permit (California Driver's Permit Age – Over 18)***

For those who are over the age of 18 and want a driving permit in California, they will get what's known as an Instruction Permit.

The main difference between an Instruction Permit and a Provisional Instruction Permit is the age of the of drivers (minors vs. adults). Since adults presumably are more life-experienced and aware than a teen, there are less restrictions placed for new adult drivers, but restrictions nonetheless.

### ***Adults – California Driving Permit Rules:***

- Must drive with an adult at least 18 years or older in the passenger's seat at all times
- Must pass the knowledge exam with a minimum score of 30/36
- Must pass a vision exam

### ***Application Process:***

- Complete the [California Driver's License or Identification Card Application](#)
- Visit your closest DMV
- Pass a knowledge test
  - 3 allowed attempts before the application process restarts. No wait time between failed tests.
- Pass a vision test
- Provide your SSN and full legal name
- Bring birth certificate or US passport
- Bring documents for proof of residency

- Thumbprint, signature, and picture (taken onsite)

While there are still restrictions placed on the Instruction Permit, as you can see, there is more leeway for adults compared to minors when it comes to the knowledge test, who they can drive with, and the application process.

## **Costs**

For both the California driver's permit age-based temporary licenses, future drivers must pay the same application fee of \$39.

This fee covers the cost of your physical driver's license and your knowledge test. If you pass the vision exam, knowledge exam, supply the DMV with the correct documents, and fill out all the paperwork correctly, then you won't have to pay this fee again.

However, a driver's permit can get pricy if you continuously fail your knowledge exam. Both minors and adults seeking a driver's permit are allowed 3 attempts to pass. If all 3 attempts are unsuccessful, then a \$39 fee must be paid again, and the application process has to start from scratch.

## **Time**

The online part of the California driving permit application process is relatively quick. However, if you aren't able to fill out the entire application in one sitting, then you're allowed to log back into your account at any time (up to 1 year later!) to complete the application.

After the online application is complete, then the majority of your time will be dedicated to driving to your nearest DMV and waiting in line to take your exams and present your necessary documents. If everything goes smoothly, then you'll be issued a California driving permit.

There are two big issues that new drivers (minors and adults) face when going through the application process that make the process longer than it needs to be:

- 1) You forgot a necessary document
- 2) You failed your knowledge test

While remembering all of your documents may be easier to do than studying for your test, it is a common mistake many eager applicants make.

A failed knowledge test for minors means a minimum of 7 days wait before they can return and take the test, unlike an adult who can retake the test anytime they want. Retaking the knowledge exam adds more time onto the application process, especially for minors.

The best way to avoid retaking the knowledge exam to save you time is to study the [California Driver Handbook](#) provided by the DMV. All questions on the exam come from this handbook.

## What's Next?

Now that you know how to get a California driving permit, the next step is to start building confidence behind the wheel. Start practicing your driving skills and enhance your knowledge on the road today with ---INSERT COMPANY NAME---'s DMV certified and top-rated online driving school.

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**Links to Sources:** <https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-licenses-identification-cards/instruction-permits/>  
<https://www.edl.dmv.ca.gov/apply/choose-language>  
<https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/file/california-driver-handbook-pdf/>

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