

LAW SUMMARY

Office of Legislative Legal Services



COLORADO DRIVER'S LICENSES¹

Types of driver's licenses. Colorado has a number of different types of licenses. The most common types are a driver's license and a minor driver's license. The Colorado Department of Revenue (the "Department") issues all driver's licenses in the state. The Department can suspend a driver's license when the driver accumulates a certain number of points. A driver accumulates points when he or she is convicted of a traffic offense.

Types of Driver's Licenses and When They May Be Suspended

<i>Type of license</i>	<i>Age requirements</i>	<i>Suspension</i>
Driver's license	At least 21 years of age	12 points within 12 months 18 points within 24 months
Minor driver's license	At least 18 but less than 21 years of age	9 points within 12 months 12 points within 24 months 14 points after turning 18
	At least 16 but less than 18 years of age and at least one year with a driver's permit.	Over 5 points within 12 months Over 6 points before turning 18

The Department may not license any person: (1) While his or her license has been suspended; (2) Whose license is revoked, until 12 months after the revocation; (3) Whom a court determines is an habitual drunkard or addicted to the use of a controlled substance; (4) Whom a court determines suffers from mental disability or disease and for whom competency has not been restored; or (5) Who is not legally present in the United States.

¹ This summary contains information commonly requested from the Office of Legislative Legal Services. It does not represent an official legal opinion of the General Assembly or the state of Colorado and does not bind the members of the General Assembly. It is intended to provide a general overview of Colorado law as of the date of its preparation. Any person needing legal advice should consult his or her own lawyer and should not rely on the information in this memorandum.

A minor is prohibited from transporting other minor passengers for the first six months the license is held. For the second six months, the minor may transport one minor passenger. A minor is also prohibited from driving between the hours of 12 midnight and 5 a.m. for the first year the license is held. There are exceptions for immediate family members, a medical emergency, and if an adult driver is in the vehicle. See section 42-4-116, C.R.S.

Driving permits.

Types of Instruction Permits with Basic Requirements.

Age requirements	Type of Permit and Education requirements	Supervision requirements
15 - 15 ½	Driver Education Permit Completion of a driver education classroom course	A parent, stepparent, grandparent guardian, foster parent, or driving instructor or alternate permit supervisor when applicable
15 ½ - 16	Driver Awareness Permit Completion of a 4-hour driver awareness program	A parent, stepparent, guardian, grandparent, foster parent, or driving instructor or alternate permit supervisor when applicable
16-21	Minor Instruction Permit None	A parent, stepparent, guardian, foster parent, or driving instructor or anyone over 21 who holds a license

An instruction permit must be held for at least one year before a minor may be licensed. The instruction permit may be held for up to 3 years. In addition, the department may issue a temporary permit, valid for up to 1 year, to a person who has applied for a permanent license.

How to get a driver's license. Anyone seeking a license should go to the nearest Driver License Office and:

- Submit proof of age and identity and a physical description;
- State whether he or she was previously issued or denied a license;
- Pass all required examinations;
- Pay the required fee;
- Be fingerprinted and photographed;
- Demonstrate completion of required behind the wheel instruction.

Motorcycles. The department also licenses motorcycle drivers. To drive a motorcycle legally, a person must pass a motorcycle skills test. Passage entitles a person with a class C (automobile) driver's license to get a class M endorsement. A person may also receive a class M driver's license, which only authorizes the person to drive a motorcycle. A person may also receive a limited endorsement that authorizes operation of three-wheeled motorcycles only.

Probationary licenses. The department may also issue a probationary license to any person whose driver's license or provisional driver's license has been revoked because of any alcohol-related administrative proceeding or habitual offenses. This license requires the use of an ignition interlock device. The term of the probationary license may not exceed one year. For the specific requirements that apply to a probationary license, see section 42-2-127, C.R.S.

Commercial driver's licenses. The department also issues commercial driver's licenses, which are required to operate:

- Any motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight rating or combination vehicle weight rating of over 26,000 pounds;
- Any vehicle that transports quantities of hazardous materials that requires a warning placard under the Department of Transportation regulations; or
- Any vehicle designed to transport 16 or more persons, including the driver.

If the person meets the requirements, the department may issue a commercial driver's license to anyone 21 years of age or older. The applicant must agree to register the vehicle in Colorado within 30 days after becoming a resident of the state. The department may impose additional license requirements.

Further information. This summary does not include all the details and exceptions in state law and regulations. For more specific information, contact your local Division of Motor Vehicles Driver License Office or visit a public library and ask for Title 42 of the Colorado Revised Statutes. The information summarized here can be found in sections 42-2-101 to 42-2-208, C.R.S. (driver's licenses generally) and sections 42-2-401 to 42-2-408, C.R.S. (commercial driver's licenses).