

Q & A: Reciprocal Licensing for Out of Country Drivers

Question: How are driver licensing standards established?

Answer: Driver licensing standards are established in the Operator Licensing and Vehicle Control Regulation of Alberta's *Traffic Safety Act*. Alberta Transportation, in conjunction with Service Alberta, sets and administers the policies for operator licensing.

Question: What requirements are necessary to obtain an Alberta Driver's License?

Answer: Proof of legal presence in Alberta must be confirmed and supported by such documents as: Record of Landing, Federally-issued Student Authorization, Federally-issued Employment Authorization or a valid Foreign Passport with appropriate immigration documents such as a Refugee Status Claim.

Once legal presence has been confirmed, new Canadians are required to prove that residency has been established in Alberta. This can be verified by providing documents containing the client's name and physical Alberta address. Proof can be confirmed by such documents as residential utility, telephone, gas or cable bill, mortgage or residential lease documents, written confirmation of employment, which must include a contact name and phone number, or land title documents.

Question: Who verifies each document to establish legal presence and residency?

Answer: Service Alberta and/or their Agents review the documents presented. Legal presence and residency are only verified if questions arise regarding the authenticity of reciprocal licensing documents. Service Alberta, Special Investigations Unit investigates where there is a question as to document authenticity when referred to them by an Agent.

All non-reciprocal licensing documents must be reviewed to establish legal presence and residency.

The turnaround time for confirming authenticity of these documents is 10 working days if there is a question of authenticity. This 10 day turnaround for licensing is the standard in other Canadian jurisdictions. Service Alberta continually reviews licensing

processes with a view to implement any means possible to streamline the process without compromising licensing integrity.

Licensing delays may occasionally occur if acceptable confirmation is unavailable from the country of origin to verify prior driver licensing status. Service Alberta has been working with Consulate offices to expedite the provision of necessary documents.

Question: **Are applicants screened to determine whether or not they have been denied the right to hold a driver's license?**

Answer: Yes, clients are screened to ensure that the client has not previously held a licence in Canada and that the client does not have a "Denied" status. Service Alberta conducts a search of the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators Interprovincial Record Exchange across Canada for the client.

Question: **When must immigrants enrol in Alberta's Graduated Driver Licensing Program?**

Answer: Immigrants who do not have verifiable previous driving experience of two years as a fully-licensed driver, will be enrolled in Alberta's Graduated Driver Licensing Program upon completing and passing the following:

- Knowledge test
- Vision screening
- Basic road test

If the client has been a fully licensed driver for at least two years in the country they came from, a Graduated Driver License will not apply, however, clients are only eligible to apply for an Alberta Class 5 or 7 and must complete and pass the following:

- Knowledge test
- Vision screening
- Advanced Road Test

Immigrants coming from countries who have signed a reciprocal driver's licensing agreement with Alberta and have at least two years of verifiable driving experience can exchange their out of country license for an Alberta driver's license, exempting them from Alberta's Graduated Driver Licensing Program provided they meet the following requirements:

- The driver must be at least 18 years old. If a client is under 18 years old, consent for a minor is required or proof of self-sufficiency or marriage is required.
- The driver must present proof of presence and residency in Alberta by providing federal travel authorization documents such as employment authorization and record of landing.
- The driver must provide proof of date first licensed. If the client has been licensed for two or more years as a fully licensed driver in their country of origin the Graduated Driving Licence program conditions do not apply.
- The driver must meet all requirements for the class of licence being applied to in order to drive a motor vehicle.
- The driver will be required to pass a vision screening test and disclose all medical conditions or physical disabilities that may affect their ability to safely drive a motor vehicle.