

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
1993 SESSION

CHAPTER 368
HOUSE BILL 1016

AN ACT TO CHANGE THE GENERAL DRIVERS LICENSE RENEWAL CYCLE
FROM FOUR TO FIVE YEARS AND TO MAKE UNIFORM THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A DRIVERS LICENSE.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 20-7 reads as rewritten:

"§ 20-7. Issuance and renewal of drivers licenses.

(a) License Required. – To drive a motor vehicle on a highway, a person must be licensed by the Division under this Article or Article 2C of this Chapter to drive that vehicle. The Division issues regular drivers licenses under this Article and issues commercial drivers licenses under Article 2C.

A license authorizes the holder of the license to drive any vehicle included in the class of the license and any vehicle included in a lesser class of license, except a vehicle for which an endorsement is required. To drive a vehicle for which an endorsement is required, a person must obtain both a license and an endorsement for the vehicle. A regular drivers license is considered a lesser class of license than its commercial counterpart.

The classes of regular drivers licenses and the motor vehicles that can be driven with each class of license are:

- (1) Class A. – A Class A license authorizes the holder to drive any of the following:
 - a. A Class A motor vehicle that is exempt under G.S. 20-37.16 from the commercial drivers license requirements.
 - b. A Class A motor vehicle that has a combined GVWR of less than 26,001 pounds and includes as part of the combination a towed unit that has a GVWR of at least 10,001 pounds.
- (2) Class B. – A Class B license authorizes the holder to drive any Class B motor vehicle that is exempt under G.S. 20-37.16 from the commercial drivers license requirements.
- (3) Class C. – A Class C license authorizes the holder to drive any of the following:
 - a. A Class C motor vehicle that is not a commercial motor vehicle.
 - b. When operated by a volunteer member of a fire department, a rescue squad, or an emergency medical service (EMS) in the performance of duty, a Class A or Class B fire-fighting, rescue, or EMS motor vehicle or a combination of these vehicles.

The Commissioner may assign a unique motor vehicle to a class that is different from the class in which it would otherwise belong.

A new resident of North Carolina who has a drivers license issued by another jurisdiction must obtain a license from the Division within 30 days after becoming a resident.

~~(a)~~(b) Motorcycles and Mopeds. – To drive a motorcycle, a person must have a drivers license and a motorcycle endorsement. To obtain a motorcycle endorsement, a person must demonstrate competence to drive a motorcycle by passing a road test and a written or oral test concerning a motorcycle and must pay the fee for a motorcycle endorsement. Neither a drivers license nor a motorcycle endorsement is required to drive a moped.

~~(b)~~ Every application for a drivers license shall be made upon the approved form furnished by the Division.

(c) Application and Tests. – To obtain a drivers license from the Division, a person must complete an application form provided by the Division, be a resident of this State and must State, and demonstrate his or her physical and mental ability to drive safely a motor vehicle included in the class of license for which the person has applied. To obtain an endorsement, a person must demonstrate his or her physical and mental ability to drive safely the type of motor vehicle for which the endorsement is required. The Division shall note an endorsement on the face of a drivers license.

To demonstrate physical and mental ability, a person must pass an examination. The examination may include road tests, vision tests, oral tests, and, in the case of literate applicants, written tests, as the Division may require. The tests must ensure that an applicant recognizes the handicapped international symbol of access, as defined in G.S. 20-37.5. The Division may not require a person who applies to renew a license that has not expired to take a written test or a road test unless one or more of the following applies:

- (1) The person has been convicted of a traffic violation since the person's license was last issued.
- (2) The applicant suffers from a mental or physical condition that impairs the person's ability to drive a motor vehicle.

~~The Commissioner may adopt regulations that allow employees of governmental agencies or private businesses to receive a drivers license without taking a road test if the conditions specified in the regulations are complied with. Provided, however, that persons 60 years of age and over, when being examined as herein provided, shall not be required to parallel park a motor vehicle as part of any such examination.~~

(c1) Insurance. ~~In addition to the other requirements of this section, no person shall be issued~~ The Division may not issue a drivers license to a person until the person has furnished proof of financial responsibility. Proof of financial responsibility shall be in one of the following forms:

- (1) A written certificate or electronically-transmitted facsimile thereof from any insurance carrier duly authorized to do business in this State certifying that there is in effect a nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability policy for the benefit of the person required to furnish

proof of financial responsibility. The certificate or facsimile shall state the effective date and expiration date of the nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability policy and shall state the date that the certificate or facsimile is issued. The certificate or facsimile shall remain effective proof of financial responsibility for a period of 30 consecutive days following the date the certificate or facsimile is issued but shall not in and of itself constitute a binder or policy of ~~insurance or insurance.~~

- (2) A binder for or policy of nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability insurance under which the applicant is insured, provided that the binder or policy states the effective date and expiration date of the nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability policy.

The preceding provisions of this subsection do not apply to applicants who do not own currently registered motor vehicles and who do not operate nonfleet private passenger motor vehicles that are owned by other persons and that are not insured under commercial motor vehicle liability insurance policies. In such cases, the applicant shall sign a written certificate to that effect. Such certificate shall be furnished by the Division and may be incorporated into the license application form. Any material misrepresentation made by such person on such certificate shall be grounds for suspension of that person's license for a period of 90 days.

For the purpose of this subsection, the term 'nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle' has the definition ascribed to it in Article 40 of General Statute Chapter 58.

The Commissioner may require that certificates required by this subsection be on a form approved by the Commissioner.

The requirement of furnishing proof of financial responsibility does not apply to a person who applies for a renewal of his drivers license and who is not required to take the written examination.

Nothing in this subsection precludes any person from showing proof of financial responsibility in any other manner authorized by Articles 9A and 13 of this Chapter.

~~(d) The Division shall cause each person who has heretofore been issued a drivers license to be examined or reexamined, as the case may be, to determine whether or not such person is physically and mentally capable of safely operating motor vehicles over the highways of the State. Those persons found, as a result of such examination or reexamination, to be capable of safely operating motor vehicles over the highways of the State shall be reissued drivers licenses; and those persons found to be incapable of safely operating motor vehicles over the highways of the State shall not be reissued drivers licenses. The examination required by this subsection may include such road tests, oral and in the case of literate applicants written tests, and tests of vision, as the Division may require and shall include such test as is necessary to assure that applicants recognize the "international symbol of access" for the handicapped (sign R7-8, Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices) and devices relative to handicapped drivers as set forth in Article 2A of this Chapter. Provided, however, that persons 60 years of age and over, when being examined as herein provided, shall not be required to parallel park a motor vehicle as part of any such examination.~~

(e) Restrictions. – The Division may impose any restriction it finds advisable on a drivers license. A restriction shall be noted on the face of the license. It is unlawful for the holder of a restricted license to operate a motor vehicle without complying with the restriction and is the equivalent of operating a motor vehicle without a license. If any applicant shall suffer from any physical defect or disease which affects his or her operation of a motor vehicle, the Division may require to be filed with it a certificate of such applicant's condition signed by some medical authority of the applicant's community designated by the Division. This certificate shall in all cases be treated as confidential. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the Division from refusing to issue a license, either restricted or unrestricted, to any person deemed to be incapable of safely operating a motor vehicle. This subsection does not prohibit deaf persons from operating motor vehicles who in every other way meet the requirements of this section.

(f) Expiration and Temporary License. – ~~A drivers license expires on the birthday of the licensee in the fourth year following the year of issuance; and no new license shall be issued to any operator after the expiration of his license until such operator has again passed the examination specified in this section. Any operator may at any time within 60 days prior to the expiration of his license apply for a new license and if the applicant meets the requirements of this Chapter, the Division shall issue a new license to him. A new license issued within 60 days prior to the expiration of an applicant's old license or within 12 months thereafter shall automatically expire four years from the date of the expiration of the applicant's old license.~~ The first drivers license the Division issues to a person expires on the person's fourth or subsequent birthday that occurs after the license is issued and on which the individual's age is evenly divisible by five, unless this subsection sets a different expiration date. The first drivers license the Division issues to a person who is at least 17 years old but is less than 18 years old expires on the person's twentieth birthday. The first drivers license the Division issues to a person who is at least 62 years old expires on the person's birthday in the fifth year after the license is issued, whether or not the person's age on that birthday is evenly divisible by five.

A drivers license that was issued by the Division and is renewed by the Division expires five years after the expiration date of the license that is renewed. A person may apply to the Division to renew a license during the 60-day period before the license expires. The Division may not accept an application for renewal made before the 60-day period begins.

Any person serving in the armed forces of the United States on active duty and holding a valid drivers license properly issued under this section and stationed outside the State of North Carolina may renew ~~his~~the license by making application to the Division by mail. Any other person, except a ~~nonresident as defined in this Article,~~ nonresident, who holds a valid drivers license issued under this section and who is temporarily residing outside North Carolina, may also renew by making application to the Division by mail. For purposes of this section "temporarily" shall mean not less than 30 days continuous absence from North Carolina. In either case, the Division may waive the examination and color photograph ~~ordinarily~~otherwise required for the

renewal of a drivers license, and may impose in lieu thereof ~~such any~~ conditions as it may deem ~~considers~~ appropriate to each particular application; ~~provided that such license shall expire 30 days after the licensee returns to North Carolina, and such license shall be designated as temporary.~~ application. A license renewed by mail is a temporary license that expires 30 days after the person to whom it is issued returns to this State.

~~Provided further, that no person who applies for the renewal of a drivers license shall be required to take a written examination or road test as a part of any such examination unless such person has been convicted of a traffic violation or had prayer for judgment continued with respect to any traffic violation within a four year period immediately preceding the date of such person's renewal application or unless such person suffers from a mental or physical condition which impairs his ability to operate a motor vehicle.~~

~~Provided further, that no person who applies for the renewal of his drivers license and who must take the written examination pursuant to this section shall be issued a renewed license unless such person has furnished the proof of financial responsibility specified in subsection (c1).~~

(g) Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 667, s. 6.

(h) Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 113, s. 1.

(i) Fees. – The following fees apply to a regular drivers license: fee for a regular drivers license is the amount set in the following table multiplied by the number of years in the period for which the license is issued:

Class of Regular License	Fee
<u>Class of Regular License</u>	<u>Fee For Each Year</u>
Class A	\$15.00 <u>3.75</u>
Class B	15.00 <u>3.75</u>
Class C	10.00 <u>2.50</u>

The fee for a motorcycle endorsement is ~~five dollars (\$5.00).~~ one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) for each year of the period for which the endorsement is issued. The appropriate fee must be paid before a person receives a regular drivers license or an endorsement.

(i1) Restoration Fee. – Any person whose drivers license has been revoked pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter, other than G.S. 20-17(2), shall pay a restoration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00). A person whose drivers license has been revoked under G.S. 20-17(2) shall pay a restoration fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) until the end of the fiscal year in which the cumulative total amount of fees deposited under this subsection in the General Fund exceeds five million dollars (\$5,000,000), and shall pay a restoration fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) thereafter. The fee shall be paid to the Division prior to the issuance to such person of a new drivers license or the restoration of the drivers license. The restoration fee shall be paid to the Division in addition to any and all fees which may be provided by law. This restoration fee shall not be required from any licensee whose license was revoked or voluntarily surrendered for medical or

health reasons whether or not a medical evaluation was conducted pursuant to this Chapter. The twenty-five dollar (\$25.00) fee, and the first twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) of the fifty-dollar (\$50.00) fee, shall be deposited in the Highway Fund. The remaining twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) of the fifty-dollar (\$50.00) fee shall be deposited in the General Fund of the State. The Office of State Budget and Management shall certify to the Department of Transportation and the General Assembly when the cumulative total amount of fees deposited in the General Fund under this subsection exceeds five million dollars (\$5,000,000), and shall annually report to the General Assembly the amount of fees deposited in the General Fund under this subsection.

It is the intent of the General Assembly to annually appropriate the funds deposited in the General Fund under this subsection to the Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina to be used for the Center for Alcohol Studies Endowment at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, but not to exceed this cumulative total of five million dollars (\$5,000,000).

(j) Highway Fund. – The fees collected under this section and G.S. 20-14 shall be placed in the Highway Fund.

(k) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 726, s. 5, effective October 1, 1991.

(l) Learner's Permit. – Any person who except for lack of instruction in operating a motor vehicle would be qualified to obtain a drivers license under this Article may obtain a learner's permit. A learner's permit authorizes the permit holder to drive a specified type or class of motor vehicle while in possession of the permit. A learner's permit is valid for a period of 18 months after it is issued. The fee for a learner's permit is ten dollars (\$10.00). A learner's permit may be renewed, or a second learner's permit may be issued, for an additional period of 18 months. The permit holder must, while operating a motor vehicle over the highways, be accompanied by a person who is licensed to operate the motor vehicle being driven and is seated beside the permit holder.

(l-1) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 726, s. 5, effective October 1, 1991.

(m) Instruction Permit. – The Division upon receiving proper application may in its discretion issue a restricted instruction permit effective for a school year or a lesser period to any of the following applicants:

(1) An applicant who is less than 18 years old and is enrolled in a drivers education program that is approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and is offered at a public high school, a nonpublic secondary school, or a licensed drivers training school.

(2) An applicant for certification under G.S. 20-218 as a school bus driver.

A restricted instruction permit authorizes the holder of the permit to drive a specified type or class of motor vehicle when in possession of the permit, subject to any restrictions imposed by the Division. The restrictions the Division may impose on a permit include restrictions to designated areas and highways and restrictions prohibiting operation except when an approved instructor is occupying a seat beside the permittee. A restricted instruction permit is not required to have a distinguishing number or a picture of the person to whom the permit is issued.

(n) Format. – Every drivers license issued by the Division shall bear thereon the distinguishing number assigned to the licensee and color photograph of the licensee of a size approved by the Commissioner and shall contain the name, age, residence address and a brief description of the licensee, who, for the purpose of identification and as a condition precedent to the validity of the license, immediately upon receipt thereof, shall endorse his or her regular signature in ink upon the same in the space provided for that purpose unless a facsimile of his or her signature appears thereon; provided the requirement that a color photograph of the licensee appear on the license may be waived by the Commissioner upon satisfactory proof that the taking of such photograph violates the religious convictions of the licensee. Drivers licenses shall be issued with differing color photographic backgrounds according to the licensee's age at time of issuance for the following age groups:

- (1) Persons who have not attained the age of 21 years.
- (2) Persons who have attained the age of 21 years.

The Division shall determine the different colors to be used. Such license shall be carried by the licensee at all times while engaged in the operation of a motor vehicle.

(o) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 726, s. 5, effective October 1, 1991."

Sec. 2. G.S. 20-9(g)(1) reads as rewritten:

"(1) The Division may issue a license to any person who is afflicted with or suffering from a physical or mental disability set out in subsection (e) of this section who is otherwise qualified to obtain a license, provided such person submits to the Division a certificate in the form prescribed in subdivision (2). ~~Unless sooner revoked, suspended or canceled, such license~~ Until a license issued under this subdivision expires or is revoked, the license continues in force as long as the licensee presents to the Division one year from the date of issuance of such license and at yearly intervals thereafter a certificate in the form prescribed in subdivision (2), provided the Commissioner may require the submission of such certificate at six months six-month intervals where in his opinion public safety demands. In no event shall a license issued pursuant to this section be valid beyond the birthday of the licensee in the fourth year following the year of issuance, at which time the license is subject to renewal."

Sec. 3. 20-37.7(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) A special identification card issued to a person for the first time under this section ~~shall expire on the birth date of the holder in the fourth year of issuance. The expires when a drivers license issued on the same day to that person would expire. A special identification card renewed under this section expires when a drivers license renewed by the card holder on the same day would expire.~~

The fee for the issuance or reissuance of a special identification card is the same as the fee set in G.S. 20-14 for issuing a duplicate license. A special identification card may be issued without fee to a resident of North Carolina who is legally blind or has attained the age of 70. The fees collected under this section shall be credited to the Highway Fund. The fees collected for the issuance of special identification cards to

persons under the age of 16 shall be placed in a reserve fund to cover the cost of the operation of the program required by this Article."

Sec. 4. G.S. 20-37.16(d) reads as rewritten:

"(d) The fee for a Class A, B, or C commercial drivers license is ~~forty dollars (\$40.00)~~ ten dollars (\$10.00) for each year of the period for which the license is issued. The fee for each endorsement is ~~five dollars (\$5.00)~~ one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25) for each year of the period for which the endorsement is issued. The fees required under this section do not apply to a person whose license is restricted to driving a school bus or school activity bus or to employees of the Driver License Section of the Division who are designated by the Commissioner."

Sec. 5. This act becomes effective January 1, 1995. A drivers license or a special identification card issued by the Division of Motor Vehicles before January 1, 1995, and renewed by the Division after that date is considered the first drivers license or special identification card issued by the Division for purposes of determining when the license or card expires.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 17th day of July, 1993.

Dennis A. Wicker
President of the Senate

Daniel Blue, Jr.
Speaker of the House of Representatives