



Driver CPC initial qualification for lorry, bus and coach drivers

The Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) is a new requirement for professional drivers that has been introduced across the European Union. It aims to maintain high standards of driving standards among professional drivers and improve road safety.

As a new driver, you will need to pass the Driver CPC theory and practical tests, in addition to the licence acquisition theory and practical tests, if you intend to drive a bus, coach or lorry for a living.

Any drivers of lorries weighing over 3.5 tonnes and minibuses with 9 seats or more must obtain a Driver CPC.

This guide is aimed at new drivers who already have provisional entitlement to drive larger vehicles, and want to get their full vocational licences. It explains the different parts of the Driver CPC initial qualification tests, and what you will need to do to pass them.

Do you need to take the Driver CPC initial qualification tests?

If you want to drive a bus, coach or lorry for a living, but don't have a full vocational driving licence yet, you will need to take the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) initial qualification tests.

This applies to the following licence categories:

- buses and coaches - categories D, D1, DE and D1E
- lorries - categories C, C1, CE and C1E

Bus and coach drivers who hold a relevant vocational licence gained before 10 September 2008, and lorry drivers who hold a relevant vocational licence gained before 10 September 2009, do not need to take the initial qualification. This is because they are deemed to hold 'acquired rights'. However, they will have to complete periodic training to keep their Driver CPC. For more information, see our guide on Driver CPC periodic training for lorry, bus and coach drivers.

Those drivers with D, D1, DE and D1E entitlement on their licence stating 'not for hire or reward' (Code 101) will not have acquired rights and will have to take the initial qualification should they wish to drive for a living.

The National Vocational Training (NVT) route

If you are a new driver who has already passed the theory and practical tests to get your vocational licence, you can enrol in an NVT programme while you complete the rest of your initial qualification. This will let you drive professionally for up to 12 months until you are fully Driver CPC qualified. For more information on the NVT route, see our guide Driver CPC: the basics.

Exemptions from Driver CPC

You may not need a Driver CPC if you drive only certain categories of vehicles, or only carry out certain activities. For more information, see our guide on Driver CPC: the basics.

What the Driver CPC initial qualification tests involve

The initial Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) qualification is split into four parts. These include the theory and practical tests you will need to pass before you can gain your full vocational driving licence.

The other two parts are optional, and only need to be taken if you want to get the full Driver CPC that will allow you to drive buses, coaches or lorries professionally.

This gives you the flexibility to obtain your vocational licence only, or to gain full Driver CPC at the same time.

The two Driver CPC theory tests are:

- part one - theory test (multiple choice and hazard perception)
- part two - case studies

The practical tests are:

- part three - licence acquisition (practical test of driving ability)
- part four - Driver CPC practical test (vehicle safety demonstration)

To get the full Driver CPC qualification, you will need to pass all four parts. If you want to get a vocational licence, but will not be driving for a living, you will only need to take and pass part one and part three.

What order can the tests be taken in?

You must pass part one before you can take part three, and pass part two before you take part four.

However, you can choose to do the theory test or case studies in any order. You can also take the licence acquisition test before the Driver CPC practical test, or the other way around.

Driver CPC initial qualification part one - theory test

The first part of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) initial qualification you will need to pass is the theory test.

This is made up of two separate tests: multiple choice, and hazard perception. Both tests are done on a computer at a Driving Standards Agency (DSA) test centre. They can be taken in any order, and can be done on different days or on the same day.

To pass the **multiple choice** part, you will need to answer 100 questions, and get at least 85 right.

For the **hazard perception** element you will be shown, on a computer screen, a

series of 19 video clips showing developing hazards. You will need to use the computer mouse to indicate the hazards as soon as you see them develop. You must score at least 67 out of 100 to pass this part of the test.

The theory test will take you about two and a half hours to complete.

When you arrive at the test centre, you will need to present either your photocard driving licence and its paper counterpart, or your paper driving licence and your passport.

You will be given the result of each test after you have finished.

Driver CPC initial qualification part two - case studies

The case studies test is optional if you only want to get a vocational licence and do not want to drive for a living. You must take it if you want to drive professionally and qualify for a full Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC).

The case studies test is a computer-based exercise. You will be given seven case studies based on real-life situations you're likely to come across in your working life. Examples could be driving a bus in icy conditions, or being asked to carry out non-driving work when you're due to take weekly or daily rest. The aim is to test your knowledge, and how you put it into practice.

Each test is made up of seven case studies, each one with six to eight questions, with a possible maximum score of 50. The pass mark for the PCV test is 40 and the pass mark for the LGV test is 38 (to be reviewed September 2010). The case studies test will take about one and a half hours to complete.

Drivers who already hold a Driver CPC for one category of vehicle (ie PCV or LGV) and wish to obtain a Driver CPC for the other category, will need to take a part two case study conversion test consisting of 10 case studies with a total of 50 questions. Driver CPC initial qualification parts one, three and four will need to be completed in full.

Driver CPC initial qualification part three - practical test of driving ability

You will need to have passed the part one theory test before you can take the practical test of driving ability for larger vehicles. See the page in this guide on Driver CPC initial qualification - theory test.

If you want to drive buses, coaches or lorries, you must pass the practical test before you can apply for a full vocational licence, regardless of whether or not you want to get a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence.

The test will take an hour and a half, with at least an hour of driving. The examiner will assess your driving in a variety of traffic conditions, and on several different types of road.

The practical test is made up of two parts. The first is a reversing exercise, and is done at the test centre. The second takes place on public roads. It may include driving on motorways, depending on where you take your test. You will have to carry out exercises specific to the type of vehicle you drive. For example, if

you're driving a bus or a coach, you will be asked to stop at a bus stop and move away when the examiner tells you to.

The practical test also includes an eco-safe driving assessment which involves the examiner taking note of how you control the vehicle and plan your driving. This assessment does not count towards the result of the test, however the examiner will give you feedback at the end of your test.

Driver CPC initial qualification part four - vehicle safety demonstration

Passing this test is compulsory if you want to obtain a Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) that will allow you to drive lorries, buses or coaches for a living. It is optional if you only want to get a vocational driving licence, and do not want to drive professionally.

This test takes about half an hour. You will only be allowed to take it if you have already passed part two of the Driver CPC initial qualification, the case studies theory test. For more information on this test, see the page in this guide on Driver CPC initial qualification part two - case studies.

To pass, you will need to show your knowledge and ability in the following areas:

- ability to load the vehicle, paying attention to safety rules and using the vehicle properly
- security of the vehicle and its contents
- ability to prevent criminality and trafficking in illegal immigrants - for example, what you should do if you have returned to the vehicle after taking a comfort break on a ferry or at a border crossing
- ability to assess emergency situations
- ability to prevent physical risk
- ability to complete a physical, walk round vehicle safety check

Lorry tests may also use a piece of equipment called a Load Securing Demonstration Trolley (LSDT) that will allow you to demonstrate your ability to secure loads. The test consists of five topic areas covering the Driver CPC syllabus and in order to pass you will have to score 15 out of a possible 20 points in each topic area (75 per cent) and an overall score of 80 per cent.

Load Securing Demonstration Trolley

Each Driving Standards Agency (DSA) test centre has an LSDT, designed to allow a candidate to demonstrate securing a load during the vehicle safety demonstration. Trainers may wish to obtain an LSDT for their own use, although there is no formal requirement for them to do so. If you do wish to obtain an LSDT, you can download design drawings and details of the DSA's contracted manufacturing supplier from the DSA website (PDF, 772K) - Opens in a new window.

After you have passed the Driver CPC initial qualification tests

After you have passed all four modules of the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (Driver CPC) initial qualification, you will be entitled to a Driver

Qualification Card (DQC). This proves that you hold Driver CPC.

You can view an example of a DQC here - Opens in a new window.

If you hold a GB photocard driving licence, the DQC will be sent to you automatically once you have passed all four initial qualification tests.

Your DQC will be sent to the address on your driving licence, so make sure that your details are up to date with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

You will need to keep your DQC with you at all times when you are driving. You will face a fine if you are found to be driving professionally without a card when you should have one.

Lost or stolen cards

If your DQC has been lost, stolen or damaged, you must report it to the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) as soon as possible and apply for a replacement card. There will be a fee to replace and issue new cards.

To report your DQC card lost, stolen or damaged, email the DSA at customer.services@dsa.gsi.gov.uk (putting 'DQC Enquiry' in the subject field) or call the DSA on Tel 0300 200 1122.

You will be able to continue to drive professionally while you wait for your new DQC to arrive. If your replacement card does not arrive within 15 days of you making the application, we strongly recommend that you contact us to confirm that your application has been received and is being processed.

If your card has been lost or stolen we recommend you inform your employer.

Periodic training for Driver CPC holders

A Driver CPC is valid for five years. To keep your Driver CPC after that, you will need to complete 35 hours of training by the end of each five-year period.

If you don't do this, your Driver CPC will no longer be valid and you will not be able to continue to drive professionally after the five years is up.

For more information, see our guide on Driver CPC periodic training for lorry, bus and coach drivers.

DSA Helpline

0300 200 1122

Related guides on businesslink.gov.uk

[Driver CPC: the basics](#)

[Driving tests to get your professional driving licence](#)

[Driver CPC periodic training for lorry, bus and coach drivers](#)

[Apply for a provisional licence to drive lorries, buses or minibuses](#)

[Add higher categories to your driving licence](#)

Related web sites you might find useful

Download a leaflet about the Driver CPC Initial Qualification from the Driving Standards Agency website (PDF, 602KB)

http://www.dsa.gov.uk/Documents/BusinessLinkGovUK_documents/yb0800%20CPC/Driver_CPC_Initial_Qual_Aug09.pdf

You can find this guide by navigating to:

Home > Your business sector > Transport and logistics > Driving a bus or coach

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