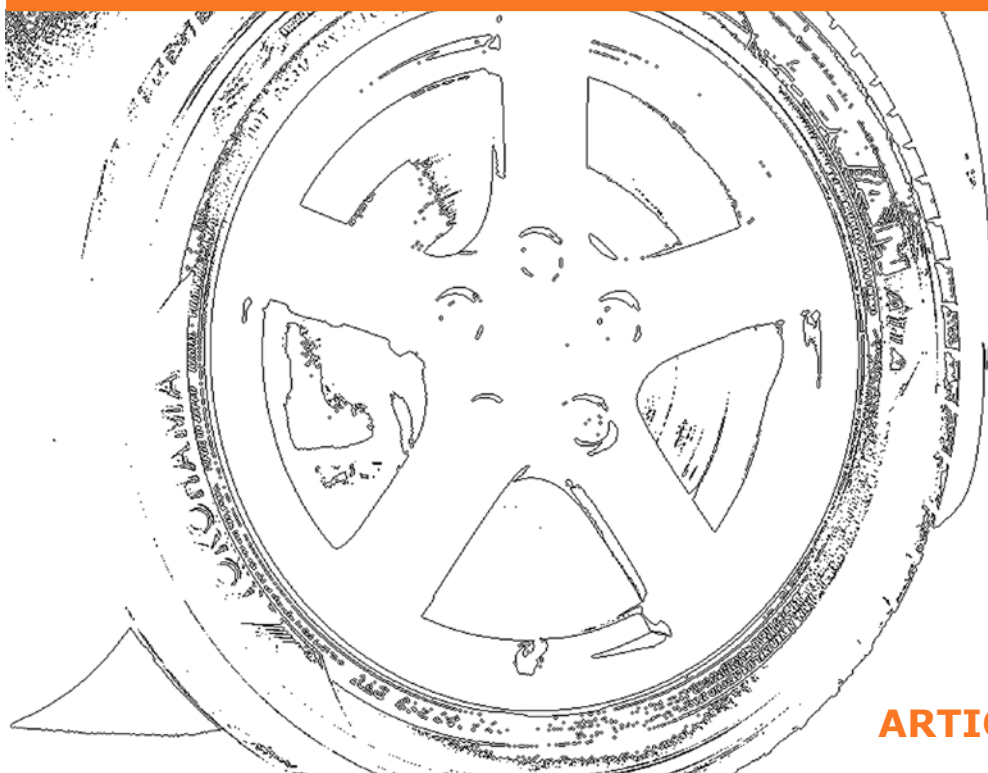


Knowledge

BANK



ARTICLE 29

Checking driver licences

Checking driver licences

Types of licence

New 'photocard' driving licences are gradually replacing the old green paper licences.

Photocard licences were introduced to meet the requirements of the EU Second Directive on driving licences. This says that driving licences have to incorporate photographs from 2001.

One major advantage of the new licence is that it stops licensed drivers lending their licences to people who are unqualified or disqualified. It also stops qualified drivers impersonating others at driving tests.

The new licence has to be renewed every ten years until the driver is 70. You should be aware that this means that a large number of photocard licences will expire in 2011.

If you have a paper licence it will be valid until its expiry date. However, should you wish to replace it with a photocard licence you can do so for a small fee by applying on a form available from the Post Office. The driving licence has two parts; a plastic photocard and a paper 'counterpart' document.

The plastic photocard is issued in provisional and full forms. The provisional licence is green, looks like the full licence and is clearly marked 'provisional'. The full licence is pink and shows the categories of vehicle for which the driver is licensed.

The counterpart driving licence is a paper document that is issued with the photocard. It shows whether the driver holds any provisional entitlements to drive vehicles other than those for which the full licence is valid. It also shows any endorsements, court-imposed sentences and disqualifications. If there are too many endorsements for full details to be shown, the counterpart will be marked 'continuation sheet to follow' and the information will be listed on a continuation sheet.

If you change your address you must notify the DVLA by completing the relevant section on the counterpart and submitting it with the photocard to the DVLA. If you fail to advise a change of address you can be fined £1,000.

Checking driver licences

The issue number on the licence is important. This is made up of two numbers plus an alphabetic character. The alphabetic character identifies the latest counterpart issued for that photocard.

The counterpart and the photocard are both bar-coded to ensure they are matched up during the production process. In Wales, the counterpart is printed in both English and Welsh.

You may obtain further information about driving licences on forms INF60, INF61 and INF60/2 available from the DVLA at DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1BN. Customer enquiries +44 (0)1792 772151.

Website: www.DVLA.gov.uk

The photocard and the counterpart must both be produced when taking a driving test, hiring a vehicle or producing your licence at the request of the police.

It is good fleet management policy to inspect both the photocard and the counterpart for all drivers periodically. If one of your employees drives without a licence the vehicle is automatically uninsured. A good approach is to inspect licences when new employees join the company, then every six months thereafter.

Drivers who passed their standard driving test before 1 January 1997 can drive vehicles up to 7.5 tonnes without restriction on the weight being towed (if any).

However, drivers passing after this date are only allowed to drive vehicles up to 3.5 tonnes that are not being used to tow more than 750kg.

Disability

There are a number of disabilities that must be notified to the DVLA, to allow it to determine whether a driver should retain their licence and continue to drive on the roads. The DVLA publishes a list of the disabilities that must be notified.

The following information has been compiled from the DVLA document that lists the disabilities that must be reported:

Checking driver licences

- An epileptic event (seizure or fit)
- Sudden attacks or disabling giddiness, fainting or blackouts
- Severe mental handicap
- If a pacemaker, defibrillator or anti-ventricular tachycardia device is fitted
- Diabetes controlled by insulin
- Diabetes controlled by tablets
- Angina (heart pain) while driving
- Parkinson's disease
- Any other chronic neurological condition
- A serious problem with memory
- A major or minor stroke
- Any type of brain surgery or brain tumour
- Severe head injury involving in-patient treatment at hospital
- Any severe psychiatric illness or mental disorder
- Continuing or permanent difficulty in the use of arms or legs affecting the ability to control a vehicle
- Dependence on or misuse of alcohol, illicit drugs or chemical substances in the past three years (does not include drink/driving offences)
- Any visual disability affecting both eyes (excluding short/long sight or colour blindness)

If you report a disability to the DVLA they will send you a form asking for further information and asking for consent to contact your doctor. A medical assessor working for DVLA will then decide whether you will be allowed to drive.

Mobilise Organisation – formed in 2005 from a merger of two long-standing charities, the Disabled Drivers' Association and the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club – can provide further information about DVLA procedures and many other aspects about issues faced by disabled motorists.

Their contact details are: Mobilise Organisation, National Headquarters, Ashwellthorpe, NORWICH NR16 1EX. Phone: + 44 (0)1508 489449; Fax: + 44 (0)1508 488173; E-Mail: enquiries@mobilise.info; Website: www.mobilise.info