

# PRIVATE CAR

## Belgian driving licence



- You have to be 18 years old and in possession of a valid driving licence to drive in Belgium). The Belgian driving licence is issued by the municipality where you live or (in the case of diplomats) by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Driving licences from most other European countries are valid in Belgium. They do not have to be exchanged for a Belgian licence except:
- If the European driving licence is made for an unlimited period

AND

- If you live (carrying a Belgian residence card) since at least 2 years in Belgium.

Only holders of an EU driving licence mentioning a limited period of validity (very often 10 or 15 years) are not obliged to exchange it, during the time of the validity.

It is advisable to register your national licence with the driving licence department in your local town hall in case of loss or theft.

## Foreign driving licenses



### 1. European national driving licence

A European national driving licence is a driving licence issued by a member state of the European Union or the European Economic Area.

#### ***Do you have to exchange it?***

First of all, we have to distinguish between licences issued with or without an expiry date.

- With an expiry date: member states mutually recognise each other's driving licences. Therefore, as long as the validity period of a European driving licence does not expire, it is not necessary to exchange it for a Belgian driving licence.
- Without an expiry date: exchange is mandatory within two years of setting up residency in Belgium. The holder of the licence must swap his national licence for a Belgian driving licence with a new official validity period.

#### ***Where do you exchange it?***

European national driving licences are exchanged at the commune administration (in the commune where you are resident).

#### ***Is registration mandatory?***

No, holders of a European national driving licence are not required to show their driving licence when they register in a commune. However, it is a good idea to register your driving licence because if it is lost, stolen or damaged, the procedure for exchanging it will be much faster. A registered European licence enables the holder to easily obtain a replacement (issue of a Belgian licence) from the commune.

PLEASE NOTE: for all types of European licences, the exchange must be made before the expiry date. An expired licence cannot be exchanged, even if it has been registered beforehand during its validity period.

EXCEPTION: the procedure is different for a French driving licence. A request for licence authentication must be made to the Federal Public

## 2. Non-European national driving licence

A non-European national driving licence is a driving licence that is not included in the list of European national driving licences compiled by the European Commission.

We should distinguish between a **non-European national driving licence recognised** in Belgium and **one which is not recognised**.

- Recognised non-European national licence: after registration in the commune, the licence holder should go to the driving-licence service of the commune where an exchange will be made if certain conditions are met (residence, nationality, length of stay, type of licence submitted, ...). The licence exchange will only take place **after** positive authentication by the relevant police service. If the police service has a doubt about the licence and gives its reasons for this, an exchange may be refused.
- Non-European national licence not recognised: nationals from countries outside the EU with which Belgium does not have an agreement are required to pass a driving test (theory and practical) to obtain a Belgian licence. However, they are exempted from the apprenticeship (a waiting period of more than three months between passing the theoretical exam and the practical driving test) if their driving licence has been authenticated by the police service. In this case, after passing the theoretical exam they can go directly to the driving test centre with their theory certificate and take the practical driving test.

### *Do you have to exchange your licence?*

You can drive on Belgian roads for a period of 185 days if you hold a non-European national driving licence which is **recognised and has not expired**.

### *Which documents do you need to make the exchange?*

You need to supply proof of six months' residence in the country that issued the licence, at the time it was delivered. Additionally, in some circumstances a French or Dutch translation of the national licence will be required, prepared by a certified translator.

PLEASE NOTE: the procedures to follow may vary slightly from one commune to another, so you are advised to check with your own particular commune. Just contact the "foreign driving licences" service of your commune or the Federal Public Service Mobility and Transport (Tel: +32 (0)2 277 31 11).

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## Car Importation and Registration - Formalities



1. Before taking any steps, one must be registered in the National Register and hold a Belgian ID card, or at least have the annex from the commune certifying that you are in the process of registering yourself as a Belgian resident.
2. Take all of the vehicle's **original documents: European certificate of conformity, foreign registration and vehicle's invoice** (if necessary).
3. Go to the **customs office** in order to request the pink registration application form, bearing a green "705 label", including the vehicle's properties. The customs office fills the form onsite and adds his own stamp. In order to speed-up the process, we recommend you to send the listed documents, with a clear mention of your home address, to one of the following addresses: [Danielle.steurbaut@minfin.fed.be](mailto:Danielle.steurbaut@minfin.fed.be) or [mariepaule.baccus@minfin.fed.be](mailto:mariepaule.baccus@minfin.fed.be) or [roland.dewolf@minfin.fed.be](mailto:roland.dewolf@minfin.fed.be). The customs office will invite you to pick-up the form once this is ready for pick-up.

### **Customs office address and opening hours:**

11 Rue de L'Entrepôt - 1020 Brussels  
From Monday to Friday - 08:00 to 11:30  
T +32 (0)2 575 62 05  
T +32 (0)2 576 92 21  
T +32 (0)2 577 37 38

### 4. Go to the **vehicle inspection**.

- If the vehicle changes owners, a used car inspection must be carried out. Take your vehicle to the office.
- If the vehicle does not change owners, proceed to a simple administrative inspection. Only take the documents described under points 2 and 3. In this case, you are not obliged to show the vehicle.

### **Vehicle inspection offices:**

- 3-9 Rue du Labeur - B 1070 Anderlecht - T +32 (0)2 529 07 84
- 25 Rue de la Grenouillette - B 1130 Haren - T +32 (0)2 240 73 50
- 118 Rue Colonel Bourg - B 1140 Evere - T +32 (0)2 726 91 52

<http://www.autocontrole.be/>

5. Go to your insurance broker or insurance company to take out a **Belgian "civil liability" insurance policy**.

6. Submit your registration application to the **DIV** (Vehicle Registration Department), or ask your insurer to do this on your behalf, either in person, either by post to the following address: DIV, Division Immatriculation des Véhicules, **56 Rue du Progrès, 1210 Brussels**).

7. Once the car is registered and older than 4 years, you will be invited by regular mail to a yearly mandatory technical inspection.

### **What to do when you leave Belgium?**

You must request that your number plate be deleted from the system:

- Either from abroad, return your plate to the DIV (Service Radiations, 56 Rue du Progrès, 1210 Brussels). The date the plate will be deleted from the system is the date of receipt of your number plate.

- Or, from Belgium, return it to a post office who will issue a certificate of deregistration, for a small fee.

**Warning:** Road tax remains due as long as the plate has not been deleted from the system, and a prorated refund will be wired on your bank account once the deregistration has been processed. Of course, if you proceed to the deregistration from abroad, you will have to mention your new address and bank account in order to perceive the refund.

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### **Car Registration - Taxes**



**Warning!** Some taxes are obligatory, such as the tax on entry into service and the annual road tax. Other taxes such as VAT or import duties, are due in specific cases depending on the country in which the vehicle was purchased and the latter's condition.

- The **tax on entry (taxe de mise en circulation)** into service is payable once the Belgian plate is acquired. It is calculated with the help of an official fixed rate scale per type of vehicle.
- The **road tax (taxe de circulation) is to be paid** annually. Its amount is assessed in function of the vehicle's power and is required from any registration number holder.

The Federal Public Service Finance is in charge of calculating these taxes, and they are made available on the websites of the Ministry.

- **Import tax** (import duties) will be due in the event that a vehicle was purchased (new or used) outside of the European Union. This amount is calculated on the customs value of the vehicle and is 10% for passenger cars.
- The **Value Added Tax (VAT)** is 21% on the sales price of the vehicle and on any import duties. It is due in both cases:

1. You purchase a new car in a country on the customs territory of the European Union to register it in Belgium.

2. You purchase a new or used car outside of the customs territory of the European Union to register it in Belgium.

**Warning!** A vehicle is considered to be new if the delivery is made within a time limit of six months counting from the date on which the car first entered into service or if the odometer reads less than 6,000 km.

More information.

### **SPECIFIC QUESTIONS**

#### **What to do if you do not have a European certificate of conformity?**

- Apply for one from the seller or from the sales rep for your vehicle's brand OR
- File the application in Belgium with your technical inspection department. This is what is referred to as the **conformity process**. **After** you have gone to customs (with your pink registration application form with the "705 label"), make an appointment with the technical inspection department to proceed to the vehicle's full inspection.

A record will be then created by the technical inspection department and forwarded to FPS Mobility. As soon as a positive response is received, the inspection department will contact you in order for you to collect the conformity document on site with your vehicle on which a sticker will be affixed close to the engine.

#### **What to do when you leave Belgium?**

You must request that your number plate be deleted from the system:

- Either return your plate to the DIV (Service Radiations, 56 Rue du Progrès, 1210 Brussels). The date the plate will be deleted from the system is the date of receipt of your number plate.
- Alternatively, drop off your plate in a box provided for this purpose at the DIV main office or branches.

**Warning!** Road tax remains due as long as the plate has not been deleted from the system!

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### **International and CD Number Plates**



If you are not registering a car as a full regular resident in Belgium, you may receive, for your vehicle, special number plates. The protocol of the international organization who is employing you, will provide you information on the delivery of such number plates.

## CD plates

CD plates are converted into European format plates, with the letters "CD" followed by the inscription in ruby red on white background. The inscription is made up of 2 letters followed by 3 numbers.

Applications are to be submitted to the Protocol Department, which will forward them to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DIV).

For an overview of these specific cases, please have a look at the list here:

<https://mobilit.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/Beslissingen%20invoeren%20Europese%20kentekenplaat%20FR.pdf>

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## Parking Policy



In Brussels the municipalities are in charge of the parking policy on their territory. With 19 different municipalities, there are also 19 different parking regulations. Whenever you park a car in Brussels, there are three options:

- pay and display (buy a ticket from a terminal and display it behind the windscreen)
- residents' parking permit and you don't have to pay
- place a blue parking disc behind the windscreen.

If you are a resident of a Brussels municipality, you can request a resident's card (or 'municipal parking permit'). This card allows you to park free of charge in your own street and also for the most part in your entire neighbourhood (or several neighbourhoods within the municipality). Each family can request one resident's card free of charge. You will have to pay for a second card (for a second vehicle). Submit an application for a resident's card to your municipal administration. Bring your ID card, vehicle registration and proof of insurance. In a few municipalities, the card can be renewed on the Internet.

Nearly everywhere in the Brussels-Capital Region you will have to pay to park your car on public roads. This discourages people to travel by car within the city. You can find parking terminals in many locations. Hours and amounts for these parking terminals vary from one municipality to another and sometimes even from street to street.

Most municipalities also have blue zones (mostly in and around shopping streets) for short-term parking (maximum 2 hours) where you are to place a blue parking disc behind the windscreen. These discs are sold in supermarkets for less than 5 euros.

Would you like to know more about the parking policy in your municipality? Go take a look at your municipality's website. It is nonetheless not easy to know in which municipality you are located. Various long roads in the Brussels-Capital Region run through various municipalities and drivers often have to be both municipal geography and parking regulations experts.

There are, in addition, various public paid car parks in the capital. Motorists are electronically guided from the circular road (road around the historic centre of Brussels) to these car parks. With an electronic arrow system you can see how many spaces are still available. These car parks are managed by private companies. Further information about these car parks, with addresses, rates and number of spaces can be found on Brussels Mobility.

More information about parking: [www.bruxellesmobilit.irisnet.be/](http://www.bruxellesmobilit.irisnet.be/)

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## Low Emission Zone



The most polluting vehicles are now banned from the LEZ (low emission zone) in Brussels-Capital Region in order to improve the quality of air. This regulation, which came into effect on 1st January 2018, concerns cars, certain vans, buses and coaches whether they are registered in Belgium or abroad. The Expat Welcome Desk explains the practical consequences of this matter...

### How do you identify the LEZ area?

All entries to the LEZ area in Brussels are identified by specific road signs which show that you are entering or leaving the low emission zone. Cameras have been set up just after the road signs to check that vehicles comply with the new access criteria.

### Vehicles registered in Belgium

To be driven in the LEZ area, Belgian-registered vehicles must comply with LEZ access criteria.

These criteria are based on the vehicle category, its fuel type and its Euro norm. The higher a vehicle Euro norm, the lower its emissions.

The Euro norm is usually indicated on the registration certificate of every vehicle. If this is not the case, the date of its first registration is determinant.

For example, a car registered between 1/07/1992 and 31/12/1996 will be considered to be "Euro 1".

The LEZ targets particularly old diesel vehicles, because they emit more pollutants which are harmful to air quality and health. Gas-powered vehicles (CNG and LPG) are treated as petrol vehicles.

Please note that as from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019, certain petrol vehicles will also be affected by the LEZ.

To find the date until which your vehicle is allowed to be driven in the Brussels LEZ area, use the following simulation tool:  
<http://sim.lez.brussels/intro>

The penalty for driving a non-compliant vehicle in the Brussels low emission zone is a €350 fine!

### **What about vehicles registered abroad?**

To facilitate checking at LEZ entry points, **these vehicles must be registered** before entering Brussels. This registration can only be made via the electronic form:

<https://irisbox.irisnet.be/irisbox/noauth/formulaire/bruxelles-fiscalite/inscription-lez>

This registration request is free of charge and simple to make (vehicle number plate, fuel type, details of person making the request, etc.).

If this procedure is not followed, the driver is liable to receive a €150 fine!

Foreign vehicle registration is valid for 3 years, on condition that the number plate is not changed.

### **What if your vehicle does not meet LEZ requirements?**

#### The day pass

Vehicles which do not comply with LEZ access criteria may still enter the zone by purchasing a day pass, which costs €35 per day. Access is authorised for a maximum of 8 calendar days a year per vehicle.

Drivers of vehicles with foreign number plates may also purchase this pass, on condition that they have first registered their vehicle online.

<https://www.lez.brussels/fr/content/pass-dune-journ%C3%A9e>

#### Change of vehicle

If your vehicle does not comply with Brussels LEZ access criteria, you can choose to:

- either have the vehicle scrapped in an approved centre. Please note that by scrapping it and not registering another vehicle for a year, you will be eligible for a Bruxell'AIR subsidy;
- or sell it on the second-hand market (but not in Brussels).

### **Bruxell'AIR subsidy**

All those domiciled in the Brussels-Capital Region who return their vehicle number plate and have their vehicle scrapped, will **under certain conditions** be eligible for a Bruxell'AIR subsidy: a mobility package covering various travel modalities including public transport pass, Cambio Start subscription, bicycle subsidy, and more.

Full details available at <https://www.lez.brussels/fr>

### **USEFUL LINKS**



#### **Federal Mobility and Transport Administration**

+32 2 277 31 11

[mobilit.belgium.be/fr](http://mobilit.belgium.be/fr)

📍 rue du Progrès - B 1210 Brussels

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