



Quick guide to driving a minibus

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Introduction

A minibus:

- is a motor vehicle with between 9 and 16 passenger seats in addition to the driver's seat, and
- may be driven for profit or for social purposes but the appropriate driving licence entitlement must be held. For minibuses, this is category D1.

If you do not hold category D1 on your licence there are still circumstances where you may drive a minibus.



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You can drive a minibus for any purpose:

- if you have passed a minibus driving test and hold a licence with unrestricted category D1, or
- if you have passed a bus test and hold category D.

By passing a test in either of these categories you can drive a minibus for profit (hire or reward), as part of your employment or for social purposes.

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You can drive a minibus for hire or reward if you have passed a:

- minibus driving test and hold licence category D1, or
- a bus driving test and hold licence category D.

A vehicle is used for hire or reward if payment is made directly or indirectly by passengers for any services which include the carrying of passengers. Operations likely to be seen as hire or reward include:

- courtesy bus services, and
- sightseeing tours

Payment could be made directly or indirectly to the driver of the minibus, or to the operator of the minibus service, by or on behalf of passengers.

Examples of indirect payments to the driver include:

- a salary paid by an employer
- a gift in lieu of payment, or
- payment for accommodation as a reward for driving.

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You can drive a minibus that is not being used for hire or reward if you passed:

- a category B (car) test before 1 January 1997 and hold licence category D1 with code 101, or
- a category B (car) test on or after 1 January 1997 and meet all the following conditions.
 - You are over 21 and have held a category B licence for at least two years.
 - The minibus is used by a non-commercial body for social purposes.
 - You receive no payment other than recovery of your out-of-pocket expenses (for example, fuel or parking costs).
 - You provide the service on a voluntary basis.
 - The minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes (4.25 tonnes if including any specialist equipment to carry disabled passengers).
 - You do not tow a trailer.

When your driving licence expires when you reach age 70, the entitlement to drive a minibus can be renewed upon request if you meet the medical standards required for category D1. This requirement applies to drivers who hold D1 with code 101, as well as those who drive a minibus with their category B licence, as explained above.

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Driving a minibus when you have a Section 19 permit

A Section 19 permit:

- is issued by the Traffic Commissioner and certain designated organisations
- is given to non-profit making bodies that run transport services which benefit the community, and
- allows vehicles to be operated for hire or reward without a full Public Service Vehicle Operator's licence and allows category B licence holders to drive minibuses.

To drive a vehicle under a Section 19 permit:

- you must have passed a car test before 1 January 1997 and hold licence category D1 with code 101, or
- you must meet the conditions for driving a minibus on a voluntary basis (see 'Driving a minibus that is not being used for hire or reward') by having passed a car test on or after 1 January 1997 and only holding a category B entitlement.

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