

Proposed improvements to New Zealand's Graduated Driver Licensing System.

The Government is proposing a package of changes to the driver licensing system, including removing the full test and introducing a number of safety mitigations for novice drivers (people on their learner or restricted licence). These changes will make the process for getting a full licence more accessible and efficient and bring our system more in line with other countries.

Proposed Changes

1. Remove the full test

This change would remove the full licence test. Instead of sitting the full test, you would need to keep a clean driving record on your restricted licence before you can progress to your full licence (see proposal 2).

2. Introduce a clean driving record requirement to the restricted licence

You must keep a clean driving record on your restricted licence before you can get your full licence. If you commit any driving offence (not including parking tickets), your restricted licence time would restart from the time of offence.

3. Reduce the demerit threshold for novice drivers to have their licence suspended

Currently if you reach 100 demerit points within two years, your licence could be suspended. Under the change, if you reach 50 demerit points while you are on your learner or restricted licence, your licence could be suspended.

4. Introduce a zero-alcohol limit for novice drivers

There is currently a zero-alcohol limit for drivers aged under 20 years. The change would extend this to novice drivers. This means if you are on your learner or restricted licence, you would not be allowed to drive after any alcohol, no matter how old you are.

5. Improve NZTA's oversight of approved advanced driver courses

NZTA approves courses which can reduce the time people spend on their restricted licence. The changes would give NZTA more ability to consider whether course providers are suitable and allow them to suspend or revoke providers where necessary.

6. Reduce the number of vision tests

Currently you need to have your vision tested at each licence application and renewal. The changes mean you would only need to sit a vision test when you apply for your first licence, and when you first renew your licence after you turn 45. The current requirements would stay the same for people over 75 years old.

How to Participate

Head to the Ministry of Transport website to find the consultation. [link to come]

Timeline

Consultation is open from **Monday 14 April – Monday 9 June**.

Once decisions have been approved by Cabinet, the new system will start on 1 July 2026.