



Driving in Europe

A drivers guide from Alphabet

As the UK leaves the European Union it is likely that your UK driving licence and insurance will not be recognised in Europe . This guide will help you to prepare.

When driving in Europe, you will need the following documentation:

- An **International Driving Permit (IDP)**, acknowledged by the country you're visiting
- The VE103 Vehicle on Hire certificate
- A **Green Card**, should you wish to use your UK insurance.

What is an IDP?

An IDP is a multi-language translation of your UK driving licence. The permit required varies according to the country you are visiting. For example, when in France you'll require an IDP 1968 which is valid for 3 years but in Spain you'll need an IDP 1949, valid for only a year. If you're travelling between countries, you will require the applicable permit for the country you are travelling in. And you will need to pay for each permit.

Check which permits you will need via the [Post Office website](#)

Where can you apply for an IDP?

The only place you can apply for an IDP is over the counter at a Post Office. There are over 2,500 in the UK that offer the service, which takes about 5 mins. You must be over 18 and have a full, valid driving licence to apply. You can check where your nearest IDP issuing branch is [here](#).

What do you need to apply?

A full, valid driving licence. Either a photo or the paper version is acceptable.

If you have a paper licence you will also need to take a valid passport for identification purposes

- A passport sized, recent photo of yourself
- £5.50 application fee, per permit payable by card or cash

What is a green card?

A green card is issued by your insurer to demonstrate that you have the minimum basic cover required to drive in Europe. It is basically an international insurance certificate - not an actual card but a piece of paper that must be carried if you're driving abroad.

If you take your car into Europe a green card is needed. You shouldn't need one if you're driving a hire car if you are covered under their insurance. The only other option is to purchase local 'frontier' cover but that may not be appropriate and could be costly.

What do I need to get a green card?

Your green card will be issued by your insurance company so you need to contact them.

The following is worth knowing:

- The green card should be free but some companies may charge a small administration fee
- It can take up to a month to receive your green card so plan ahead
- Your insurance will be invalid if you take your car abroad without a green card
- It's also illegal so you could be prosecuted and end up with a fine or having your car seized.

The Association of British Insurers have produced a simple summary with more information which you can find [here](#).

Please be aware that you will also need a minimum of 6 months before your passport expires to travel within Europe.

GB stickers and number plates

You should display a GB sticker on the rear of your vehicle and trailer, even if you currently have a number plate which includes the GB identifier.

You will need a GB sticker even if you have a number plate with the Euro symbol and Great Britain national identifier.

You are not required to display a GB sticker to drive in Ireland.

UK Government Guidance

In August 2019 the UK Government produced guidance on what you will need to be able to drive while visiting the EU if there is a 'no deal' Brexit. To view it, [click here](#).

More information

www.gov.uk/guidance/driving-in-the-eu-after-brex

www.postoffice.co.uk/international-driving-permit