

If you're new to professional driving and want to drive a lorry, bus or coach you must complete the Driver CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) [initial qualification](#). After you have completed this you will get a [driver qualification card](#) when you qualify. Like your driving licence, you must keep your Drivers qualification card with you when you're driving professionally.

Q. I am a new Driver, what do I have to do?

A. If you are a new driver, you must pass an initial driver CPC qualification before you can drive professionally. Then every 5 years thereafter complete 35 hours of Driver CPC periodic training.

Q. What is an initial qualification?

A. The initial driver CPC qualification is split into four parts.

1. Theory test
2. Case studies
3. Practical test
4. Vehicle safety demonstration

You must pass all four parts before you start to drive professionally

Q. What is Driver CPC Qualification?

A. Driver CPC is a legally required qualification for professional bus, coach and lorry drivers. It will:

- Improve your knowledge and skills
- Develop you skills and knowledge throughout life
- Improve road safety through better qualified drivers.

Q. Do I need to undertake Driver CPC Training?

A. You might not need to complete Driver CPC training, even if you're driving a large goods vehicle or passenger carrying vehicle. This depends on, the vehicle you are driving and what the vehicle is being used for.

Q. What Vehicles can I drive without Driver CPC?

A. You don't need Driver CPC if the vehicle you drive is:

- Being road tested after repair, maintenance or technical development
- New or rebuilt and not been put into service yet
- Limited to a top speed of 28mph

Vehicle uses where you don't need Driver CPC

You don't need Driver CPC if the vehicle you drive is:

- Used for non-commercial carriage of passengers or goods for personal use
- Used to carry material or equipment you use for your job - but driving the vehicle can't be the main part of your job
- Used for driving lessons for anyone who wants to get a driving licence or a Driver CPC
- Used by, or is under the control of, the armed forces, civil defence, the fire service and forces responsible for maintaining public order
- Used in states of emergency or for rescue missions

Q. Do I have 'acquired rights'?

A. You'll have 'acquired rights' if you're a:

- lorry driver and got your vocational licence (C, C1, C+E and C1+E) before 10 September 2009
- bus or coach driver and got your vocational licence (D, D1, D+E and D1+E) before 10 September 2008 - this includes a restricted vocational licence D(101) issued after 1991 and D1(101) issued before 1997

Your 'acquired rights' only counts for the type of vehicle you'd originally got your vocational licence for. You'd have to get the Driver CPC initial qualification for the other type of vehicle.

For example, if you drive a lorry and have 'acquired rights' and want to become a bus or coach driver, you would have to complete the initial qualification for Buses & Coaches.

Q. What does 'acquired rights' mean?

A. You could have the Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) through 'acquired rights' if you're already a professional lorry, bus or coach driver.

This means that because you've already been working as a lorry or bus driver, your experience is counted as the same as taking the Driver CPC initial qualification.

You'll still need to complete 35 hours of periodic training every 5 years to keep your Driver CPC

Q. When do I need to do Driver CPC periodic training?

A. It's up to you when you take the training courses, as long as you do them within 5 years.

Q. When does the 5-year period start

A. Each 5-year period starts from 5 years before your current Driver CPC qualification runs out - not from the date you completed your last 35 hours of training.

For all 'acquired rights' drivers it started on:

- 10 September 2008 for category D, D1, D+E and D1+E drivers
- 10 September 2009 for category C, C1, C+E and C1+E drivers

You must complete your 35 hours of periodic training in the 5 years before the earliest expiry date if you've got bus and lorry entitlements and want to keep your Driver CPC for both.

Q. How do I get my driver qualification card (DQC)?

A. After you've passed the initial qualification you'll get a driver qualification card (DQC).

You must carry your DQC while driving a large goods vehicle or passenger carrying vehicle.

If you have 'acquired rights' - You won't get a DQC if you have your Driver Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) through 'acquired rights' until you've done 35 hours of periodic training. Don't Worry... Your driving licence is proof of your Driver CPC until you've done this.

Q. I was driving professionally before Sept 2009, what does this mean for me?

A. You will have 'acquired rights'. You must gain 35 hours of periodic training every 5 years to keep your driver CPC qualification. Periodic training involves attending courses on various aspects of professional driving. Modules are normally delivered in separate sessions, each one lasting for 7 hours and all or most are classroom based learning.

Q. What is periodic training?

A. Periodic training involves attending courses on various aspects of professional driving. Most people aim to attend 1 course per year in order to achieve the target of 35 hours every 5 years.

Q. Where can I find Driver CPC courses?

A. Only approved courses through approved centres will count towards your Driver CPC Qualification. National Driver Training are pleased to say that we can offer a various range of approved Driver CPC courses.

Q. What happens when I complete my 35 hours?

A. You will receive a Driver qualification card. This is an EU directive and you will be breaking the law if you're driving without one after Sept 2014.

Q. I have 'acquired rights' do I have to complete the 'Initial qualification'?

A. You do not have to complete the 'Initial qualification'. You do however have to complete 35 hours periodic training before Sept 2014.