

Vocational driver licence renewal – section 88

Renewing a vocational driving licence is a critical aspect of maintaining a legal, robust, and efficient transport operation.

Whether you're a haulage company, a passenger transport service, or a delivery business, staying compliant with the regulations is essential.

This Fact Sheet explores the process for renewing a vocational driving licence and details the requirements in place should drivers' renewals be delayed beyond the expiry date of their existing licence.

- No photo enclosed. This can be checked if required by looking at the expiry date on the photo on the driving licence.
- No signature by the driver on the declaration section.
- No D4 medical enclosed (if required) with the application form.

If delays to the renewal mean that a new licence hasn't been received before the expiry date of the old one, the driver may have to stop driving vehicles requiring vocational entitlement!

Section 88

Introduction

As a vocational driver (category C, C1, C+E, D etc) your 'group two' driving entitlement has enhanced requirements over a light vehicle licence holder.

Once a driver reaches the age of 45, the vocational licence entitlement must be renewed to continue driving. This then continues every five years until the age of 65, after which the entitlement must be renewed every year.

To renew, DVLA (DVA for Northern Ireland) will send a renewal application approximately 60 days from the licence expiry. The application includes a D4 medical report form (DL1 for Northern Ireland) which must be completed by a doctor and may also require input from an optician.

As professional drivers, the responsibility ultimately lies with the licence holder for ensuring they are fully complying with their licence terms, and operators have a duty to ensure all drivers working for their business are compliant.

Delays to renewals

Apart from the late submission of applications, there are several common reasons why applications are rejected and sent back to drivers which delay the renewal process. These are:

- Eyesight questions not answered.
- Failure to ensure the Doctor has completed the medical report blood pressure question.



As a safeguard, and only intended as a last resort, *The Road Traffic Act 1988* contains section 88 which may allow drivers to temporarily continue driving after the expiry their licence providing the following specific conditions are met:

- A correct and complete vocational licence renewal form has been received by DVLA/DVA in the last 12 months. Send using a tracked and traceable postal service to provide confirmation of receipt. Inputting your email and mobile number onto the form will ensure DVLA are able to send updates via SMS and email.
- The doctor must have told the driver they are fit to drive. If the Doctor is unsure, further guidance is available on GOV.UK – [Assessing fitness to drive](#).
- The driver's vocational group two licence entitlement has not been suspended, revoked or refused by a traffic commissioner.
- Any conditions specified on the driver's previous licence that still apply continue to be met, for example wearing eyesight correction.

- The driver was not disqualified as a high risk offender (a driver convicted of a serious drink driving offence) on or after 1 June 2013.
- The last driving licence was not revoked or refused for medical reasons.
- The driver is not currently disqualified from driving by a court.
- The driver has held a valid driving licence, and only drives vehicles they have applied for on the current application and were entitled to drive on their previous licence.

Operators should also check with their insurance provider to ensure they cover a driver whilst driving under Section 88.

Ongoing medical conditions

If the driver has a medical condition which has become worse since the previous licence was issued, or develops a new medical condition, they must inform the Drivers Medical Unit, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU.

Failure to do so is a criminal offence punishable by a fine of up to £1,000. Further information is available on GOV.UK – [Health conditions and driving](#).

Photo validity

A change made within the third EU driving licence directive saw an introduction of a five year validity period on all vocational licences. Therefore there is a possibility that your entitlement would expire on a different date to the photocard.

To cater for this DVLA has a process to align the licence and category entitlement renewal dates.

Checking licence

Drivers can check their licence information using online checking services. Three pieces of information are required:

- Driving licence number.
- National Insurance number (NI).
- Postcode.

Drivers will be asked to tick a box to confirm they are the licence holder. Once the information has been inputted drivers will be able to view personal details such as:

- Name.
- Address.



- Date of birth.
- Endorsements and penalties (if any), when they were added and when they expire.
- Licence categories which can be driven and when they need to be renewed.

The services can be accessed at:

- DVLA – [view or share driving licence](#)
- NI Direct – [view or share driving licence](#)

Drivers must...

- Ensure they only drive vehicles their licence entitles them to drive.
- Know the expiry date of entitlements and promptly deal with the application process to ensure plenty of time for renewal.
- Look after their physical and mental health to ensure they continue to meet the medical standards for their vocational licence entitlement.
- Tell DVLA/DVA and their employer about a medical condition which affects their ability to drive. Most drivers who tell DVLA/DVA about a medical condition still keep their entitlement.

References

Road Traffic Act 1988

INF188/6 – Can I drive while my application is with DVLA?

GOV.UK – Health conditions and driving