

Driving in the U.S. and Visiting the BMV

Definitions

- The **Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)** is the state agency responsible for regulating vehicles and licensing drivers.
- A **learner's permit** is a document that permits individuals 18 and older, who are learning to drive, to practice driving *only* when a licensed driver is in the front seat of the car with him or her.
- A **driver's license** is a document that permits a person to drive a car in the United States.
- An **international driving permit** is a document obtain in the driver's home country that translates the license into ten languages.

Three Options to Drive in the U.S.:

If you have a valid, unexpired driver's license from your home country AND an official international driving permit:

- You are permitted to drive in the U.S. for one year.
- You must have both documents with you while driving.

If you have a valid unexpired driver's license from your home country WITHOUT an international driving permit:

- You need an official translation of your driver's license. *ISSA does not provide translations.*
- Visit the BMV with ID to complete a driving skills exam, a written exam, and a vision screening.

If you do NOT have a driver's license from your home country:

- You will first need to obtain a learner's permit at a BMV branch.
- Follow the BMV instructions for the learner's permit, passing the driving skills test, and obtaining a license.

Application Instructions for Indiana Driver's Permit or License

1. Prepare for the written knowledge exam. *Review the Driver's Manual at <http://www.in.gov/bmv/2362.htm>*
2. Bring the following **original** documents to the BMV (*Verify that your name is spelled consistently on all of your documents.*):
 - Passport with student visa (Citizens of Canada and Bermuda will NOT have a visa)
 - I-94 card (print your I-94 record at <https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94>).
 - Current Form I-20 or DS-2019
 - Social Security Card or Letter of Social Security Number Ineligibility (wait 14 business days after ISSA check-in to apply)
 - Two documents with your name and address proving your Indiana residency, i.e. utility bill, bank statement, your student account statement, an official transcript, etc.
 - Driver's license from your home country and an official translation, if applicable. *If you have an International Driver's Permit, this serves as an official translation. If your license is in English, you do not need a translation.*
 - Students on Optional Practical Training (OPT) will need the valid Employment Authorization Document (EAD)
3. At the BMV, you must pass the vision screening and two exams:
 - Written knowledge exam (arrive at least one hour before the branch closes in order to take the exam)
 - Driving skills exam
 - If you have a valid license from your home country, you can schedule the driving skills exam immediately.
 - If you do not have a valid license, you will receive a learner's permit and can take the exam after 180 days.
4. Once you've passed the exams, the BMV will give you a temporary 30-day license. When the BMV has determined that you are lawfully present in the U.S. and you have passed all the exams, they will mail your driver's license or driver's permit to you.

Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) Information (<http://www.in.gov/bmv/>)

South Bend Branch (take bus #7 to South St station)
623 South Saint Joseph Street
South Bend, IN 46601
(574) 233-2149

Mishawaka Branch
2544 Miracle Lane
Mishawaka, IN 46545
(574) 255-9620

Updated 02/14/2017