

9. Transport in Ireland

Public Transport

Buses are the main form of public transport in most of the country. Ireland's national bus company is called Bus Éireann. It operates a number of services, including commuter services for cities such as Waterford, school buses, rural services, Expressway (inter-city) and Eurolines (to Europe). Rural areas are either served by what is known as Stage Carriage, which are regular daily services stopping on request where required, or Rural Services that run one day a week to a market town from the surrounding area. Expressway services run between larger towns and cities and there is no need to book a seat; tickets can be bought on the bus. There are also a number of private bus companies in each county.

The Eurolines service provides links to 1500 destinations in Europe. Details of timetables and fares can be found at the website shown below.

The Rural Transport Initiative provides a number of public rural transport services for those living in rural areas. See the local directory or contact your local CIC for more details.

The South East is relatively well served by the rail network. The national rail company is called Iarnród Éireann. There are different types of fares available and to find the best one for your needs, and for timetable information, see the website given below.

Contact Details

Bus Éireann

www.buseireann.ie

Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail)

www.iarnrodeireann.ie

Also check The Golden Pages

Driving in Ireland

Safety

Motorists drive on the left side of the road in Ireland. Everyone in a car must use a seatbelt – both front and back.

Appropriate child restraints must also be used, preferably in rear seats, for all children aged under twelve years old and depending on their height. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that this is the case. The speed limit is usually 50km/hour in cities, towns, villages and other built-up areas unless otherwise stated. It can be up to 80km, 100km, 120km/hour depending on the status of the road in other places. Roads are patrolled by Gardaí in marked and unmarked police cars and they do speed



checks. A penalty point system is in operation in Ireland whereby points are given for many offences, including speeding, mobile phone use, dangerous overtaking and failure to obey traffic lights. Drivers caught for these offences must pay a fine and receive penalty points on their driving licence (12 penalty points in 3 years mean you lose your licence).

It is illegal to drive under the influence of drugs or with a blood alcohol level of over 80 milligrams per ml in Ireland. There is no safe amount that you can drink – some people may be under the limit with one drink, others are not. It is culturally unacceptable to drink and drive in Ireland. The Gardaí have the power to stop drivers and randomly breath-test them. Detailed information on driving rules, road signs, etc. can be found in the book “Rules of the Road”, available in libraries and bookshops.

Driving Licences

If you already have a driving licence that was issued in an EU country, or Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, you can drive in Ireland for as long as it is valid. You may apply to exchange it for an Irish licence within one year of arrival, but this is not obligatory. If you have a licence from any other country, you may drive in Ireland for up to 12 months. However, if you plan to stay longer than 12 months you should apply for an Irish driving licence from your Local Authority. Drivers with licences from Australia, South Africa, Japan, Switzerland, South Korea, Jersey, Isle of Man or Gibraltar can exchange for

an Irish licence within one year of arrival, with no need to sit the driving test. You are obliged to carry your licence with you at all times when driving in Ireland.

How to Apply

The first step is to apply to your Local Authority for a provisional licence, which is usually valid for 2 years. Applicants must first pass a driving theory test (a written test on the rules of the road etc.). Once you have a provisional licence, you can start learning to drive. However, while on your first provisional licence, you must always drive under the supervision of someone with a full licence. When you are a competent driver, the next step is to apply for a full driving licence. To do so you must pass an oral and practical driving test. Full licences should be renewed every 10 years.

Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT)

In Ireland all vehicles must be registered with the Revenue Commissioners (except those brought in temporarily by a visitor). If you are moving to Ireland or are already living here and are importing a car or buying a new one, you must first do three things:

- Pay VRT
- Have motor insurance
- Pay motor tax



Vehicle registration tax is payable on registering the vehicle. Penalties for failing to pay this tax include forfeiture of the vehicle and prosecution. Strict time limits apply for registering the vehicle from the time when it is brought into the State. The form you receive on paying the tax allows you pay motor tax.

Certain groups are exempt from having to pay VRT:

- Visitors resident in Ireland temporarily who have owned the vehicle abroad for more than 6 months
- People who have moved here permanently and who have owned the vehicle abroad for more than 6 months
- Certain disabled drivers
- Diplomats

For more information on VRT, see www.revenue.ie.

Insurance

Motor vehicle insurance is compulsory in Ireland. You cannot drive a vehicle for which you are not insured and all vehicles must have an insurance disc displayed on the windscreen. Costs can vary greatly between different insurance companies so it is advisable to check prices with several companies. Some will accept a no-claims bonus from abroad. However, you will need to provide written evidence of your insurance record and each case is assessed individually. This includes vehicles that are registered outside the State. The Gardaí have the power to impound them if they are driven in Ireland without insurance and you may face a heavy fine or jail sentence.

Motor Tax

Drivers must also pay motor tax for their vehicle. The rate of tax varies depending on the engine size – the bigger the engine, the higher the tax. Motor tax discs (like insurance discs) must be displayed on the front window of your car at all times. When you have paid for your first motor tax disc, it can subsequently be renewed on-line. Further information and applications forms can be obtained from your local Motor Taxation/Drivers' Licence Office (See contact details below).

National Car Test (NCT)

To ensure they are roadworthy, all vehicles that are four or more years old must pass the National Car Test. Cars that pass the test are issued with an NCT disc that must also be displayed in the front windscreen. The disc is valid for 2 years and then the car must be re-tested. Vehicles that fail the test cannot be driven in a public place.

Parking

Parking is not allowed on roads or streets with double yellow lines, on footpaths and within 5 metres of a junction. Parking on streets with single yellow lines is forbidden at certain times. These times will be shown on a sign nearby (usually 8.30am – 6.30pm, Monday – Saturday). Cars parked illegally may be towed away or clamped. Look carefully for signs warning clamping is in operation. Drivers with a disability may apply for a parking permit that allows them to park in disabled driver spaces

Some cities and towns operate a paid parking system. This may be ticket or disc. Cars parked in a disc parking area (indicated by street parking signs) must display a valid parking disc. Cars that

overstay their disc may get a parking ticket fine or be clamped. Discs may be purchased at some newsagents and tickets can be bought at ticket machines on the street.

Contact Details

Motor Tax Offices

Carlow

Athy Road, Carlow

Tel: 059 9170342

Email: motortax@carlowcoco.ie

Kilkenny

County Hall, John's Street, Kilkenny

Tel: 056 779 4100

Email: motortax@kilkennycoco.ie

North Tipperary

Kickham Street, Nenagh

Tel: 067 44701/8

Email: motortax@northtippcoco.ie

South Tipperary

Emmet Street, Clonmel

Tel: 052 34444

Friar Street, Cashel

Tel: 062 64700

Email: motortax@southtippcoco.ie

Waterford

Cathedral Square, Waterford City

Tel: 051-849972

motortax@waterfordcoco.ie

Shandon Road, Dungarvan

Tel: 058 22087

Email: motortax@waterfordcoco.ie

Wexford

County Hall, Wexford

Tel: 053 9176333

Email: motortax@wexfordcoco.ie

Driving Tests

www.drivingtest.ie

National Car Testing Service (NCTS) Ltd.

Customer Service,

Citywest Business Campus,

Lakedrive 3026, Dublin 24

Tel: 1890 200670

Email: info@ncts.ie

www.ncts.ie