

Driving in B.C. Without a Valid B.C. Driver's Licence

Unlicensed drivers are a chronic problem on B.C. roads. Many have outstanding fines for driving without a driver's licence and other traffic offences, and they breach the insurance of any vehicle they are driving.

The consequences of driving unlicensed are severe. Repeat offenders will be prohibited from driving as an incentive for them to get a driver's licence and to drive legally. As you will read in this fact sheet, the consequences for those who continue to drive unlicensed ramp up.

The Consequences of Driving Unlicensed

The first time police catch you driving unlicensed, you will receive a violation ticket for driving without a valid driver's licence. You will not be permitted to drive the vehicle any further on the road.

If you are caught driving unlicensed and have a previous 'No Driver's Licence' conviction, a notice on your driving record will inform the peace officer of this and the vehicle you are driving will be impounded immediately, for seven days, whether it is owned by you or not. You will also be prohibited from driving on the spot. The consequences of continuing to drive without a driver's licence get tougher at that point.

If you continue to operate a motor vehicle after being prohibited from driving, you will be charged with 'Driving While Prohibited' which is punishable by a \$500 fine and up to six months in jail for a first offence.

Drivers Licensed Outside B.C.

You may drive in B.C. for up to six months if you hold a valid foreign or out-of-province licence. If you are a new resident to the province, you must obtain a B.C. driver's licence within 90 days of your arrival if you wish to continue to drive in B.C.

If you are licensed elsewhere, you must produce a driver's licence at the request of a peace officer. If a licence is not produced, a 'Notice of Driving Prohibition' will be issued right then and there. If a driver's licence is produced, the driver should be allowed to continue on their way unless the officer has evidence to suggest you should be holding a B.C. driver's licence.

Driving Prohibition Term

The driving prohibition is indefinite, continuing until you get a valid B.C. driver's licence. This will involve meeting all other licensing requirements that you may have been avoiding over the years (such as outstanding traffic fines).

Having the Driving Prohibition Reviewed

If you believe you should not have been identified as an unlicensed driver or that you have a reason to be exempt from the requirement to hold a valid B.C. driver's licence, you may submit your reasons in writing to the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles. An adjudicator will consider this submission and compare it with the your driving record.

The adjudicator's review decision will be sent to you once your application has been considered.

Applying for a Review

You may download an “*Application for Review of a Driving Prohibition for Driving While Unlicensed*” from the OSMV website (shown below). Along with the completed form, enclose a \$50.00 review fee (certified cheque or money order made payable to the Minister of Finance) along with the information or evidence needed to support your application. If you are claiming you are exempt from requiring a valid B.C. driver’s licence, you will need to submit proof to the adjudicator that you had a valid licence from another jurisdiction at the time of the incident, as well as proof that you are exempt from the requirement to hold a B.C. driver’s licence.

If you are claiming that you should not have been identified as an unlicensed driver, you will have to explain why.

You can submit the package to the Superintendent at the address below.

Review Results

If the adjudicator decides the prohibition is to be terminated, the adjudicator will inform you and let you know when any exemption might expire. The reinstatement fee that is payable when you re-apply for a B.C. driver’s licence would be waived only if the out-of-province licence was produced at the time the prohibition was served.

If the driver was incorrectly identified on their record as an unlicensed driver, this will be corrected and the driver will not be required to pay the reinstatement fee.

If the review is conducted and the prohibition is confirmed, you will be advised that you will remain prohibited from driving until you obtain a B.C. driver’s licence.

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OSMV WEBSITE: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv