

Driving in Massachusetts¹

This information below will be useful to you if you do not currently have a valid U.S. driving license from any state **AND** if you fall into one of the two categories below:

- A. **Valid International Driving License Holder:** You have a valid driving license from your home country and wish to drive in the U.S.
- B. **New Driver:** You do not have a valid license and wish to begin your driving journey in the U.S.

Please consult the appropriate section for more information.

A. Valid International Driving License Holder

As someone with a valid driving license from your home country, you have two options. The first is a temporary option, useful for your time at Wellesley College. The second option is more permanent, and particularly useful if you know that you will not be in the U.S. or Massachusetts beyond your time at Wellesley College. The second option is the recommended option.

1. Temporary Option(s)

- I. Obtain an International Driving Permit (IDP) from your home country
 - An IDP is recognized in 174 countries, and contains your name, photo, and driver license information, translated into 10 languages.
 - It proves your right to drive in whatever country you are in, and can serve as a legitimate form of photo ID.
 - An IDP is **only good for one year**, starting from the date of issuance.
 - You are eligible if you are:
 - 18 or older
 - Have a valid driver's license that is valid for at least 6 months past the issuance of the IDP.
 - **You can only apply for an IDP from your home country.**
 - An IDP is useful if you intend on borrowing someone's car or renting a car, but will not be eligible for a ZipCar membership.

¹ Adapted from <http://www.dmv.org/ma-massachusetts/apply-license.php>. This information may change. Please check the website directly for more detailed and up to date information.

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- II. Apply for a ZipCar membership with your international license
- Being here at Wellesley College grants you access to ZipCars on campus.
 - Typically, you can only apply for a ZipCar membership if you hold a valid U.S. driving license. However, they now have some room for valid international driving license holders.
 - You will have to send them documentation from your home country regarding your driving history.
 - See http://members.zipcar.ca/apply/foreign-drivers?zipfleet_id=40436214 for more information.

Note: These options are **temporary**. You are legally allowed to drive in Massachusetts for up to 1 year from your arrival date each time you lawfully enter the U.S. However, the moment you become a resident of Massachusetts, Massachusetts law requires you to obtain a valid Massachusetts driving license, with no grace period. There appears to be less stringent requirements about students residing in the state, which grants you these temporary options.

2. Permanent Option

The option that grants you full, permanent legal right to drive in Massachusetts and other states is to obtain a Massachusetts driving license. You are eligible to apply for a Massachusetts driving license if you meet the following identification requirements²:

- You have proof of residency (which can be obtained from Wellesley College).
- A valid and current foreign passport
- A Social Security Number or a Denial Notice issued by the Social Security Administration
- THREE other forms of identification, with at least one from the provided Primary Identification list. All forms of Primary Identification must be original copies.
- Please refer to <http://www.dmv.org/ma-massachusetts/apply-license.php> for a full list of primary and secondary forms of identification.

If you meet the eligibility requirements, please refer to <http://www.dmv.org/ma-massachusetts/apply-license.php> for a very clear, detailed list of the steps you will need to take to obtain your Massachusetts driving license.

B. New Driver

If you are a new driver, you will not be eligible for the temporary options available to international driving license holders. **Refer to the Permanent Option detailed above for more information.**

If you are 18 or older and a first-time driver, the Department of Motor Vehicles recommends that you enroll in a driver education course. This is not required by law (unless under 18), but taking a supplemental course will contribute to confidence and better preparation for testing.

² For non-citizens only