



Information Note

Requirements for recruitment of HGV Drivers who are non-EEA citizens

This information note is intended to provide guidance to the Irish road haulage industry on the requirements that must be satisfied when recruiting HGV drivers from non-EEA countries (other than UK citizens who are covered by the Common Travel Area). The EEA (European Economic Area) consists of the European Union (EU) Member States and Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway.

The HGV driver profession in Ireland is subject to a wide range of EU and national regulations. In order to qualify to work as a HGV driver in Ireland a non-EEA national must go through a number of different stages, involving a range of different State bodies. An Irish employer of a HGV driver who is a non-EEA national must also ensure all relevant regulations are complied with. Website links to the relevant information available from these State bodies are provided below. The most up-to-date information will be available directly from those State bodies.

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Employment Permit Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)	Visa (if required) Department of Justice	IRP (Irish Residence Permit) Card Department of Justice	HGV Driving Licence, Driver CPC Card, Driver Card and Driver Attestation Road Safety Authority (Department of Transport)

HGV drivers applying for an Irish Employment Permit must have a HGV driving licence that can be exchanged for an Irish HGV driving licence (*i.e.*, licences deemed equivalent to Irish CE or C1E category licences for articulated HGVs). HGV driving licences issued in a non-EEA country can only be exchanged for an Irish HGV licence if the licence is issued by a country with which Ireland has a driving licence exchange agreement that covers the relevant HGV licences.



Ireland currently has driving licence exchange agreements that cover HGV licences with **South Africa, Australia, Republic of Korea, and Japan**. Agreements with a number of other non-EEA countries are currently being considered.

Stage 1: Employment Permit

To work as a HGV driver in Ireland, non-EEA nationals will need an Employment Permit. There had been a quota of 320 such permits, but it was announced on 28 October 2021 that this quota is being removed and there is now no quota in place. Applications can be submitted online along with supporting documentation and the relevant fees on the Employment Permits Online Portal:

<https://epos.djei.ie/EPOSONlineportal#/app/welcome>.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) requires that a foreign national seeking employment as a HGV driver in the State (1) holds a driving licence that is deemed equivalent to an Irish CE or C1E driving licence, through a driving licence exchange agreement between the Road Safety Authority (RSA) and the appropriate regulatory authority in another jurisdiction; and (2) provides a copy of that driving licence in its entirety with his/her application for an Employment Permit.

If an applicant meets all the criteria for an Employment Permit, the permit may be granted for a period of up to 2 years. A permit can be renewed for up to a further 3 years. Further information on Employment Permits is available on DETE's website here: <https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/What-We-Do/Workplace-and-Skills/Employment-Permits/>.

The User Guide for the Employment Permits Online System is available here: https://epos.djei.ie/EPOSONlinePortal/UserGuide_v2.pdf.

When DETE receives an Employment Permit application for this category of employment, DETE contacts the RSA to request that the RSA contact authorities in the relevant jurisdiction, e.g., South Africa, to confirm driving licence details and issue a letter of verification to the RSA. DETE forwards copies of both the front and back of the appropriate licence to the RSA with the application, as the back of the licence may, in specific cases, contain data relevant to the licence issued. Thus, prior to the granting of Employment Permits, the RSA carries out this validation process with the relevant jurisdiction. The RSA then issues a letter of verification (*i.e.* noting that the RSA has checked/verified the licence) to DETE.



Note: The most recent driving licence details must be used in applications to avoid any undue delays.

Stage 2: Visa

Some non-EEA citizens require a visa to enter Ireland, while others do not. A person can find out if they are a visa required national here:

<http://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-visit-ireland/visit-ireland-travel-path/>.

As listed at the previous link, nationals from South Africa, Australia, South Korea, and Japan do not currently require visas to enter Ireland.

If the person is not a visa required national, they can move to Stage 3.

If they are a visa required national, only after an applicant has successfully been granted an Employment Permit should they apply for an Employment Entry Visa. The Employment Permit should be submitted alongside all other requested documentation with the application. The full list of required documentation can be found here:

<https://www.irishimmigration.ie/coming-to-work-in-ireland/what-are-my-work-visa-options/applying-for-a-long-stay-employment-visa/employment-visa/#guide>.

Applications are made via [AVATS](#), and applicants are advised to apply at least 8 weeks in advance of their intended travel dates. Applicants will be advised at the end of their online application where to submit their application and supporting documentation – this will usually be to their local Irish Embassy or to Visa Division in Dublin.

If a HGV driver is granted an Employment Entry Visa and has moved to Ireland, they must then obtain an Irish Residence Permit card (IRP card) from the Department of Justice (see Stage 3 below).

Stage 3: IRP (Irish Residence Permit) card

If a HGV driver is granted an Employment Permit and has moved to Ireland, they must then register their permission to be in the State within 90 days to obtain an Irish Residence Permit from Immigration Service Delivery (ISD) at the Department of Justice.

Registration allows the immigration authorities to record people's permission to live in the State and the conditions attached. Once someone successfully registers, they are granted an Irish Residence Permit, which proves they are legally in the State.



People living in Dublin city or county must register with ISD in Dublin and can find details here: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/registering-your-immigration-permission/how-to-register-your-immigration-permission-for-the-first-time/information-on-registering-if-living-in-dublin/>.

People living outside Dublin must register at their local office through the Garda National Immigration Bureau: <https://www.irishimmigration.ie/registering-your-immigration-permission/how-to-register-your-immigration-permission-for-the-first-time/information-on-registering-if-living-outside-of-dublin/>.

It is only when a driver has their IRP card that they can apply to the NDLS (National Driver Licence Service) to exchange their driving licence for an Irish one. They surrender their foreign licence to the NDLS at this point. See below and information here: <https://www.ndls.ie/licensed-driver/exchange-my-foreign-driving-licence.html>.

Stage 4: HGV Driving Licence, Driver CPC card, Driver card and Driver Attestation

Holders of licences issued by countries with which Ireland has a HGV driving licence exchange agreement (at present South Africa, Australia, South Korea, and Japan) and which are deemed equivalent to Irish CE and C1E licences may undertake a direct 'swap' for Irish licences if they choose to take up residence and work in Ireland as HGV drivers.

i) HGV driving licence

Following the above stages, the driver applies to the NDLS in Ireland to exchange his/her HGV driving licence for an Irish licence. It is important that the driver presents his/her most recent driving licence to the NDLS. Licence exchange may require further checking by the RSA and follow-up with the relevant jurisdiction's authorities.

Details are available at this link: <https://www.ndls.ie/licensed-driver/exchange-my-foreign-driving-licence.html>.

A list of all the documentation required to exchange a non-EEA licence is available at this link: <https://www.ndls.ie/licensed-driver/exchange-my-foreign-driving-licence.html#to-apply-online-to-exchange-a-foreign-driving-licence-issued-by-a-recognised-state>.



Note: The most recent driving licence details must be used in applications to avoid any undue delays. In some cases, the NDLS will need to contact the country that issued your licence, and this may cause a delay in issuing you an Irish licence.

- ii) Driver CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) card
In order to drive a HGV professionally in Ireland, the driver must hold a valid Irish Driver CPC (Certificate of Professional Competence) card. The following RSA webpage has detailed information regarding what is required for a non-EEA HGV driver who has an Irish Employment Permit in order to attain an Irish CPC: <https://www.rsa.ie/services/professional-drivers/cpc/foreign-cpc-drivers>.

- iii) Driver card (also known as digital tachograph card or Digi card)
The applicant's Irish HGV driving licence is required to apply for a digital tachograph card. Drivers can apply online for an Irish tachograph driver card (digi card) from the RSA at the following link: <https://www.rsa.ie/services/professional-drivers/tachographs-information>.

- iv) Driver Attestation
Article 3 of Regulation (EC) No 1072/2009 provides that "International carriage shall be carried out subject to possession of a Community licence and, if the driver is a national of a third country, in conjunction with a driver attestation". Article 5 of the same Regulation deals with driver attestation. Non-EEA nationals who are not long-term residents in the Union, within the meaning of Council Directive 2003/109/EC11, and who work for a Union haulier holding a Community licence require a driver attestation.

The Road Transport Operator Licensing Unit of the Department of Transport issues Driver Attestations to operators who employ third country drivers. The application form is available on www.rtol.ie.

Road Transport and Freight Policy Division

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