

ICBC L & N Driver Restrictions Epic Summary & 29+ FAQ

 drivinginstructorblog.com/n-driver-restrictions/

Carmen

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ICBC L & N Driver Restrictions British Columbia

If you were wondering things like...

Do N drivers have a curfew?

What are the rules for N drivers in BC?

Can you drive after midnight with an N?

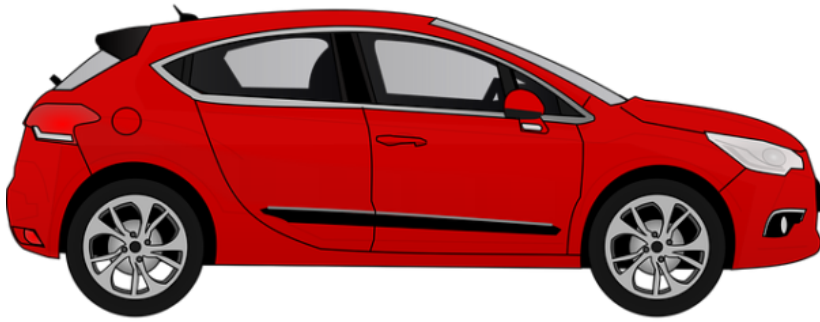
Are N drivers allowed to use GPS?

Can new drivers listen to music?

How many passengers can L and N drivers take?

This article will answer all these questions, plus so many more.

ICBC gives the gift of a lot of L & N driver restrictions. These are in place for both class 7L 'learner drivers' and class 7N 'new drivers.'



Both new and learner drivers have with their own set of rules and regulations. Some of them overlap. This is all part of ICBC's graduated licensing program.



Jump to a section:

These N driver restrictions are in place to keep **inexperienced** drivers as **safe as possible**.

To do this, ICBC had to try and **reduce the amount of distractions** for the driver.

Multiple studies have found that **new drivers crash much more when their friends are in the vehicle with them**.

Read more: [Graduated Licensing – Year Six Evaluation Report](#)



That's why you'll notice some pretty stringent requirements in the **passenger restriction sections**.

So, let's go through this. We will discuss the 'L' or Learner rules.

Then we will move onto the 'N' New driver rules.

But first, let's go through a few of the similarities for **both the 7L and the 7N licenses**.

L & N Driver Restrictions – Electronic Devices

ICBC's L&N Driver Restrictions Quic... x
[ICBC's L&N Driver Restrictions Quick Guide](#)

For Both 'L' & 'N'

- **No hand-held cellphones** or other electronic devices
- **No hands-free cellphones** or other electronic devices
- Do not touch, operate, hold or adjust **your phone**
- **Bluetooth with wireless headset** is not allowed
- Using **speakerphone** that can be operated with one touch or voice commands is not allowed
- Do not program a **GPS system**
- You can **not select music from your cellphone**
- **Do not wear earbuds**
- Connecting your cellphone or hand-held device **to play music** on your in-vehicle audio system is not allowed

*Keep in mind, these N driver restrictions laws are for **when you are driving**.

It's okay if you want to safely pull over and park, and then connect your music for example. Just do not even think about touching any of the above **while driving**.

These laws are in effect even when you're stopped at a red light, or stuck in bumper-to-bumper traffic.

Read more: Use of Electronic Devices, BC Government 



Port Moody Police

@PortMoodyPD

You're 5x more likely to be involved in a crash when using a phone behind the wheel. Remember to leave the phone alone while driving! We have been enhancing our distracted driving enforcement this month. @roadsafetykath @icbc <https://t.co/9KrW4Usca8>
8:55 PM · Mar 9, 2022

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Can N Drivers Listen to Music?

Yes, you can listen to music while driving. But, you **can't use electronic devices while driving.** In other words, **set up your music before you drive.**

Then, put it away. Do not touch any electronic device whatsoever while driving. Or, **just use the radio or CD player if those are options in your vehicle.**

Distracted Driving Fines & Penalty Points

The fines for **distracted driving** are **not cheap** these days. One ticket costs \$368 and 4 points; for a total of \$620.

If you aren't familiar with ICBC driver penalty points, they are a bad thing, and add an additional charge on top of your fine.

Motor Vehicle Act section	Description	Fine	Point level
214.2 (1)	Using electronic device while driving	\$368	4
214.2 (2)	Emailing or texting while driving	\$368	4

- Four points costs \$252
- 50 points will cost you \$34,560

How Do ICBC Penalty Points Work?



Port Moody Police

@PortMoodyPD

Did you know #DistractedDriving is a contributing factor in nearly 1/3 of fatal crashes in B.C.? Throughout the month of March, we continue to enhance enforcement - with fines starting at \$368. #EyesForwardBC <https://t.co/R3ydybjGKz>

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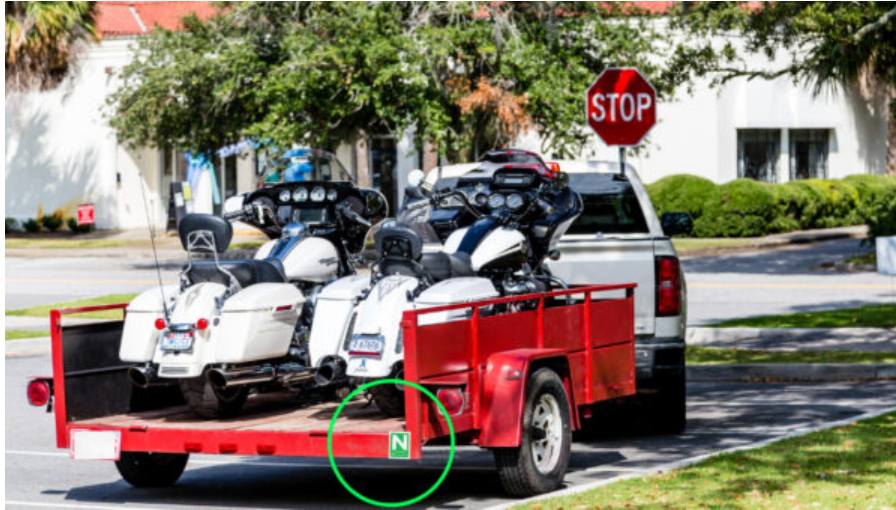
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You Must Prominently Display The Official 'L' Or 'N' Sign



- Your 'L' or 'N' sign needs to be **clearly visible**. Do not hide it half behind your license plate
- It is supposed to let drivers around you know to be a **little more patient**
- If you're **driving a trailer**, put the 'L' or 'N' sign on the back of the trailer; not on the back of the vehicle



Remember the whole point of it is for **other people to actually see it**.

If you're going for driving lessons with a driving school, you don't need to put the L or N sign on the car.

That's because driving school cars are required to have big signs. These signs say 'student driver' attached to the back of the car for people to see. You can always add the sign if you like.

L & N Driver Restrictions Zero Drugs & Alcohol

For both L and N drivers, there is a strict **zero alcohol & drugs tolerance** law.



Driving In the U.S. & Across Canada

Yes, the N driver restrictions allow for **both N and L to drive across Canada & in the U.S.** Just make sure to follow the same **restrictions** displayed on the back of your license. You might need a magnifying glass to read it, but it's there.



When in Rome.... I mean, **when in the USA, do as the Canadians do.** If you do get pulled over, authorities will look at your license. They will be able to see your L and N driver restrictions. And, they'll expect you're following them.

Driving On the Highway/Freeway



Can Class 7 Drive On Highway In BC?

Yes, you can drive on the highway & freeway with your Learner's license and New driver license (Class 7L & 7N). The only exception is if it indicates you aren't allowed on the back of your license. This is rare.

The only way to get **better and more experienced at driving** is to **actually drive**. That's why **brand new learner drivers with their Class 7 are allowed to drive on the freeway and highway**. The highway/freeway – ironically – isn't the most dangerous place for new drivers.


The **most dangerous place (for all drivers) is intersections**. The second most common place where crashes happen is parking lots.


Just be sure to keep your eyes up far ahead when on the freeway, this will help keep your car control smooth. And stay in the right lane; **the left lane is for faster traffic**.

What Vehicles Can New Drivers Operate?

Freeway Driving Burnaby - Kensington To Brunette Ave

L & N Driver Restrictions

Class 5 or 7 (novice L & N) licence holders are allowed to operate passenger vehicles that have 2 axles , such as:

- **Cars & vans**
- **Construction & utility vehicles (2 axle max)**
- Light trucks
- Limited-speed motorcycles or ATV's (all terrain vehicle)
- **Any motor home (may exceed 2 axles) not equipped with air brakes** 
- 3-wheeled vehicles; does not include 3-wheeled motorcycles (trikes) or motorcycle/sidecar combinations

Can A New Driver Tow A Trailer?



New drivers and learner drivers in BC (Class 7 L & N) are allowed to tow a trailer that weighs up to a maximum 4,600 kg GVW (gross vehicle weight).

GVW is the combined **weight of your trailer and its load.**

Say a trailer weighs 4,000 kg when empty. You can tow the trailer with a Class 4, 5 or 7 (novice) driver's licence.

Just be careful, because after you load the trailer with loot, the GVW might exceed 4,600 kg. So do **'watch your weight'** especially if you're packing your collection of designer marble counter tops or something like that.

Can A New Driver Rent A U-Haul?



U-Haul  requires that renters be **at least 16 years old to rent a trailer**, and **18 years old to rent trucks**. You **do not need a special driver's license** to rent a U-Haul, since they are **not classified as commercial vehicles**.

According to U-Haul, **learner drivers are not able to drive**. However, **new drivers are able to rent and drive U-Hauls**.


Any license which grants ability to drive without supervision will work. Learner's permits are not acceptable.

U-Haul 

Be sure to follow all of your N driver restrictions when driving U-Haul.

Class 7L Learner Restrictions

A Learner is a new driver who has either never driven before, or has driven a small amount, or infrequently enough to be needing another Learner's license.

These are the most inexperienced drivers. Passing the knowledge test with ICBC.  – which includes a road signs test – is required to 'get the L.'

Learner Driver Restrictions: Your Required Supervisor

When you have your 'L'

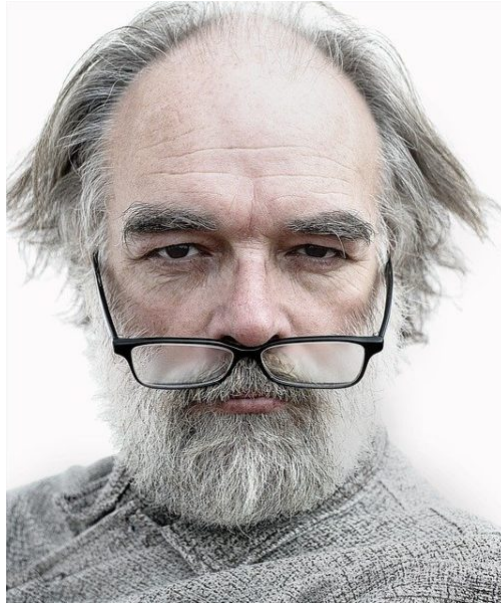
Your supervisor must be at least **25 years or older** (or any age if they are a licensed driving instructor)


The supervisor must **hold a valid driver's license**, other than a learner's license or Class 7, of a class that permits operation of the motor vehicle category

'N' New drivers can not supervise 'L' drivers

Must sit in the front seat beside the driver

Hopefully your supervisor is not quite as serious as this guy... —>



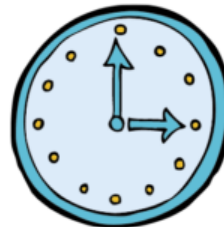
No offence to 'the guy,' whoever you are. Loving that *smouldering intensity sh%#*  right there.

New Driver 'L' Restrictions: Permitted Driving Hours

ICBC permits you to drive between **5 am and midnight only, with the L.**



**5 AM
to
MIDNIGHT**



Length of 'L' Phase

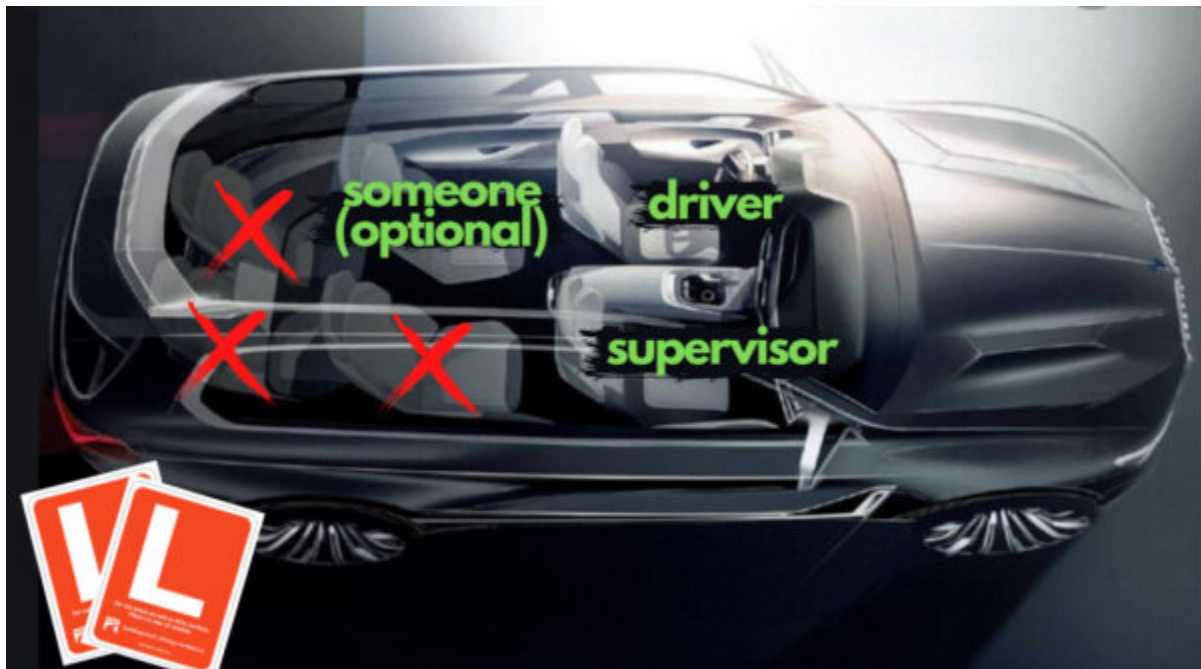
This 'L' stage lasts for **at least 12 months**, after which time you can take your '**N' Road Test**. Get 26+ epic tips for the road test.

If drivers don't behave, their L phase can last much longer.

ICBC has set the 'L' driver's license to be **valid for 2 years**. You can renew it by re-taking the knowledge test, if it does expire.

How Many Passengers With 'L' ?

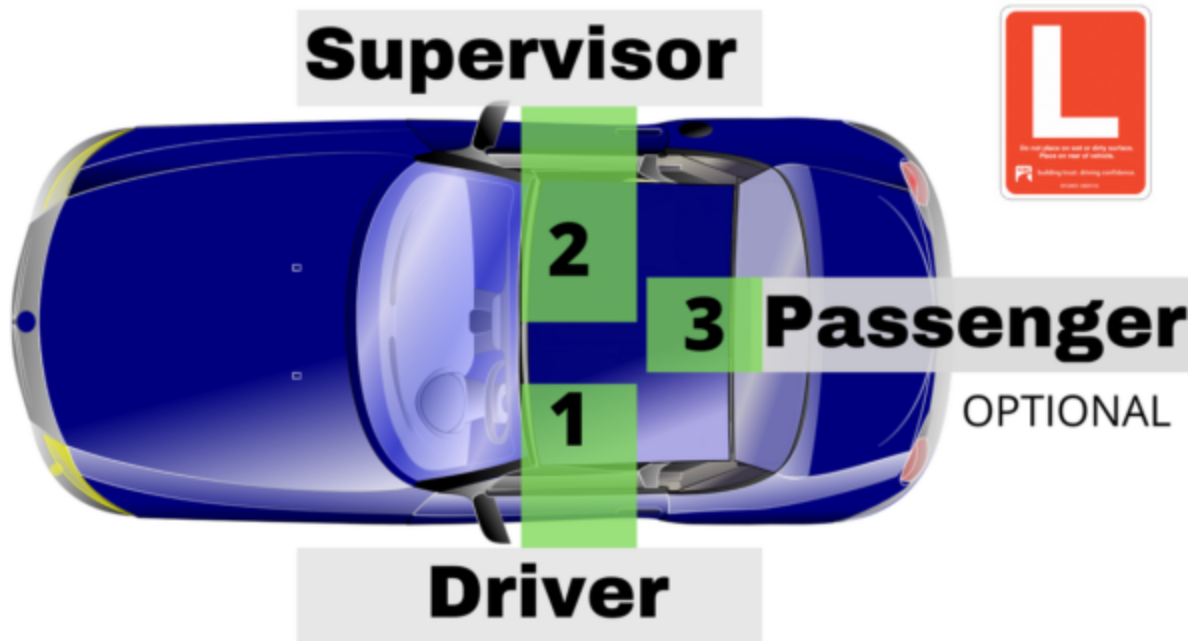
Maximum 3 People In The Car In Total Including The Driver



Learner drivers can only have **2 passengers in the car**, maximum.

The only people allowed in the car are:

1. The driver
2. The supervisor
3. The **optional** other passenger



Class 7 – N Driver Restrictions

Rules For 'N' Drivers In BC

A **new driver** is a human who has passed their very **first road test**. Not necessarily on the first try.

So, they will have driven with somebody for at least a little while. That somebody may have been a **family member, friend, or a driving instructor**.

As soon as they get their 'N', **they may drive alone** for the first time in their life. Ah, freedom.

There is no road signs test to get your 'N' per se, but the examiner will be able to tell if you see and know your road signs while you are driving.

'N' Passenger Restrictions

You can **only take 1 passenger in this stage**, unless they are your **immediate family members**, or, if you have a supervisor with you.

If you so desire, you can **fill up your vehicle with family members**, as long as they all have a seat belt of course.



Additionally, you may also drive with as many people as you have seat-belts for, if you have a supervisor with you.

The supervisor must be the usual supervisor: aged 25 years or older, with a valid class 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 driver's license. They need to sit beside you in the front seat.

Immediate Family Members Definition

What counts as immediate family members? Immediate family means

- Parents
- Children
- Spouse
- Brothers
- Sisters
- Grandparents
- Step-parent
- Step-grandparent
- Step-child
- Step-brother
- Step-sister
- Foster-parent
- Foster-grandparent
- Foster-child
- Foster-grandchild
- Foster-brother
- Foster-sister

... but not cousins. Cousins are not considered immediate family.

Think of cousins as 'friends.'

Spouse Definition For ICBC Restrictions



What counts as a spouse?

A spouse is defined as someone who was **married** to another person at ‘the relevant time’ or who was **living for minimum 2 years or longer** immediately before the ‘relevant time’ in a **marriage-like relationship**.

This includes **marriage-like relationships** between **people of the same gender identity**.

Length Of Time In ‘N’ Stage



2 YEARS



Part of the N driver restrictions includes the amount of time in this stage. This stage must last for **at least 24 months** (2 years), unless you have successfully completed a **GLP driver education program**. However, **your N license won't expire for 5 years**.

In the case you've completed an approved driver education program, your 24 months can be reduced to 18 months.

If your license is **suspended, cancelled, expired, or surrendered**, you must **wait longer** to qualify for a full privileged driver's license.

Once your license is reinstated, your 24 months will start over from the beginning.

Can You Renew Your N License BC?

Even though you can take your **second road test** after **two years**, your 7N Novice license **won't expire for five years**. After five years, if you're still not ready for the second road test, you can simply **renew your drivers license**, just like anyone else. You'll just need to **go to ICBC, pay a fee, and get a new photo taken**.

The only thing to be aware of is the amount of time your 'N' license has been expired. If it's **been expired for a long time** (don't quote me but I believe it is 2 or 3 years), then you won't be able to simply renew it. At that point you'll need to do another road test, or, you can also just get a BC-ID card which is a non-drivers photo ID, if you're not into driving anymore.

Time Of Day Restrictions

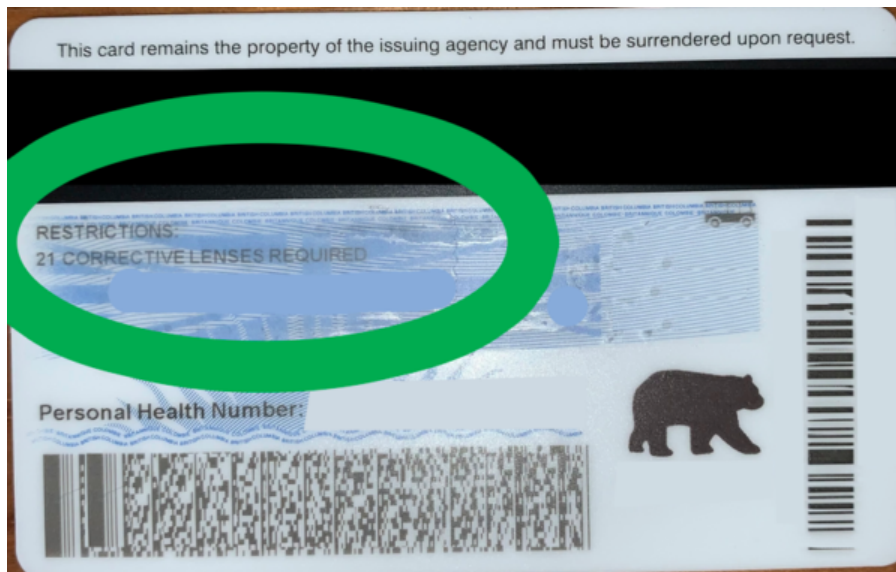
Can N Drivers Drive At Night In BC?

Yes, Class 7N new drivers can drive **at night or anytime 24/7/365**. There are **no time restrictions – you may drive whenever you like**, as long as you're following all of the restrictions printed on the back of your license. The only time restriction in the **graduated licensing program** is for **Learner – 7L** – drivers, who are restricted to **5 a.m. till midnight**.



What Are Your Particular New Driver Restrictions?

FYI: **Your customized restrictions** are printed on the **back of your drivers license**. You may or may not need a magnifying glass in order to read them.



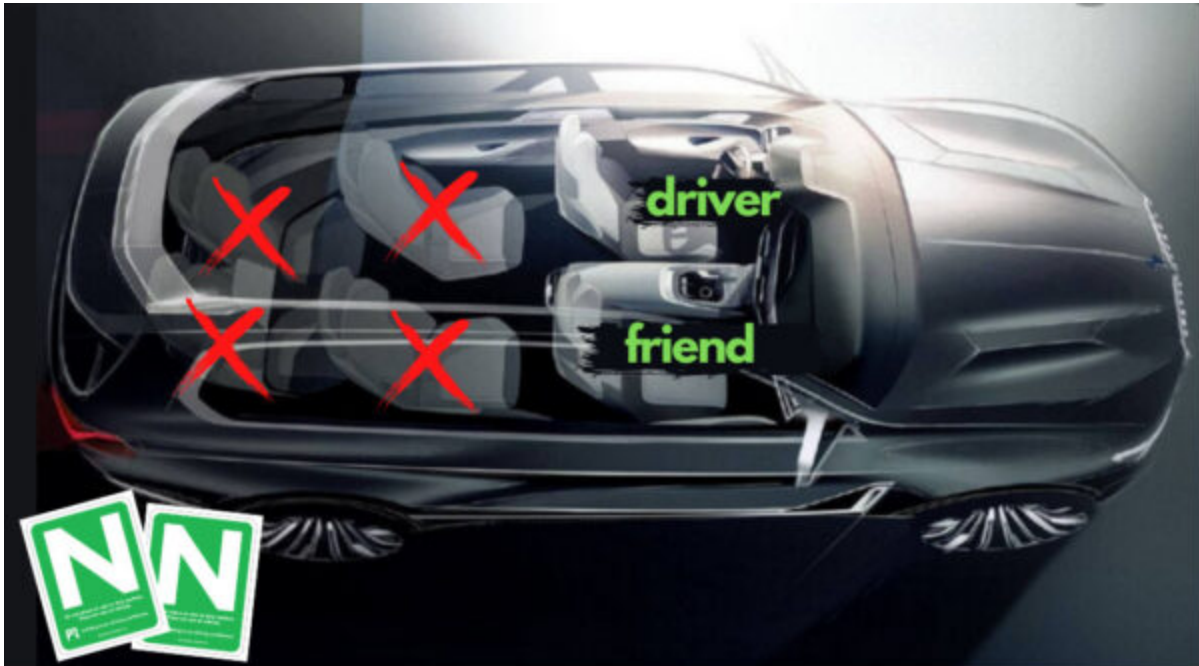
[Read about the graduated licensing program on the ICBC website.](#) 

[ICBC FAQ's \(Can I drive outside of BC with my L or N\)](#)

'N' Novice Driver Passenger Restrictions

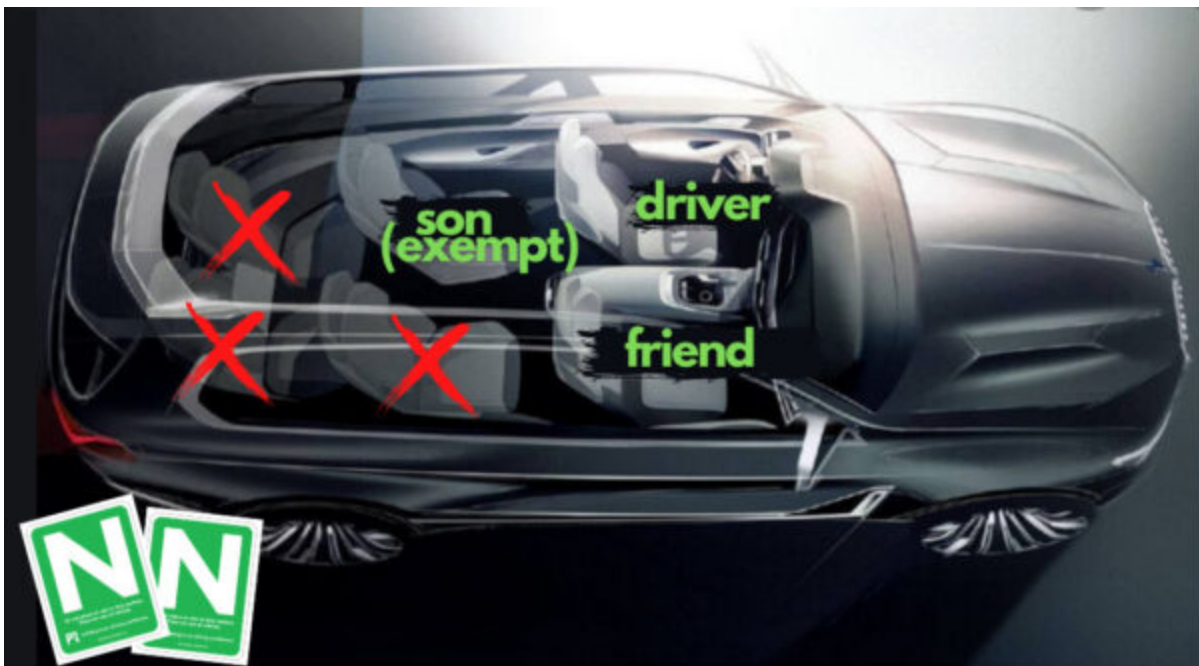
How Many Passengers With 'N'?

New drivers can only have ONE passenger as per their new driver restrictions...

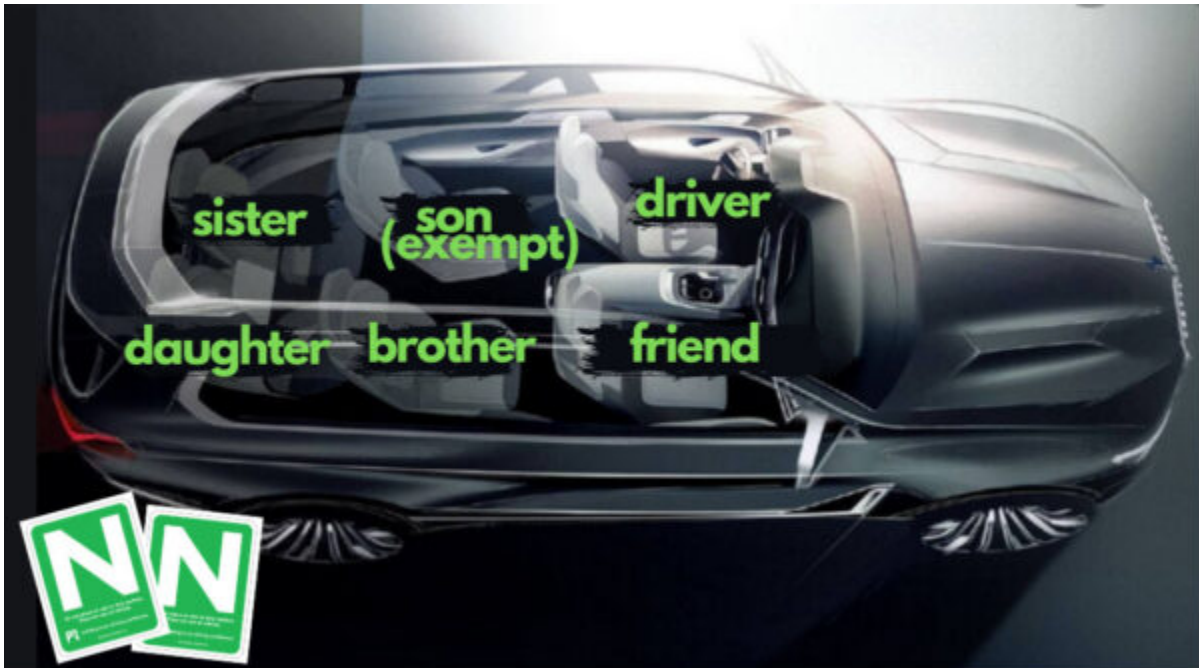


...Immediate family members are exempt from the rule

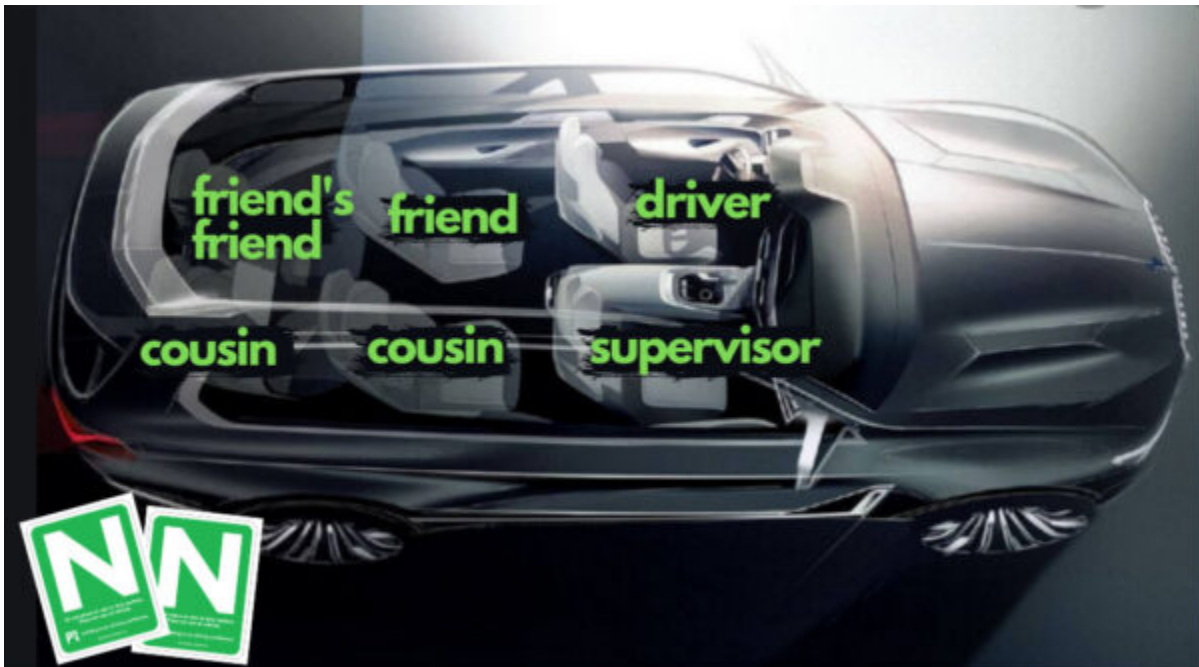
These new driver restrictions may be annoying and inconvenient and. But, they aren't forever.



That means you can fill up your car with immediate family members and you can still have ONE friend (or non-immediate family member)



You can also fill up your car with any kind of people you want IF you have a qualified supervisor with a full license class 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5

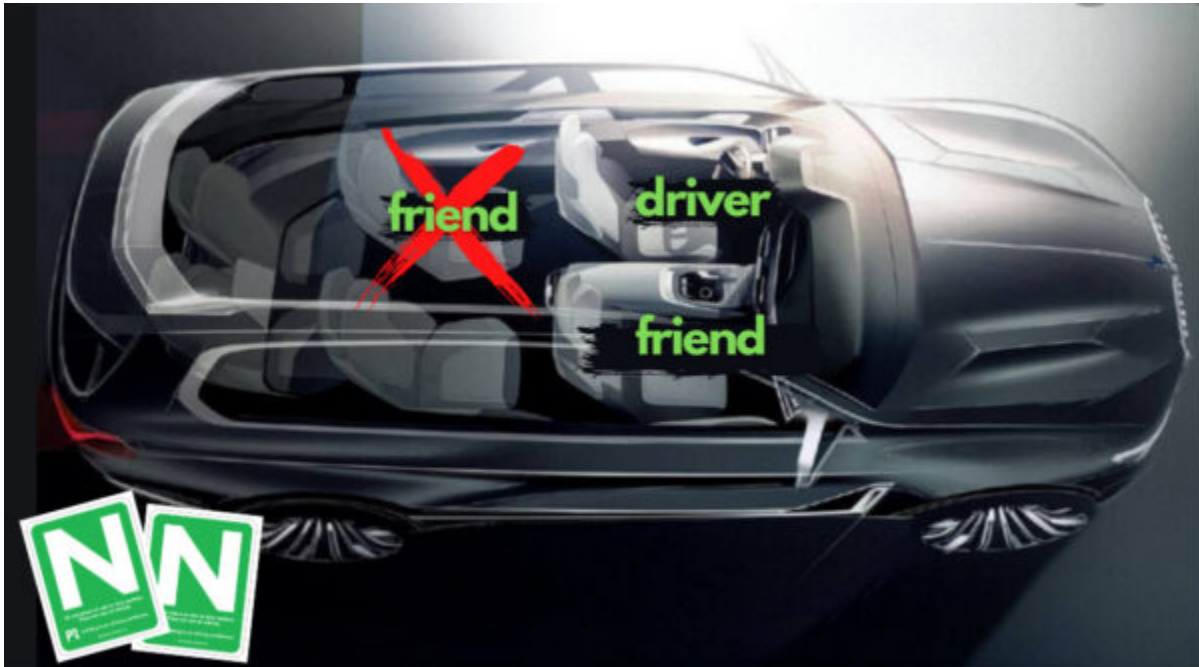


N Driver Restrictions: You Are Not Allowed To Drive With TWO Friends

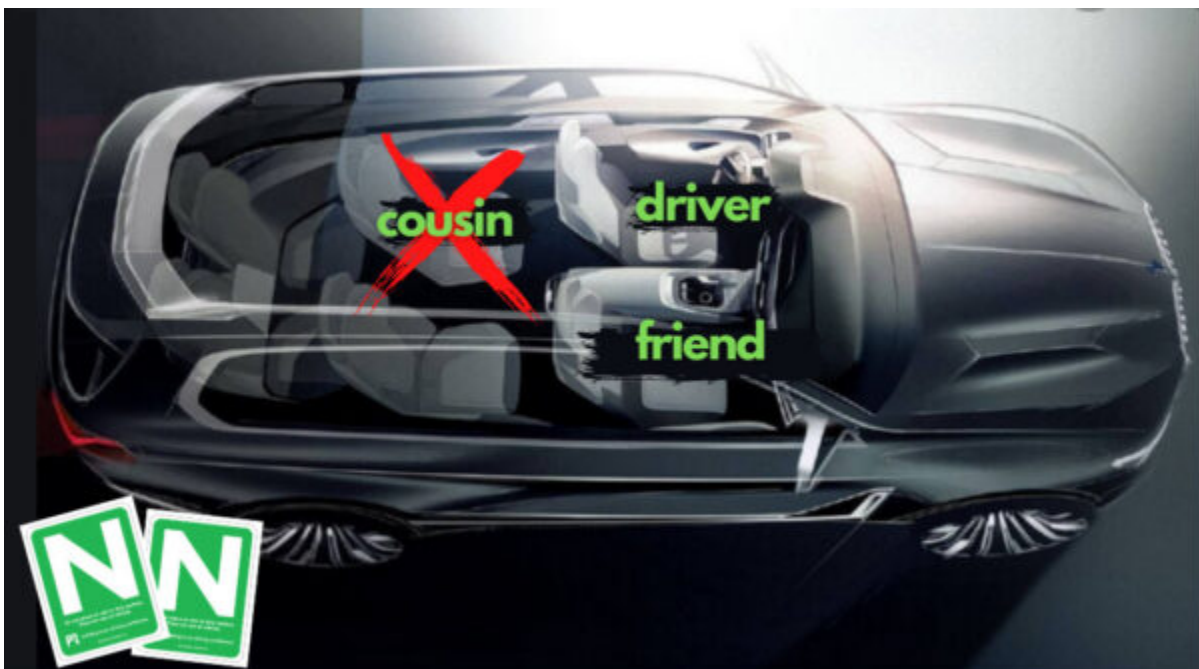
Sorry... You can only have ONE friend. Friends are nice, but have been proven to be very distracting for new drivers.

ICBC has found that **new drivers who drive around with friends in their vehicle are much more likely to crash.** And unfortunately, some people's friends have been lost this way.

Wondering about crashing your friends' car? You're not the only one.



You can not drive with one friend plus another person who is NOT an immediate family as defined by ICBC above



Remember the reason that these restrictions are in place are to **keep people safe**. **New drivers are more likely to have a crash** when compared with experienced drivers, even without distractions.

Does ICBC Check The 60-Hour Log?



It's highly recommended that new drivers drive for at least 60 hours before attempting their first road test.

But no, ICBC does not check your '60 hour log;' Which is/was a paper form to keep track of your on-road practicing hours.

Can I Buy A Car With L License In BC?

Yes yes you can, you can buy and insure a car with a learners license in BC, why not? Just follow the restrictions on your license as usual. Make sure you have a supervisor when you are driving it, display your L sign, etc. etc., etc.

When beginning to drive and own a car, make sure you know about car insurance premiums, and how liability and comprehensive insurance work, as you'll need to make some decisions around those.

Pro Tip: It may be helpful to grab some mini blind spot mirrors  or a convex rear-view mirror  from Amazon or somewhere else. These can literally be your extra eyes, and **help you to see so much more**. Sometimes they might not feel right on a smaller car because they take up so much room on the side-view mirrors which tend to be already pretty small, but you might like them anyway. For larger vehicles, I really did not understand what I was missing until I got some of these mirrors, and I wished I had gotten them sooner. Why stress out about blind spots if you really don't have to? I still like them today, even as an experienced driver.




There Is a Pulse In Your Thumb

Okay this is just slightly random, but I thought I'd throw it in here for good luck. Avoid checking someone's pulse with your thumb. Your thumb has its own.

Can a New Driver Drive With a Baby in British Columbia?

Yes, just be sure to **follow your passenger restrictions. Immediate family members are exempt from the one-passenger restriction in the 'N' stage.** In other words, daughters and sons are allowed.

Read about car seats on Transport Canada: [Child safety car seats](#) 

The [safest place for a car seat](#)  is in the rear, middle seat, as it is farthest away from potential airbags and impact.

Read more: [Car Seat Regulations BC – The Basic Guide](#)

Lost Your L or N Sign?

If you lost your L or N sign, you have a few options. You could:

Make sure to attach it to your vehicle so that it's clearly visible. Unfortunately, making your own sign is not permitted.

Otherwise, you will need to [visit ICBC](#).  Check ahead of time as many locations are only allowing appointments.

Question: Is It Illegal To Keep An “N” Or “L” On The Back Of A Vehicle All The Time Even If The Driver Is Not In The Learners Or New Category?

Answer From The VPD (Vancouver Police Department) Via Email:

The simple answer is “no” it is not illegal, but keep in mind that you may be stopped if you are the lone occupant of the vehicle driving while displaying an “L” sign. The “L” sign requires the driver to be accompanied by a qualified supervisor. If an officer sees a vehicle operated by a lone individual while displaying an “L” sign the officer will more than likely stop the vehicle to ascertain if he/she is contravening the licence restrictions.

Penalty For Driving Alone With Learners Permit In BC

If a **learner driver drives alone**, without supervision, it's hard to say exactly what the **consequences** will be. **Police** can use their **discretion**. Some of the **possibilities** include:

- Getting a **ticket** for “driving contrary to restrictions”
- Your vehicle may be **towed** at your expense
- Your case may be sent to the **superintendent** (supervisor of motor vehicles department) for review
- Your drivers license may be **suspended for 3 to 6 months** (once suspended, you'll need to restart the graduated licensing program time frame)
- **At-fault collisions** that have potential to haunt you forever (not trying to be dramatic, it's kind of true)



Port Moody Police

@PortMoodyPD

This afternoon, an "L" driver who just failed his @icbc road test was caught excessively speeding by officers (94km/h in 50 km/h zone) - without a required supervisor. His vehicle was impounded & a violation ticket was served roadside. #slowdown <https://t.co/3rxQc9z6nu>




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Can An N Driver Drive My Car?

Since September 2019, ICBC has changed their insurance model. They're moving to a more **driver-based** system. Yes, new and learner drivers can drive your car, but ICBC asks you to list **who drives your car**. **Examples are** family members and employees – including learner drivers  and new drivers.


You can **add a learner** or a new driver to your listed drivers at an Autoplan broker office. You will need their driver's licence number and **birthday**. You can add or remove listed drivers anytime.

If an **unlisted driver** crashes your car, you could face a financial consequence unless you have Unlisted Driver Protection .

Driver-based model: Under the new model, at-fault crashes will follow the driver, not the vehicle.


However, crashes caused by learners won't go on their driving record. The learner stage will also not count towards their driving experience.

ICBC – For parents of teen drivers

My eBook for new drivers and co-pilots. I still can remember what it was like to be a teenager. I learned how to drive with some adults, but they weren't driving instructors. When I became one I realized what such a big difference there was. Knowing how to drive and knowing how to teach driving are like two very different things. In my freshly created eBook I wanted to try to minimize the disconnect between learners and co-pilots... Because let's face it, there seems to be one! Check it out on my eBook Selz store and reduce the stress. 

Common ICBC Restriction Codes

BC Drivers License Restrictions Examples


Wondering what those numbers on your license mean? Here are some common ICBC restriction codes. 

- Restriction 14 – Restriction 14 may be applied to a licence as a result of a road test. Drivers with this restriction are not permitted to operate a vehicle on highway 99 South of Vancouver, or highway 1 east of Van, or west of highway 9.
- Restriction 21 – Corrective lenses required
- Restriction 39 – Qualified supervisor required age 25+, 1 passenger
- Restriction 43 – 5 am to midnight only L
- Restriction 45 – 1 passenger unless supervisor aged 25+, family exempt

- Restriction 46 – 0 BAC/BDC (blood alcohol/drug content), must display L sign, no electronic device
- Restriction 47 – 0 BAC/BDC (blood alcohol/drug content), must display N sign, no electronic device

Conclusion

These new driver restrictions can seem downright annoying. But of course they are there to try and keep people safe. New drivers are simply at increased risk of crashing and causing injuries. This is due to many factors; two of the most important being driver inexperience, and driver distraction, and sometimes you can throw raging hormones and some other stuff into the mix there, too.

The brain does not fully develop until the age of 25.  The part of the brain that doesn't develop until age 25 is called the prefrontal cortex. Impulsive behaviors may be much more tempting up until the age of 25. This is why it's not a coincidence that many car rental companies charge a "youthful surcharge" or have an additional fee for those under 25. They aren't simply hating on your age; those under 25 statistically crash more.

No one says you have to learn how to drive at any certain age (I mean, maybe they do..), but just learn when you feel ready.

My recommendation would be to follow the rules and avoid getting any tickets. Get through the graduated licensing program as efficiency as you can. Even though it may not seem like it, there is a full privilege drivers license waiting at the end of it all. And I think the marvelous newfound freedom that comes with that will all be worth it.



If you have problems saying 'no' to your friends, it may be helpful to drive a car that only has 2 seats such as:

- Honda CR-Z 
- Mazda MX-5 Miata
- Nissan 370Z
- Smart Fortwo
- BMW Z4
- TT Roadster

Just something to think about. Need to brush up on your Canada road signs, or road lines?

Read More: Distracted Driving – Province of British Columbia

Reference: Get Your N – ICBC

Pro Tip: It may be helpful to grab some [mini blind spot mirrors](#)  or a [convex rear-view mirror](#)  from Amazon or somewhere else. These can literally be your extra eyes, and **help you to see so much more**. Sometimes they might not feel right on a smaller car because they take up so much room on the side-view mirrors which tend to be already pretty small, but you might like them anyway. For larger vehicles, I really did not understand what I was missing until I got some of these mirrors, and I wished I had gotten them sooner. Why stress out about blind spots if you really don't have to? I still like them today, even as an experienced driver.

Read more:



Me back in the good ole days when the gas price was 97 cents!

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