

TIMELINE

1888	- The first recorded sale of a manufactured motor car was to Emile Roger of Paris, who bought a petrol-driven Benz.
1907	- Cabs with meters began operating in London.
1930	- Regulations introduced covering endorsements fitness declaration. Age restrictions and a form of driving test brought in for disabled drivers. Full licences for disabled drivers valid for a year. - The Road Traffic Act 1930 introduces licensing system for PSVs.
1931	- PSV drivers could be required to take a test at the discretion of Traffic Commissioners. - First edition of the Highway code introduced.
16 Feb 1934	- Licences for lorry drivers are introduced under the Road Traffic Act, 1934. The licensing authority may require the applicant to submit to a practical test of their ability.
1934	- 'Belisha' beacons provide advanced warning of new pedestrian crossings.
1935	- A 30 mph speed limit introduced in urban areas. Windscreen wipers used for the first time.
1935	- Voluntary testing is introduced by the Road Traffic Act, 1934, to avoid a rush of candidates when the test becomes compulsory. Mr J Beene is the first person to pass his driving test, at a cost of 7 shillings 6d.
1 Jun 1935	- Compulsory testing brought in for all drivers who started driving on or after 1 April 1934: around 246,000 candidates apply and the pass rate is 63%, with 250 examiners taking at least nine and up to sixteen, half-hour driving tests a day. Examining staff also make all test bookings. There are no test centres: examiners meet candidates at a pre-arranged spot such as a car park or railway station. - Anyone buying a driving licence must put 'L' plates on the car and eventually take a driving test to get their full licence.
1 Jan 1937	- Speedometers and safety glass in windscreens are made compulsory. - Provisional licences are brought in for HGV drivers.
2 Sept 1939	- Driving tests suspended for the duration of World War Two and resumed on 1 November 1946. During the war, examiners are designated Traffic Officers and supervise fuel rationing.
1 Jan 1940	- HGV licences and tests are suspended during World War Two.
18 Feb 1947	- A period of a year granted for wartime provisional licences to be converted into a full licence without passing the test.
1950	- The pass rate for the driving test is 50%.
1951	- Zebra crossings introduced.
19 Oct 1956	- The test fee doubles from 10 shillings to £1.
24 Nov 1956	- Testing suspended again during the Suez Crisis. Learners allowed to drive unaccompanied and examiners help to administer petrol rations. Testing is resumed on 15 April 1957 and has continued uninterrupted ever since.
15 Jul 1957	- Provisional licences are no longer over-stamped with 'passed test'
1 Sept 1957	- The three-year driving licence is introduced under the Road Traffic Act 1956. The fee for a replacement licence, if lost or defaced, rises by

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	150% from 1 shilling to 2 shillings 6d.
1 Mar 1958	- Provisional licences are valid for six months
Dec 1958	- The M6 Preston Bypass was the first stretch of motorway built.
2 Nov 1959	- The M1 was officially opened. In the early days there was no speed limit, no central reservation, no crash barriers and no motorway lighting.
1959	- Examiner training transferred to the newly acquired Stanmore Training School. Up until now, examiners have been trained 'on the job'
1 Jul 1961	- Learner riders are restricted to machines of 250 cc capacity, to try to reduce motorcyclist fatality figures.
1 Apr 1962	- People who have held more than seven provisional licences are required to take a driving test; if they fail to do so, the licensing authority may refuse a further application for a licence.
1963	- New grouping systems are introduced for driving tests and driving licences and a distinction is made between the test of competence and the test of fitness. - The Road Traffic Act 1962 permits riders to ride motorcycles of more than 250 cc after passing their test. - Mopeds are placed in their own vehicle group for driving test purposes.
1964	- A voluntary register of Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs) set up under the Road Traffic Act 1962. To become an ADI you have to pass stringent written and practical tests. From 1970, all driving instructors must be officially registered.
1965	- Centralised licensing system set up at new Swansea DVLC, taking over licence issue from County/Borough Councils.
1 May 1965	- The application form for a driving licence is revised. - The distance from which a driving test candidate must be able read a number plate is changed to 67 feet for 3 1/8 inch high characters.
1967	- The Driving and Motor Licences Division (DML) begins promoting safe driving through film and TV 'shorts'.
10 May 1967	- The Road Safety Act 1967 paves the way for regulations covering the licensing and testing of HGV drivers.
8 Oct 1967	- New drink-drive laws come into force: the legal limit is 80 mg alcohol in 100 ml blood.
2 Jul 1968	- The test fee rises to £1:15 shillings.
2 Jun 1969	- Vehicles used in the test must not have dual accelerator control unless this has been made inoperable. - A separate driving licence group for automatic vehicles is introduced. - Candidates are required to produce their driving licence to the examiner at the test and sign the examiner's attendance record. Examiners may refuse to conduct a test if these requirements are not fulfilled.
25 Jun 1969	- The Vehicle and Driver Licences Act introduces new regulations, including a licence fee increase and the specification of vehicle groupings for the purposes of driving tests.
4 Aug 1969	- An up-to-date scheme is introduced for licensing and testing new lorry drivers.
Nov 1969	- The first official driving manual published, called 'Driving – the Ministry of Transport Manual', priced 12 shillings 6 d.
1970	- A total of 3,500 people are prosecuted for driving on a forged licence or

	wrongfully attempting to obtain a licence.
1970	- The new HGV test prompts a change in PSV testing. Until now vehicle inspectors have carried out PSV driving tests: this is taken over by examiners who are now HGV qualified.
1972	- The demand for driving tests rises by 20%, and a further 15% in the following year, leading to a huge backlog of tests.
16 Dec 1972	- The minimum age for riders of motorbikes over 50 cc is raised from 16 to 17.
1973	- Crash helmets are made compulsory. - The top speed for mopeds is set at 30 mph.
1 Mar 1973	- Computerised driving licences are issued for the first time, with green paper licences replacing the old-style red booklets. A full licence is still only valid for three years
May 1975	- Candidates no longer have to demonstrate arm signals
1 Jan 1976	- Full licences are now valid until the holder's 70 th birthday.
July 1976	- The Driving Establishment for testing examiners moves to Cardington. Newly recruited 'L' test examiners undergo four weeks of training.
1 Oct 1982	- Provisional licences are extended until the age of 70.
Mar 1985	- Passenger service vehicle (PSV) driving tests become compulsory. Up until now, Traffic Commissioners decided whether local applicants took the test.
1988	- From now on driving tests are conducted under the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1988.
1 Oct 1989	- Prompted by alarming accident figures, the old-style 'Part 2' motorcycle test, where the examiner stands by the roadside, is replaced by the new, more demanding 'pursuit test'. The examiner now follows the candidate on a motorcycle and maintains radio contact during the test.
1 Apr 1990	- The Driving Standards Agency (DSA) is created as an executive agency of the Department for Transport. - DVLC becomes an executive agency of the Department of Transport and is renamed DVLA – the Driver and Licensing Agency.
1 May 1990	- Examiners give candidates a brief explanation of faults committed during the test, plus advice on areas for improvement.
1990	- Provisional licence holders no longer allowed to carry pillion passengers, even if the passenger is a full licence holder.
Oct 1990	- Under new legislation, anyone accompanying a learner driver must be at least 21 and must have held a driving licence for a minimum of three years.
Nov 1995	- The Pass Plus scheme is introduced to help newly qualified young drivers gain valuable driving experience and reduce the risk of them being involved in an accident.
1 Jul 1996	- A separate written theory test introduced, replacing questions asked about the Highway Code during practical test. - Candidates now have to produce their driving licence for their test.
1 Oct 1996	- The theory test pass mark is raised from 26/35 to 30/35
1 Jan 1997	- A new test category is created for a car with large trailer (B+E). - Licence categories and tests are introduced for Direct Access and small motorcycles

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	- The written theory test is introduced for LGV and PCV drivers.
1 Mar 1997	- Photographic ID is now required for both practical and theory tests
1 Jun 1997	- If a new driver gains six or more penalty points during the first two years of driving, they lose their licence and must retake both the theory and practical driving test before being allowed back on the roads
29 Sep 1997	- For car and motorcycle drivers, the minimum wait between tests of the same category is reintroduced for unsuccessful candidates, set at ten days. - For lorry and bus driver testing, a minimum wait of three days between tests of the same category for unsuccessful candidates is introduced.
Aug 1998	- Photocard licences introduced. From 1 July 1999 all licences, both first time issues and renewals, must be photocard.
Feb 1999	- The newly revised Highway Code is published, with current advice and up-to-date legislation for all road users.
6 Apr 1999	- Cars being used for a driving test must now have a front passenger seat belt, head restraint and rear-view mirror.
4 May 1999	- Changes to the 'L' test include extending the length of the test, randomising the emergency stop manoeuvre and failing candidates for committing 16 or more driving faults
4 Jan 2000	- The touch-screen theory test is introduced.
1 Feb 2001	- People gaining a full car licence from now on must pass Compulsory Basic Training (CBT) before being allowed to ride a moped. - Various changes to the motorcycle training regulations are introduced, including: - the reduction of the validity period for a CBT certificate from three to two years - the removal of the 'two year on - one year off' rule for provisional licence holders - the requirement for people gaining a full car licence to take CBT before being able to ride a moped.
19 Dec 2001	- Candidates can now book their theory test via the internet
14 Nov 2002	- A hazard perception element is introduced into the theory test; this uses video clips to test candidates' awareness of hazards on the road.
01 Sept 2003	- "Show me" "tell me" vehicle safety questions added to the beginning of the driving test.