
Use of foreign driver licenses in Vietnam

I am from the Republic of Korea and have a driver license granted there. May I use my driver license in the Vietnamese territory?



According to Vietnam's regulations on road motor vehicle driver training, driving tests, and grant of driver licenses, foreigners who have driver licenses granted by foreign authorities and wish to drive motor vehicles in Vietnam have to carry out procedures for changing such licenses into Vietnamese driver licenses.

If you have an international driver license which has been granted by an authority of a member state of the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic and remains valid, you may drive the type(s) of motor vehicles stated in your license without having to change it into a Vietnamese driver license.

In your case, your driver license is not an international driver license but only a domestic one granted by the Republic of Korea, which is not a member state of the aforesaid Convention. Therefore, if you wish to drive in Vietnam, you have to carry out procedures for changing your licenses into a Vietnamese one.

In order to change your driver license, you have to submit one application dossier directly to the Directorate for Roads of Vietnam or the Department of Transport of the city or province where your (temporary or permanent) residence is registered. The dossier must comprise:

- An application for change of the driver license;
- The Vietnamese translation of your foreign driver license certified by a notary public office, the Embassy or a consulate of the Republic of Korea in Vietnam where the translator works. You must have the Vietnamese translation and a photocopy of your driver license stapled and "fan stamped" together; if doubting about the accuracy of the translation, the Vietnamese licensing authority may send a written request to the Embassy or a consulate of the Republic of Korea in Vietnam for verification;
- A photocopy of your passport that shows the passport serial number and validity duration, your full name and picture and the page affixed with the Vietnamese visa stamp; a photocopy of your ID card, diplomatic or official ID card granted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, or a photocopy of your (temporary or permanent) residence card, or the papers proving your intended long-term residence in Vietnam;

When submitting the application for driver license change, you will be photographed and have to show the originals of the aforesaid papers.

For how long will a Vietnamese driver license granted to a foreigner be valid?

The Vietnamese law prescribes the validity duration of driver licenses of all kinds as follows:

1. Driver licenses with an indefinite validity duration include: Class A1 driver licenses (for drivers of two-wheeled motorcycles of a cylinder capacity of between 50 cm³ and under 175 cm³); class A2 driver licenses (for drivers of all two-wheeled motorcycles, regardless of their cylinder capacity); and class A3 driver licenses (for drivers of three-wheeled motorcycles, three-wheeled vans, motorized pedicabs, and vehicles of class A1).

2. Class A4, B1, B2 driver licenses are valid for 10 years from the date of grant, specifically:

Class A4 driver licenses are granted to drivers of small tractors of a gross vehicle weight up to 1,000 kg.

Class B1 driver licenses are granted to non-professional drivers who may drive:

- Passenger cars of under 9 seats, including the driver's seat;
- Trucks or special-use vehicles of a designed gross vehicle weight of under 3,500 kg;
- Trailers of a designed gross vehicle weight of under 3,500 kg.

Particularly, class B1 driver licenses granted to drivers who are over 45 years old (for female) or over 50 years old (for male) will be valid until the drivers attain the age of 55 (for female) or 60 (for male).

Class B2 driver licenses are granted to professional drivers of B1-class vehicles and rubber-tired crane trucks of a designed lift capacity of under 3,500 kg.

3. Class C, D, E, F (FB2, FC, FD, FE) driver licenses are valid for 5 years from the date of grant, specifically:

Class C driver licenses are granted to professional drivers who may drive:

- Trucks and special-use vehicles of a designed gross vehicle weight of 3,500 kg or over;
- Tractors, trailers or semi-trailers of a designed gross vehicle weight of 3,500 kg or more;
- Rubber-tired crane trucks of a designed lift capacity of 3,500 kg or more.

Class D driver licenses are granted to professional drivers who may drive:

- Passenger cars of 10 to 30 seats, including the driver's seat;
- Vehicles subject to B1, B2 and C driver licenses.

Class E driver licenses are granted to professional drivers who may drive:

- Passenger cars of over 30 seats, including the driver's seat;
- Vehicles subject to B1, B2, C and D driver licenses.

Class F driver licenses are granted to persons who have already been granted B2, C, D or E driver licenses to drive vehicles subject to licenses of such classes with trailers of a designed weight of over 750 kg.-

