

## NEWCOMERS AND ONTARIO DRIVER'S LICENSE

### IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A FOREIGN DRIVER'S LICENSE:

There is an accelerated process for exchanging a foreign driver's license for an Ontario license. It does not require a letter from the embassy. Here are some details and links:

- Exchanging the foreign license for an Ontario license gives the driver at least 12 months credit towards a full driver license. The initial license will be restricted (depending on what they are given) but will be much better than starting at the beginning of the system. At minimum the newcomer driver should be able to get a G2 license. This means they can drive alone or with family, except from midnight to 5am, and no alcohol.
- The newcomer who has a foreign license may get some credit for experience.
- The newcomer may have to wait as much as 8 more to take the in-vehicle driver test for a full license.
- Exchanging the license as soon as possible is better for multiple reasons:
  - The timing for the 8 month waiting list for the in-vehicle test does not start until they exchange the licenses;
  - The number of months credit of experience earned decreases the longer one waits;
  - The 'years of experience' as a North American driver starts when you get your Ontario license, a clock also starts on your years of experience as a driver within the North American insurance records system. This is crucial in Ontario, where insurance rates are based on years of experience rather than age. The net savings can be \$2000 or more in the first year, relative to trying to get insurance in the same year that you got the license.
- The newcomer may have to take the written test immediately. However, based on one web-site and one call to the testing service, there is an Arabic version of the test. An interpreter can help. 3<sup>rd</sup> parties also provide sample tests in Arabic. There does NOT appear to be a translation of the full guide of materials on which the test is based.
- A vision test may also be required. Perhaps it is best to ensure that a translator goes with the family member to deal with these issues.

### Links:

- Process – best is the site from the testing agency. The Ontario government official web-site is inaccurate. Telephone agents on the Ontario service line refer to this site instead: <http://www.drivetest.ca/EN/licencing/Pages/Exchanging-a-Reciprocal-Licence.aspx>
- A 3<sup>rd</sup> party Arabic site covering these issues in less detail: <http://arabic.inmylanguage.org/article.aspx?docid=2272358&cat=DRVLICENSE>
- Testing site where they say that Arabic tests are offered in all locations: <http://www.drivetest.ca/EN/drivereducation/Pages/Driver-Testing.aspx>
- Certified translators for driver license. There are six in the Ottawa area that are recognized for this purpose : <http://search.atio.on.ca/search/do/SE10019204f3d>
- Conditions of G2 license: <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/driver/handbook/section1.9.4.shtml> .
- Web version of Ontario driver handbook (in English, but may possibly be viewed using automatic google chrome translate when default google language set to Arabic, and "offer to translate page" turned on in google chrome settings. <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/dandv/driver/handbook/index.shtml>
- Sample test in Arabic. <http://www.apnatoronto.com/ontario-g1-test-arabic/>
- Useful full Arabic handbook (for Prince Edward Island, not Ontario): <http://www.peianc.com/sitefiles/File/booklets/Drivers-Handbook/DriversHandbook-AR-29-06-2009.pdf>