

11. Driving in California

California Driver's License

California law states that if you are a visitor in California and have a valid driver's license from your home state or country, you may drive here as long as your home state/country license remains valid. An International Driving Permit is not recognized in the State of California.

If you start a job, become a student or decide to permanently live in California, you must get a California driver license. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you apply for a California driver's license if you intend to remain in California for a while. Doing so will eliminate unnecessary hassles with law enforcement officials some of whom may fail to recognize your home country license.

Obtaining a California Driver's License

A California driver's license may be obtained at the following location:

Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

500 Cohasset Road #31

Chico, CA 95926

To apply for the California Driver's License you will need to present the following:

- Social Security Number (SSN) Application
**See the section below regarding a SSN and applying for a driver's license*
- Valid passport
- DS-2019
- Form I-94 Arrival Record

If the application is approved, the process takes approximately 2 weeks.

**If you will be a paid teacher or a research/teaching assistant at CSUC, the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) will require you to provide your SSN with your driver's license application. If however, you will not be teaching or your appointment at CSUC does not involve any payment, you will not be eligible for an SSN. The DMV official may request that you obtain a letter from the SSA Office stating that you do not qualify for a SSN.*

Required Exams to Obtain a Driver's License

If this is your first time to apply for a driver's license in the U.S., you will be required to take a written examination and a driving test. If you can show a valid driver's license from another state in the U.S., you will only be required to take the

written examination. To study for the written examination, you can get a copy of the California Driver's Manual from the DMV office. Also you may get the manual as well as sample tests from the DMV site at www.dmv.ca.gov . If you do not pass the test the first time, you may re-take it up to three times a day!

Once you pass the written test, you can make an appointment to take the driving test in the near future. You will need to bring your own car. The car you use must be insured and registered with the DMV. Once you pass the road, driving, test, a temporary driving license will be issued for your use until the arrival of your permanent license within four to six weeks.

Please note that DMV has arrangements to accommodate disabled persons and also has the manual in Spanish and English. This document is also available in some electronic formats

Learning How to Drive

If you don't already know how to drive, you can take a driver's education course. There are many to choose from, and oftentimes, they provide training online. Whatever you decide to follow, make sure the facility teaching you is certified by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). Check the following site to get started www.dmvdriverseducation.org/California.html .