



Step by step guide to becoming a fully qualified LGV driver

There are a number of things to be considered before starting the process to become a fully qualified LGV (large goods vehicle) driver.

AGE

The minimum age at which you can obtain an LGV licence is 18 years. Between 18 and 21, LGV drivers must hold an initial Driver CPC qualification (regardless of whether the licence is intended to be used professionally or otherwise). For drivers over 21 years of age, the Driver CPC qualification is only a necessity if the licence is being used professionally.



HEALTH

STEP ONE

Before you apply for your provisional licence you will need to take a medical. This can be arranged with your local doctor or could be booked for you by your company or training provider.

You will need a medical examination report (Form D4) obtainable from the DVLA website (www.gov.uk).

Costs for medicals vary and can range from £50 to £120, so shop around.

PROVISIONAL ENTITLEMENT

After passing your medical it will be time to apply for your provisional LGV entitlement. In this example we will look at gaining the category C licence which is a rigid vehicle above 3.5 tonnes.

STEP TWO

Although application is free, you will need to fill in a Form D2, also available from the DVLA website (www.gov.uk). Your completed application form should be sent to the DVLA at Swansea, accompanied by your completed D4 (medical form). The application form will also remind you to send your photocard driving licence.

Ensure that you read and complete the form carefully so as not to delay your application which will take between 10 to 14 days to process.

This short delay will offer an ideal time to prepare for the theoretical parts of your test.

There are several theoretical tests to pass in the licence acquisition process.

STEP THREE

Once you have received your provisional licence, you can book your two-part theory test online (Modules 1a and 1b). You will also be able to book your Driver CPC Initial Case study test online at this stage.

THEORY TESTS

Module 1A

To pass the theory test (Module 1A) you are required to answer 100 multiple-choice questions. You must get at least 85 correct to be awarded a pass. The theory test exam lasts one hour and 45 minutes. The official 'LGV Theory Test Book' is highly recommended as an ideal learning tool: costs vary between £13 – £25 depending on provider. The cost for the test is £28: from 1 October 2015 this reduces to £26.

Module 1B

The Hazard Perception Test (Module 1B) consists of 20 hazard clips. You are required to identify potential hazards as and when they appear on the screen. The required pass mark is 67 out of 100. The cost for this test is currently £12: from 1 October 2015 this reduces to £11.

It is highly recommended you acquire the official 'Hazard Perception CD ROM' available for approximately £15 from a range of providers. If you fail the hazard perception test but have passed the theory test, then you only need to re-sit the hazard perception test, and vice versa.

Once you have passed both parts of the LGV licence theory tests your certificate will be valid for two years from the date of passing the first part of the test.

Case Study Theory Test (Driver CPC Module 2)

The Driver Certificate of Professional Competence is a qualification that all LGV drivers must take to be able to drive commercially, and any LGV drivers under 21 years of age, regardless of vehicle use. This test must be sat at a DSA-approved Theory Test Centre. The cost is £24: from 1 October this reduces to £23.

You will be asked a variety of questions with multiple choice answers. The exam will use diagrams, video clips, text and audio to help illustrate the questions. Each test will consist of seven case studies and you will be asked six to eight questions per case study.

You will need to study for these tests. There are several very good training CD roms on the market to help you with your preparation.

PRACTICAL TESTS

STEP FOUR

Module 3 (Practical Test)

There are many good training providers around to prepare you for the practical driving test. Shop around, but remember the cheapest is not always the best. Look for a provider with a proven track record and compare first-time pass rates.

You will also need to consider the structure of the training provider. Is it a well-established local provider or a broker who relies on sub-contracted trainers? Both structures offer different potential advantages and also possible drawbacks, so please ensure you make the correct choice for your own needs.

In general, it will take around five days of intensive driving to prepare you for your test and many training providers will offer a pre-course assessment to determine the length of the course. The test itself lasts approximately 90 minutes and takes in various different types of road. This is carried out by a Driving Standards Agency (DSA) examiner. The cost for the test, excluding the cost of your driver training, is £115.

If you want to use your LGV licence to earn a living, there is one more part of the initial qualification Driver Certificate of Professional Competence you will need to pass.

Module 4 (Practical Test Associated Knowledge) (Driver CPC)

Module 4 is a separate practical test that lasts for approximately 30 minutes. It will normally be conducted after your practical driving test (Module 3). It is anticipated that approximately three hours of training will be required to prepare adequately for this exam. The DSA examiner will ask certain questions about vehicle and load, safety and security. You must demonstrate your answers using a vehicle and various restraining devices.

For example, part of the Module 4 test might be to carry out a pre-use vehicle check or demonstrate how you would secure a load using various restraining devices. Pre-training is essential to ensure success. The pass mark for Module 4 is 80%. However, you must get at least 75% in each subject area (five areas) to ensure success. The test fee is £55.

Once you have passed Module 4 you will be awarded a Driver CPC qualification and can drive professionally. This will be valid for five years. You must then complete 35 hours periodic training within those five years and every five years thereafter.

Congratulations. You are now a qualified LGV driver with a Category C licence and Driver CPC qualified!