

## **Minibus transport in Northern Ireland**

Clergy, youth workers, children's workers, and others who are employed by parishes are no longer allowed to drive a minibus for the church without passing a test for a D1 licence.

Parishes in Northern Ireland are advised that the Department of Infrastructure has clarified the legal requirements for minibus drivers under existing legislation. Anyone who is paid to drive, as a consequence of their employment, must have a full D (bus) or D1 (minibus) category licence. The D1 is a higher qualification and requires an additional driving test; this is separate from the D1 status held by drivers who received their full licence before 1st January 1997.

Driving as a consequence of employment includes situations where a person is:

- expected to drive a minibus occasionally as part of their contract of employment;
- driving for their organisation during their normal work hours even where it is not included in their contract of employment; or
- subject to employer discipline while making the trip.

An applicant must currently hold a valid full licence for driving a car before making an application for the D1 category. The process includes a medical test, application for the provisional category to be added to your licence, a theory and hazard perception test, and a passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) driving test. More information is available at [www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/apply-provisional-driving-licence](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/apply-provisional-driving-licence)

The department will seek to take drivers through the testing process in the shortest possible time.

Volunteer minibus drivers will continue to be able to drive for voluntary organisations (including parishes) as they do at present. The full guidance from the department is available at [www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/letter-regarding-issue-and-use-section-10b-permits-road-passenger-transport-and-minibus-driving](http://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/publications/letter-regarding-issue-and-use-section-10b-permits-road-passenger-transport-and-minibus-driving)

Parishes are asked to contact their insurers and/or legal representatives for the avoidance of doubt.