

UNACCOMPANIED LEARNER DRIVERS, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the new legislation?

It has already been the case that it is against the Law to drive unaccompanied on a learner permit. On 22 December 2018 legislation takes effect that means that a learner driver who should be accompanied, but is driving unaccompanied, is liable to have their vehicle impounded. This is in addition to the penalties points and fixed charge fine which apply prior to this change. The changes being introduced also mean that where the unaccompanied learner driver is not the vehicle owner, the vehicle could be impounded and owner liable to a fine of up to €1,000.

Why the changes?

The purpose of these changes is to highlight the dangers of driving unaccompanied. Learner permit holders driving unaccompanied pose a danger to themselves and other road users. Unaccompanied learner permit holders are among the most vulnerable road users because of their inexperience and the greater likelihood to take risks on the road. It is also recognised that the most effective way to practice learning to drive is through the guidance and support of the accompanying driver.

Who does this new legislation apply to?

The new unaccompanied driver legislation applies to anyone driving on a learner permit. It does not apply to learner permit drivers of motorcycles or learner permit drivers of tractors.

For learner permit driver who are required to be accompanied, who is permitted to be an accompanying person?

Learner permit drivers must be accompanied by a qualified driver (a person who holds a full driving licence in the Category for a minimum of 2 years) at all times while driving on a learner permit.

What date is the legislation effective from?

The legislation is effective from 22/12/2018

What are the penalty points attached to driving unaccompanied ?

Driving unaccompanied continues to be a penalty point offence in addition to the changes implemented on 22 December 2018. If a person accepts the penalty point offence of 'Learner Permit holder driving unaccompanied by qualified person' 2 penalty points are applied and a fixed charge of €80 if paid within 28 days, €120 if paid within 56 days. If convicted in Court 4 penalty points apply together with a fixed charge of €120.

What will happen if I am stopped by An Garda Siochana driving unaccompanied on a learner permit?

2 penalty points are applied and a fixed charge of €80 if paid within 28 days, €120 if paid within 56 days. If convicted in Court 4 penalty points apply together with a fixed charge of €120.

You are liable to have your vehicle impounded. If the vehicle you are driving does not belong to you the vehicle owner may face a fine of up to €1000 and the vehicle may also be impounded.

What if I am the owner of a vehicle that was taken by a learner driver without my consent?

The legislation allows an owner to make this defence in Court and to provide evidence to this effect in Court.