

§ 20-7. Issuance and renewal of drivers licenses.

(a) License Required. – To drive a motor vehicle on a highway, a person must be licensed by the Division under this Article or Article 2C of this Chapter to drive the vehicle and must carry the license while driving the vehicle. The Division issues regular drivers licenses under this Article and issues commercial drivers licenses under Article 2C.

A license authorizes the holder of the license to drive any vehicle included in the class of the license and any vehicle included in a lesser class of license, except a vehicle for which an endorsement is required. To drive a vehicle for which an endorsement is required, a person must obtain both a license and an endorsement for the vehicle. A regular drivers license is considered a lesser class of license than its commercial counterpart.

The classes of regular drivers licenses and the motor vehicles that can be driven with each class of license are:

- (1) Class A. – A Class A license authorizes the holder to drive any of the following:
 - a. A Class A motor vehicle that is exempt under G.S. 20-37.16 from the commercial drivers license requirements.
 - b. A Class A motor vehicle that has a combined GVWR of less than 26,001 pounds and includes as part of the combination a towed unit that has a GVWR of at least 10,001 pounds.
- (2) Class B. – A Class B license authorizes the holder to drive any Class B motor vehicle that is exempt under G.S. 20-37.16 from the commercial drivers license requirements.
- (3) Class C. – A Class C license authorizes the holder to drive any of the following:
 - a. A Class C motor vehicle that is not a commercial motor vehicle.
 - b. When operated by a volunteer member of a fire department, a rescue squad, or an emergency medical service (EMS) in the performance of duty, a Class A or Class B fire-fighting, rescue, or EMS motor vehicle or a combination of these vehicles.
 - c. A combination of noncommercial motor vehicles that have a GVWR of more than 10,000 pounds but less than 26,001 pounds. This sub-subdivision does not apply to a Class C license holder less than 18 years of age.

The Commissioner may assign a unique motor vehicle to a class that is different from the class in which it would otherwise belong.

A person holding a commercial drivers license issued by another jurisdiction must apply for a transfer and obtain a North Carolina issued commercial drivers license within 30 days of becoming a resident. Any other new resident of North Carolina who has a drivers license issued by another jurisdiction must obtain a license from the Division within 60 days after becoming a resident.

(a1) Motorcycles and Mopeds. – To drive a motorcycle, a person shall have one of the following:

- (1) A full provisional license with a motorcycle learner's permit.
- (2) A regular drivers license with a motorcycle learner's permit.
- (3) A full provisional license with a motorcycle endorsement.
- (4) A regular drivers license with a motorcycle endorsement.

Subsection (a2) of this section sets forth the requirements for a motorcycle learner's permit. To obtain a motorcycle endorsement, a person shall pay the fee set in subsection (i) of this section. In addition, to obtain an endorsement, a person age 18 or older shall demonstrate competence to

drive a motorcycle by passing a knowledge test concerning motorcycles, and by passing a road test or providing proof of successful completion of one of the following:

- (1) The North Carolina Motorcycle Safety Education Program Basic Rider Course or Experienced Rider Course.
- (2) Any course approved by the Commissioner consistent with the instruction provided through the Motorcycle Safety Instruction Program established under G.S. 115D-72.

A person less than 18 years of age shall demonstrate competence to drive a motorcycle by passing a knowledge test concerning motorcycles and providing proof of successful completion of one of the following:

- (1) Repealed by Session Laws 2012-85, s. 1, effective July 1, 2012.
- (2) The North Carolina Motorcycle Safety Education Program Basic Rider Course or Experienced Rider Course.
- (3) Any course approved by the Commissioner consistent with the instruction provided through the Motorcycle Safety Instruction Program established under G.S. 115D-72.

A person less than 18 years of age with a motorcycle endorsement may not drive a motorcycle with a passenger.

Neither a drivers license nor a motorcycle endorsement is required to drive a moped.

(a2) Motorcycle Learner's Permit. – The following persons are eligible for a motorcycle learner's permit:

- (1) A person who is at least 16 years old but less than 18 years old and has a full provisional license issued by the Division.
- (2) A person who is at least 18 years old and has a license issued by the Division.

To obtain a motorcycle learner's permit, an applicant shall pass a vision test, a road sign test, and a knowledge test specified by the Division. An applicant who is less than 18 years old shall successfully complete the North Carolina Motorcycle Safety Education Program Basic Rider Course or any course approved by the Commissioner consistent with the instruction provided through the Motorcycle Safety Instruction Program established under G.S. 115D-72. A motorcycle learner's permit expires twelve months after it is issued and may be renewed for one additional six-month period. The holder of a motorcycle learner's permit may not drive a motorcycle with a passenger. The fee for a motorcycle learner's permit is the amount set in G.S. 20-7(l) for a learner's permit.

(a3) Autocycles. – For purposes of this section, the term "motorcycle" shall not include autocycles. To drive an autocycle, a person shall have a regular drivers license.

(b) Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 368, s. 1, c. 533, s. 12.

(b1) Application. – To obtain an identification card, learners permit, or drivers license from the Division, a person shall complete an application form provided by the Division, present at least two forms of identification approved by the Commissioner, be a resident of this State, and, except for an identification card, demonstrate his or her physical and mental ability to drive safely a motor vehicle included in the class of license for which the person has applied. At least one of the forms of identification shall indicate the applicant's residence address. The Division may copy the identification presented or hold it for a brief period of time to verify its authenticity. To obtain an endorsement, a person shall demonstrate his or her physical and mental ability to drive safely the type of motor vehicle for which the endorsement is required.

The application form shall request all of the following information, and it shall contain the disclosures concerning the request for an applicant's social security number required by section 7 of the federal Privacy Act of 1974, Pub. L. No. 93-579:

- (1) The applicant's full name.
- (2) The applicant's mailing address and residence address.

- (3) A physical description of the applicant, including the applicant's sex, height, eye color, and hair color.
- (4) The applicant's date of birth.
- (5) The applicant's valid social security number.
- (6) The applicant's signature.

The Division shall not issue an identification card, learners permit, or drivers license to an applicant who fails to provide the applicant's valid social security number.

(b2) Disclosure of Social Security Number. – The social security number of an applicant is not a public record. The Division may not disclose an applicant's social security number except as allowed under federal law. A violation of the disclosure restrictions is punishable as provided in 42 U.S.C. § 408, and amendments to that law.

In accordance with 42 U.S.C. 405 and 42 U.S.C. 666, and amendments thereto, the Division may disclose a social security number obtained under subsection (b1) of this section only as follows:

- (1) For the purpose of administering the drivers license laws.
- (2) To the Department of Health and Human Services, Child Support Enforcement Program for the purpose of establishing paternity or child support or enforcing a child support order.
- (3) To the Department of Revenue for the purpose of verifying taxpayer identity.
- (4) To the Office of Indigent Defense Services of the Judicial Department for the purpose of verifying the identity of a represented client and enforcing a court order to pay for the legal services rendered.
- (5) To each county jury commission for the purpose of verifying the identity of deceased persons whose names should be removed from jury lists.
- (6) To the State Chief Information Officer for the purposes of G.S. 143B-1385.
- (7) To the Department of Commerce, Division of Employment Security, for the purpose of verifying employer and claimant identity.
- (8) To the Judicial Department for the purpose of administering the criminal and motor vehicle laws.

(b3) The Division shall adopt rules implementing the provisions of subsection (b1) of this section with respect to proof of residency in this State. Those rules shall ensure that applicants submit verified or verifiable residency and address information that can be reasonably considered to be valid and that is provided on any of the following:

- (1) A document issued by an agency of the United States or by the government of another nation.
- (2) A document issued by another state.
- (3) A document issued by the State of North Carolina, or a political subdivision of this State. This includes an agency or instrumentality of this State.
- (4) A preprinted bank or other corporate statement.
- (5) A preprinted business letterhead.
- (6) Any other document deemed reliable by the Division.

(b4) Examples of documents that are reasonably reliable indicators of residency include, but are not limited to, any of the following:

- (1) A pay stub with the payee's address.
- (2) A utility bill showing the address of the applicant-payor.
- (3) A contract for an apartment, house, modular unit, or manufactured home with a North Carolina address signed by the applicant.
- (4) A receipt for personal property taxes paid.
- (5) A receipt for real property taxes paid to a North Carolina locality.

- (6) A current automobile insurance policy issued to the applicant and showing the applicant's address.
- (7) A monthly or quarterly financial statement from a North Carolina regulated financial institution.
- (8), (9) Repealed by Session Laws 2015-294, s. 12, effective October 1, 2015, and applicable to contracts entered into on or after that date.

(b5) The Division rules adopted pursuant to subsection (b3) of this section shall also provide that if an applicant cannot produce any documentation specified in subsection (b3) or (b4) of this section, the applicant, or in the case of a minor applicant a parent or legal guardian of the applicant, may complete an affidavit, on a form provided by the Division and sworn to before an official of the Division, indicating the applicant's current residence address. The affidavit shall contain the provisions of G.S. 20-15(a) and G.S. 20-17(a)(5) and shall indicate the civil and criminal penalties for completing a false affidavit.

(c) Tests. – To demonstrate physical and mental ability, a person must pass an examination. The examination may include road tests, vision tests, oral tests, and, in the case of literate applicants, written tests, as the Division may require. The tests must ensure that an applicant recognizes the handicapped international symbol of access, as defined in G.S. 20-37.5. The Division may not require a person who applies to renew a license that has not expired to take a written test or a road test unless one or more of the following applies:

- (1) The person has been convicted of a traffic violation since the person's license was last issued.
- (2) The applicant suffers from a mental or physical condition that impairs the person's ability to drive a motor vehicle.

The Division shall require sign and symbol testing upon initial issuance of a license. The Division shall require vision testing as a part of required in-person, in-office renewals of a license.

The Division may not require a person who is at least 60 years old to parallel park a motor vehicle as part of a road test. A person shall not use an autocycle to complete a road test under this subsection.

(c1) Insurance. – The Division may not issue a drivers license to a person until the person has furnished proof of financial responsibility. Proof of financial responsibility shall be in one of the following forms:

- (1) A written certificate or electronically-transmitted facsimile thereof from any insurance carrier duly authorized to do business in this State certifying that there is in effect a nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability policy for the benefit of the person required to furnish proof of financial responsibility. The certificate or facsimile shall state the effective date and expiration date of the nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability policy and shall state the date that the certificate or facsimile is issued. The certificate or facsimile shall remain effective proof of financial responsibility for a period of 30 consecutive days following the date the certificate or facsimile is issued but shall not in and of itself constitute a binder or policy of insurance.
- (2) A binder for or policy of nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability insurance under which the applicant is insured, provided that the binder or policy states the effective date and expiration date of the nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle liability policy.

The preceding provisions of this subsection do not apply to applicants who do not own currently registered motor vehicles and who do not operate nonfleet private passenger motor vehicles that are owned by other persons and that are not insured under commercial motor vehicle liability insurance policies. In such cases, the applicant shall sign a written certificate to that

effect. Such certificate shall be furnished by the Division and may be incorporated into the license application form. Any material misrepresentation made by such person on such certificate shall be grounds for suspension of that person's license for a period of 90 days.

For the purpose of this subsection, the term "nonfleet private passenger motor vehicle" has the definition ascribed to it in Article 40 of General Statute Chapter 58.

The Commissioner may require that certificates required by this subsection be on a form approved by the Commissioner.

The requirement of furnishing proof of financial responsibility does not apply to a person who applies for a renewal of his or her drivers license.

Nothing in this subsection precludes any person from showing proof of financial responsibility in any other manner authorized by Articles 9A and 13 of this Chapter.

(d) Repealed by Session Laws 1993, c. 368, s. 1.

(e) Restrictions. – The Division may impose any restriction it finds advisable on a drivers license. It is unlawful for the holder of a restricted license to operate a motor vehicle without complying with the restriction and is the equivalent of operating a motor vehicle without a license. If any applicant shall suffer from any physical or mental disability or disease that affects his or her operation of a motor vehicle, the Division may require to be filed with it a certificate of the applicant's condition signed by a medical authority of the applicant's community designated by the Division. The Division may, in its discretion, require the certificate to be completed and submitted after a license or renewal has been issued based on the applicant's performance during a road test administered by the Division. Upon submission, the certificate shall be reviewed in accordance with the procedure set forth in G.S. 20-9(g)(3). This certificate shall in all cases be treated as confidential and subject to release under G.S. 20-9(g)(4)h. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to prevent the Division from refusing to issue a license, either restricted or unrestricted, to any person deemed to be incapable of safely operating a motor vehicle based on information observed or received by the Division, including observations during a road test and medical information submitted about the applicant. An applicant may seek review pursuant to G.S. 20-9(g)(4) of a licensing decision made on the basis of a physical or mental disability or disease. This subsection does not prohibit deaf persons from operating motor vehicles who in every other way meet the requirements of this section.

(f) Duration and Renewal of Licenses. – Drivers licenses shall be issued and renewed pursuant to the provisions of this subsection:

- (1) Duration of license for persons under age 18. – A full provisional license issued to a person under the age of 18 expires 60 days following the person's twenty-first birthday.
- (2) Duration of original license for persons at least 18 years of age or older. – A drivers license issued to a person at least 18 years old but less than 66 years old expires on the birthday of the licensee in the eighth year after issuance. A drivers license issued to a person at least 66 years old expires on the birthday of the licensee in the fifth year after issuance. A commercial drivers license expires on the birthday of the licensee in the fifth year after issuance. A commercial drivers license that has a vehicles carrying passengers (P) and school bus (S) endorsement issued pursuant to G.S. 20-37.16 expires on the birthday of the licensee in the third year after issuance, if the licensee is certified to drive a school bus in North Carolina.
- (2a) Duration of renewed licenses. – A renewed drivers license that was issued by the Division to a person at least 18 years old but less than 66 years old expires eight years after the expiration date of the license that is renewed. A renewed drivers license that was issued by the Division to a person at least 66 years old expires five years after the expiration date of the license that is renewed. A

renewed commercial drivers license expires five years after the expiration date of the license that is renewed.

- (3) Duration of license for certain other drivers. – The durations listed in subdivisions (1), (2) and (2a) of this subsection are valid unless the Division determines that a license of shorter duration should be issued when the applicant holds valid documentation issued by, or under the authority of, the United States government that demonstrates the applicant's legal presence of limited duration in the United States. In no event shall a license of limited duration expire later than the expiration of the authorization for the applicant's legal presence in the United States.
- (3a) When to renew. – A person may apply to the Division to renew a license during the 180-day period before the license expires. The Division may not accept an application for renewal made before the 180-day period begins.
- (3b) Renewal for certain members of the Armed Forces of the United States and reserve components of the Armed Forces of the United States.
 - a. The Division may renew a drivers license, without limitation on the period of time before the license expires, if the person applying for renewal is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States and provides orders that place the member on active duty and duty station outside this State.
 - b. A person who is a member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States whose license bears an expiration date that occurred while the person was on active duty outside this State shall be considered to have a valid license until 60 days after the date of release from active duty upon showing proof of the release date, unless the license was rescinded, revoked, or otherwise invalidated under some other provision of law. Notwithstanding the provisions of this sub-subdivision, no license shall be considered valid more than 18 months after the date of expiration.
- (4) Renewal by mail. – The Division may renew by mail a drivers license issued by the Division to a person who meets any of the following descriptions:
 - a. Is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States or a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States serving on active duty and is stationed outside this State.
 - b. Is a resident of this State and has been residing outside the State for at least 30 continuous days.

When renewing a license by mail, the Division may waive the examination that would otherwise be required for the renewal and may impose any conditions it finds advisable. A license renewed by mail is a temporary license that expires 60 days after the person to whom it is issued returns to this State.
- (5) License to be sent by mail. – The Division shall issue to the applicant a temporary driving certificate valid for 60 days, unless the applicant is applying for renewal by mail under subdivision (4) of this subsection. The temporary driving certificate shall be valid for driving purposes and shall not be valid for identification purposes, except when conducting business with the Division and not otherwise prohibited by federal law. The Division shall produce the applicant's drivers license at a central location and send it to the applicant by first-class mail at the residence address provided by the applicant, unless the applicant is ineligible for mail delivery by the United States Postal Service at

the applicant's residence. If the United States Postal Service documents that it does not deliver to the residential address provided by the applicant, and the Division has verified the applicant's residential address by other means, the Division may mail the drivers license to the post office box provided by the applicant. Applicants whose only mailing address prior to July 1, 2008, was a post office box in this State may continue to receive their license at that post office box, provided the applicant's residential address has been verified by the Division.

- (6) Remote renewal or conversion. – Subject to the following requirements and limitations, the Division may offer remote renewal of a drivers license or remote conversion of a full provisional license issued by the Division:
- a. Requirements. – To be eligible for remote renewal or conversion under this subdivision, a person must meet all of the following requirements:
 - 1. The license holder possesses either (i) a valid Class C drivers license or (ii) a valid full provisional license and is at least 18 years old at the time of the remote conversion.
 - 2. The license holder's current license includes no restrictions other than a restriction for corrective lenses.
 - 3. The license holder attests, in a manner designated by the Division, that (i) the license holder is a resident of the State and currently resides at the address on the license to be renewed or converted, (ii) the license holder's name as it appears on the license to be renewed or converted has not changed, and (iii) all other information required by the Division for an in-person renewal under this Article has been provided completely and truthfully. If the license holder does not currently reside at the address on the license to be renewed or converted, the license holder may comply with the address requirement of this sub-sub-subdivision by providing the address at which the license holder resides at the time of the remote renewal or conversion request.
 - 4. For a remote renewal, the most recent renewal was an in-person renewal and not a remote renewal under this subdivision.
 - 5. The license holder is otherwise eligible for renewal or conversion under this subsection.
 - b. Waiver of requirements. – When renewing or converting a drivers license pursuant to this subdivision, the Division may waive the examination and photograph that would otherwise be required for the renewal or conversion.
 - c. Duration of remote renewal or conversion. – A drivers license issued to a person by remote renewal or conversion under this subdivision expires according to the following schedule:
 - 1. For a person at least 18 years old but less than 66 years old, on the birthday of the licensee in the eighth year after issuance.
 - 2. For a person at least 66 years old, on the birthday of the licensee in the fifth year after issuance.
 - d. Rules. – The Division shall adopt rules to implement this subdivision.

- e. Federal law. – Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to supersede any more restrictive provisions for renewal or conversion of drivers licenses prescribed by federal law or regulation.
- f. Definition. – For purposes of this subdivision, "remote renewal or conversion" means renewal of a drivers license or conversion of a full provisional license by mail, telephone, electronic device, or other secure means approved by the Commissioner.

(g) Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 667, s. 6.

(h) Repealed by Session Laws 1979, c. 113, s. 1.

(i) Fees. – The fee for a regular drivers license is the amount set in the following table multiplied by the number of years in the period for which the license is issued:

<u>Class of Regular License</u>	<u>Fee For Each Year</u>
Class A	\$5.00
Class B	\$5.00
Class C	\$5.00

The fee for a motorcycle endorsement is two dollars and thirty cents (\$2.30) for each year of the period for which the endorsement is issued. The appropriate fee shall be paid before a person receives a regular drivers license or an endorsement.

(i1) Restoration Fee. – Any person whose drivers license has been revoked pursuant to the provisions of this Chapter, other than G.S. 20-17(a)(2) shall pay a restoration fee of sixty five dollars (\$65.00). A person whose drivers license has been revoked under G.S. 20-17(a)(2) shall pay a restoration fee of one hundred thirty dollars (\$130.00). The fee shall be paid to the Division prior to the issuance to such person of a new drivers license or the restoration of the drivers license. The restoration fee shall be paid to the Division in addition to any and all fees which may be provided by law. This restoration fee shall not be required from any licensee whose license was revoked or voluntarily surrendered for medical or health reasons whether or not a medical evaluation was conducted pursuant to this Chapter. The sixty five dollar (\$65.00) fee, and the first one hundred five dollars (\$105.00) of the one hundred thirty dollar (\$130.00) fee, shall be deposited in the Highway Fund. Twenty five dollars (\$25.00) of the one hundred thirty dollar (\$130.00) fee shall be used to fund a statewide chemical alcohol testing program administered by the Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch of the Chronic Disease and Injury Section of the Department of Health and Human Services. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a restoration fee assessed pursuant to this subsection may be waived by the Division when (i) the restoration fee remains unpaid for more than 10 years from the date of assessment and (ii) the person responsible for payment of the restoration fee has been issued a drivers license by the Division after the effective date of the revocation for which the restoration fee is owed. The Office of State Budget and Management shall annually report to the General Assembly the amount of fees deposited in the General Fund and transferred to the Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch of the Chronic Disease and Injury Section of the Department of Health and Human Services under this subsection.

(j) Highway Fund. – The fees collected under this section and G.S. 20-14 shall be placed in the Highway Fund.

(j1) [Maintenance of Organ Donor Registry Internet Site.] The Division of Motor Vehicles shall retain a portion of five cents (\$0.05) collected for the issuance of each drivers license and duplicate license to offset the actual cost of developing and maintaining the online Organ Donor Internet site established pursuant to G.S. 20-43.2. The remainder of the five cents (\$0.05) shall be credited to the License to Give Trust Fund established under G.S. 20-7.4 and shall be used for the purposes authorized under G.S. 20-7.4 and G.S. 20-7.5.

(k) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 726, s. 5.

(l) Learner's Permit. – A person who is at least 18 years old may obtain a learner's permit. A learner's permit authorizes the permit holder to drive a specified type or class of motor vehicle while in possession of the permit. A learner's permit is valid for a period of 18 months after it is issued. The fee for a learner's permit is twenty dollars (\$20.00). A learner's permit may be renewed, or a second learner's permit may be issued, for an additional period of 18 months. The permit holder must, while operating a motor vehicle over the highways, be accompanied by a person who is licensed to operate the motor vehicle being driven and is seated beside the permit holder.

(l-1) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 726, s. 5.

(m) Instruction Permit. – The Division upon receiving proper application may in its discretion issue a restricted instruction permit effective for a school year or a lesser period to any of the following applicants:

- (1) An applicant who is less than 18 years old and is enrolled in a drivers education program that is approved by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and is offered at a public high school, a nonpublic secondary school, or a licensed drivers training school.
- (2) A restricted instruction permit authorizes the holder of the permit to drive a specified type or class of motor vehicle when in possession of the permit, subject to any restrictions imposed by the Division. The restrictions the Division may impose on a permit include restrictions to designated areas and highways and restrictions prohibiting operation except when an approved instructor is occupying a seat beside the permittee. A restricted instruction permit is not required to have a distinguishing number or a picture of the person to whom the permit is issued.

(n) Format. – A drivers license issued by the Division must be tamperproof and must contain all of the following information:

- (1) An identification of this State as the issuer of the license.
- (2) The license holder's full name.
- (3) The license holder's residence address.
- (4) A color photograph of the license holder applied to material that is measured by the industry standard of security and durability and is resistant to tampering and reproduction.
- (5) A physical description of the license holder, including sex, height, eye color, and hair color.
- (6) The license holder's date of birth.
- (7) An identifying number for the license holder assigned by the Division. The identifying number may not be the license holder's social security number.
- (8) Each class of motor vehicle the license holder is authorized to drive and any endorsements or restrictions that apply.
- (9) The license holder's signature.
- (10) The date the license was issued and the date the license expires.

The Commissioner shall ensure that applicants 21 years old or older are issued drivers licenses and special identification cards that are printed in a horizontal format. The Commissioner shall ensure that applicants under the age of 21 are issued drivers licenses and special identification cards that are printed in a vertical format, that distinguishes them from the horizontal format, for ease of identification of individuals under age 21 by members of industries that regulate controlled products that are sale restricted by age and law enforcement officers enforcing these laws.

At the request of an applicant for a drivers license, a license issued to the applicant must contain the applicant's race, which shall be designated with the letters "AI" for an applicant who is American Indian.

(o) Repealed by Session Laws 1991, c. 726, s. 5.

(p) The Division must give the clerk of superior court in each county at least 50 copies of the driver license handbook free of charge. The clerk must give a copy to a person who requests it.

(q) Active Duty Military Designation. – The Division shall develop a military designation for drivers licenses that may, upon request, be granted to North Carolina residents on active duty and to their spouses and dependent children. A drivers license with a military designation on it may be renewed by mail no more than two times during the license holder's lifetime. A license renewed by mail under this subsection is a permanent license and does not expire when the license holder returns to the State. A drivers license with a military designation on it issued to a person on active duty may be renewed up to one year prior to its expiration upon presentation of military or Department of Defense credentials.

(q1) Veteran Military Designation. – The Division shall develop a military designation for drivers licenses and identification cards that may, upon request, be granted to North Carolina residents who are honorably discharged from military service in the Armed Forces of the United States. An applicant requesting this designation must produce a Form DD-214 showing the applicant has been honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States.

(q2) Deaf or Hard of Hearing Designation. – The Division shall develop, in consultation with the Department of Public Safety, the State Highway Patrol, the Division of Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and pursuant to this subsection, a drivers license designation that may, upon request, be granted to a person who is deaf or hard of hearing. The Division shall comply with the following requirements applicable to the designation:

- (1) At the request of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, the Division shall place a unique symbol on the front of the person's license. The unique symbol placed on the license shall not include any further descriptor. The Division shall record the designation in the electronic record associated with the person's drivers license.
- (2) At the request of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, the Division shall enter the drivers license symbol and a descriptor into the electronic record of any motor vehicle registered in the same name of the deaf or hard of hearing person.
- (3) For the purposes of this subsection, a person shall be considered to be deaf or hard of hearing if they provide verification or documentation substantiating their hearing loss that is recommended by the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing as acceptable. The Division of Motor Vehicles shall consult with the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing to identify acceptable forms of verification that do not result in undue burden to the person requesting the designation of hearing loss. Acceptable documentation shall include any of the following:
 - a. Documentation of certification or examination by a medical, health, or audiology professional showing evidence of hearing loss.
 - b. Affidavit executed by the person, their parent, or guardian attesting to the person's hearing loss.
 - c. Documentation deemed by the Division of Motor Vehicles to qualify as satisfactory proof of the person's hearing loss.
- (4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as authorizing the issuance of a drivers license to a person ineligible under G.S. 20-9.

- (5) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as prohibiting the issuance of a drivers license to a person otherwise eligible under the law.
- (6) Any individual who chooses to register or not to register shall not be deemed to have waived any protections under the law.
- (7) Information collected under this subsection shall only be available to law enforcement and only for the purpose of ensuring mutually safe interactions between law enforcement and persons who are deaf or hard of hearing. It shall not be accessed or used for any other purpose.
- (8) The right to make the decision for inclusion or removal of the designation from the database is entirely voluntary and shall only be made by the person who holds the drivers license associated with the designation.
- (9) The Division, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services, shall develop a process for removal of the designation authorized by this subsection that is available online, by mail, or in person.

(r) Waiver of Vision Test. – The following license holders shall be exempt from any required eye exam when renewing a drivers license by mail under either subsection (f) of this section or subsection (q) of this section if, at the time of renewal, the license holder is serving in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous duty zone:

- (1) A member of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- (2) A member of a reserve component of the Armed Forces of the United States.

(s) Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection (b1) of this section that an applicant present a valid social security number, the Division shall issue a drivers license of limited duration, under subsection (f) of this section, to an applicant present in the United States who holds valid documentation issued by, or under the authority of, the United States government that demonstrates the applicant's legal presence of limited duration in the United States if the applicant presents that valid documentation and meets all other requirements for a license of limited duration. Notwithstanding the requirements of subsection (n) of this section addressing background colors and borders, a drivers license of limited duration issued under this section shall bear a distinguishing mark or other designation on the face of the license clearly denoting the limited duration of the license.

(t) Use of Biotopic Telescopic Lenses. –

- (1) An applicant using biotopic telescopic lenses shall be eligible for a regular Class C drivers license under this section if the applicant meets all of the following:
 - a. Demonstrates a visual acuity of at least 20/200 in one or both eyes and a field of 70 degrees horizontal vision with or without corrective carrier lenses, or if the person has vision in one eye only, the person demonstrates a field of at least 40 degrees temporal and 30 degrees nasal horizontal vision.
 - b. Demonstrates a visual acuity of at least 20/70 in one or both eyes with the biotopic telescopic lenses and without the use of field expanders.
 - c. Provides a report of examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist, on a form prescribed by the Division, for the Division to determine if all field of vision requirements are met or additional testing is needed.
 - d. Successfully passes a road test administered by the Division. This requirement is waived if the applicant is a new resident of North Carolina who has a valid drivers license issued by another jurisdiction that requires a road test.
 - e. Meets all other criteria for licensure.

- (2) In addition to the requirements listed in subdivision (1) of this subsection, the Division shall require an applicant using bioptic telescopic lenses to successfully complete a behind-the-wheel training and assessment program prescribed by the Division. This requirement is waived if the applicant has successfully completed a behind-the-wheel training and assessment program as a condition of licensure in another jurisdiction.
- (3) Applicants using bioptic telescopic lenses shall be eligible for a limited learner's permit or provisional drivers license issued pursuant to G.S. 20-11, provided the requirements of this subsection are met and any other required testing or documentation is completed and submitted with the application.
- (4) Applicants issued a regular Class C drivers license, limited learner's permit, or provisional drivers license shall be subject to the following restrictions on the license issued:
 - a. The license or permit holder shall not be eligible for any endorsements.
 - b. The license or permit shall permit the operation of motor vehicles only during the period beginning one-half hour after sunrise and ending one-half hour before sunset.
- (5) Applicants issued a regular Class C drivers license may drive motor vehicles between the period beginning one-half hour before sunset and ending one-half hour after sunrise if the applicant meets the following requirements:
 - a. Demonstrates a visual acuity of at least 20/40 in one or both eyes with the bioptic telescopic lenses and without the use of field expanders.
 - b. Provides a report of examination by an ophthalmologist or optometrist in accordance with sub-subdivision c. of subdivision (1) of this subsection that does not recommend restricting the applicant to driving a motor vehicle only during the period beginning one-half hour after sunrise and ending one-half hour before sunset. (1935, c. 52, s. 2; 1943, c. 649, s. 1; c. 787, s. 1; 1947, c. 1067, s. 10; 1949, c. 583, ss. 9, 10; c. 826, ss. 1, 2; 1951, c. 542, ss. 1, 2; c. 1196, ss. 1-3; 1953, cc. 839, 1284, 1311; 1955, c. 1187, ss. 2-6; 1957, c. 1225; 1963, cc. 754, 1007, 1022; 1965, c. 410, s. 5; 1967, c. 509; 1969, c. 183; c. 783, s. 1; c. 865; 1971, c. 158; 1973, cc. 73, 705; c. 1057, ss. 1, 3; 1975, c. 162, s. 1; c. 295; c. 296, ss. 1, 2; c. 684; c. 716, s. 5; c. 841; c. 875, s. 4; c. 879, s. 46; 1977, c. 6; c. 340, s. 3; c. 354, s. 1; c. 865, ss. 1, 3; 1979, c. 37, s. 1; c. 113; c. 178, s. 2; c. 667, ss. 3-11, 41; c. 678, ss. 1-3; c. 801, ss. 5, 6; 1981, c. 42; c. 690, ss. 8-10; c. 792, s. 3; 1981 (Reg. Sess., 1982), c. 1257, s. 1; 1983, c. 443, s. 1; 1985, c. 141, s. 4; c. 682, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 869, ss. 10, 11; 1989, c. 436, ss. 1, 2; c. 771, s. 5; c. 786, s. 4; 1991, c. 478, s. 1; c. 689, s. 325; c. 726, s. 5; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1007, s. 27; c. 1030, s. 10; 1993, c. 368, s. 1; c. 533, ss. 2, 3, 12; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 595, ss. 1, 2; c. 750, s. 1; c. 761, s. 1.1; 1995 (Reg. Sess., 1996), c. 675, s. 1; 1997-16, ss. 5, 8, 9; 1997-122, ss. 2, 3; 1997-377, s. 1; 1997-433, s. 4; 1997-443, ss. 11A.122, 32.20; 1997-456, s. 32, 33; 1998-17, s. 1; 1998-149, s. 2; 2000-120, ss. 14, 15; 2000-140, s. 93.1(a); 2001-424, ss. 12.2(b), 27.10A(a)-(d); 2001-513, s. 32(a); 2003-152, ss. 1, 2; 2003-284, s. 36.1; 2004-189, s. 5(a), (c); 2004-203, s. 2; 2005-276, s. 44.1(a), (q); 2005-349, s. 4; 2006-257, ss. 1, 2; 2006-264, s. 35.2; 2007-56, ss. 1-3; 2007-249, s. 1; 2007-350, s. 1; 2007-512, s. 5; 2008-202, ss. 2, 3; 2008-217, s. 1; 2008-221, s. 1; 2009-274, ss. 2, 3; 2009-451, s. 9.5(a); 2009-492, ss.

1, 2; 2010-130, s. 1; 2010-131, ss. 1, 2; 2010-132, s. 1; 2011-35, ss. 1, 2; 2011-183, ss. 21, 127(a); 2011-326, s. 28; 2011-381, s. 2; 2012-78, s. 1; 2012-85, ss. 1, 2; 2012-142, s. 9.16; 2012-145, s. 2.2; 2013-195, s. 2; 2013-231, s. 1; 2013-360, s. 7.10(a); 2014-58, s. 5; 2014-100, s. 34.8(a); 2014-115, s. 56.8(c); 2015-163, s. 2; 2015-238, s. 2.1; 2015-241, ss. 7A.4(b), 29.30(a), 29.30(a1), 29.36; 2015-294, s. 12; 2016-75, s. 1; 2016-90, ss. 6(a), 8(a), 9(a); 2017-191, s. 1; 2018-74, s. 10(a); 2018-145, s. 14; 2019-199, s. 7(a); 2019-227, s. 3(a), (b).)