Driver's License

As a nonimmigrant visa holder (F, J student, J scholar or H-1B), you have two options to drive legally in Pennsylvania, depending upon the duration of your I-20, DS-2019, or I-797 – apply for a Pennsylvania driver’s license or use an International Driving Permit.

Those who do not plan to drive, but want a state-issued identification document, may be eligible to apply for a Pennsylvania photo identification card.

Pennsylvania Driver’s License
If you are a nonimmigrant visa holder (F, J student, J scholar or H-1B), and your I-20, DS-2019, or I-797 is valid for one year from the date you are applying, you are eligible to apply for a Pennsylvania Driver’s License.

Please review instructions about obtaining a Pennsylvania Driver’s License.

International Driving Permit
If you will be in the US for less than one year (i.e., the expiration date on your Form I-20, Form DS-2019, or Form I-797A Approval Notice is less than one year away), you are not eligible for a driver’s license. However, you may drive with a valid home country license and International Driving Permit (IDP).

An IDP translates information contained on your driver’s license into 10 languages so that officials in foreign countries are able to interpret your license. An IDP supplements a valid government-issued license; it does not serve as a replacement for a license. If you are stopped by law enforcement, you will most likely be asked to produce both your IDP and your official driver’s license. You cannot apply for an International Driving Permit in the United States, so you will need to obtain this document before traveling to the U.S.

Pennsylvania honors a valid foreign driver’s license with an international driving permit for a period of up to one year. If the foreign license and/or international permit expire(s) before one year, the individual must apply for a Pennsylvania Learner’s Permit to continue to drive in this state.

Pennsylvania Photo Identification Card
If you are a nonimmigrant visa holder (F, J student, J scholar or H-1B) who does not plan on driving, and your I-20, DS-2019, or I-797 is valid for more than one year from the date you are applying, you are eligible to apply for a Pennsylvania Photo Identification Card.

Note about REAL ID
Students wishing to apply for a REAL ID-compliant Driver’s License or Photo Identification Card must apply at a location that offers this service. See more information and how to apply here: https://www.dmv.pa.gov/REALID/pages/default.aspx.
Instructions for Applying for a Driver’s License or State ID

1. Which Document?

If you are a F, J student, J scholar or H-1B employee and your immigration document is valid for more than one year from the date you are applying, you are eligible to apply for a Pennsylvania (PA) Driver’s License or a PA Photo Identification Card (State ID).

A Driver’s License will allow you to drive, but you will have to take a written test, a road test, and a medical exam.

If you do not need to drive but still want a state-issued ID, you can get the State ID without these tests.

Every international visitor applying for a Driver’s License or State ID will need the following documents:
- Passport
- I-94 Record (http://www.chp.gov/i94)
- Social Security Card, or denial letter from the Social Security Office (if you are ineligible (see Things to Remember below))
- 2 Documents verifying a Pittsburgh address (lease, utility bill, etc.)
- Application Form for Driver’s License (with medical portion completed by a doctor) or Photo Identification Card

2. Documents You Need

Below are the documents you need based on your immigration status:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>F-1 Student</th>
<th>F-1 on OPT</th>
<th>J-1 Student</th>
<th>J-1 Scholar</th>
<th>H-1B</th>
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<td>Form I-20</td>
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<td>EAD Card</td>
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<td>DS-2019</td>
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<td>Form I-797</td>
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<td>X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To receive the Social Security Number denial letter, you must visit the Social Security Office. Please use the Social Security Office Locator (http://www.socialsecurity.gov/locator) to find the appropriate location and verify hours of operation.

For OPT Participants — You cannot get a Driver’s License or State ID before the start date listed on the EAD.

For Dependents — You need your immigration document (I-20, DS-2019 or I-797) plus the primary visa holder’s immigration document in addition to all other requirements.

More information: http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BDL/BDL%20Publications/pub%20195nc.pdf

3. Things to Remember

- To receive the Social Security Number denial letter, you must visit the Social Security Office. Please use the Social Security Office Locator (http://www.socialsecurity.gov/locator) to find the appropriate location and verify hours of operation.

For OPT Participants — You cannot get a Driver’s License or State ID before the start date listed on the EAD.

For Dependents — You need your immigration document (I-20, DS-2019 or I-797) plus the primary visa holder’s immigration document in addition to all other requirements.

More information: http://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BDL/BDL%20Publications/pub%20195nc.pdf

Visit a Driver’s License Center to submit the required documents and forms.

For additional information, visit http://www.dmv.state.pa.us/centers/licenseIDCenter.shtml

LOCAL DRIVER’S LICENSE LOCATIONS
- Penn Hills: 11620 Kelekit Dr., Pittsburgh PA 15235
- Downtown: 708 Smithfield St., Pittsburgh PA 15222
- Allison Park: 1701 Duncan Ave., Pittsburgh PA 15101

Office of International Services | 708 William Pitt Union, Pittsburgh, PA 15260 | 412.624.7120 | ois@pitt.edu | www.ois.pitt.edu