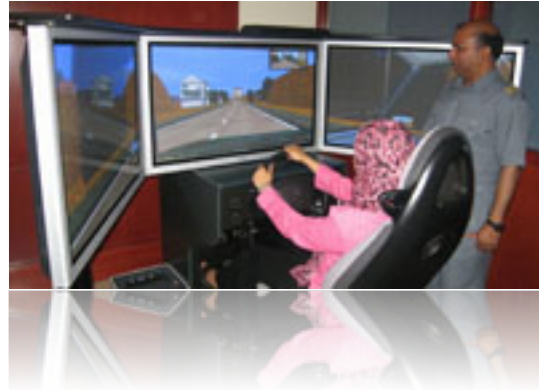# The Driving Test

By far the easiest way to get a UAE driving license is simply to replace a valid driving license from one of 24 approved countries including the UK, Australia, New Zealand, the US, Canada, South Africa, and much of Europe (for the complete list, go to www.abudhabi.ae).

Legal residents of Abu Dhabi can replace licenses from these countries provided they are the same nationality as the country that issued the existing license, and they don't already have a driving license from another emirate. We covered the procedure in Abu Dhabi Week, Vol 2 Issue 9.

If your nationality and the issuing country of your foreign license aren't the same, or if you've never had a license (or just need a new one), you'll have to undergo the famed Abu Dhabi driving test.

The testing process involves a written theory examination and a road test.

Getting Started

To get started, you must open a driving test file at the Traffic and Licensing Department on 27th Street between 2nd Street (Airport Road) and 4th Street (Muroor Road).

Submit the following documents:

- Completed application
- Three recent passport sized colour photos
- The results of an eye sight examination (which is done there while you wait for AED 20)
- Original driving license (if any)
- Letter of no objection from your employer, sponsor, or guardian depending on your nationality (check out www.abudhabi.ae if you're not sure)
- AED 100, plus an additional AED 50 if you'd like to move forward the date of your test.

The Theory Test

Once you've opened your file, you'll receive your Trainee Card and take a theoretical training course at the Emirates Driving Company in Musaffah.

This course covers six driving areas, from the most basic information like how to put the key in the ignition on through to the most complex parallel parking. If you already know how to drive, you have the option to save some time and opt out of up to five of these areas.

The course consists of six lessons which you can take at whatever speed you want (up to two lessons a day for three consecutive days), but courses fill up fast so you'll want to book early. After a session in the simulator, you'll take a parking test; testers have a reputation for being picky so be prepared. If you're testing to drive a manual transmission vehicle, you'll also need to perform a test which involves starting in first gear on a hill. The benefit to taking the manual transmission test is that fewer people try it, so you may not have to wait as long for lessons.

On passing the theory test, you'll receive a certificate. Now you're ready for the road-training course.

The Road Test

Even if you think you know how to drive, it's not a bad idea to take a driving course. Why? The instructors will give you hints and tips that will help you pass your test. One tip an instructor gave that proved to be true, for example, is that the testers may ask you to speed up even if you've already reached the maximum speed allowed for the area in which you're driving—they want to see if you're paying attention to the posted speed.

The instructors will clarify all those Abu Dhabi road rules that may seem a little unfamiliar to you, like how to negotiate roundabouts. At AED 60 an hour, the course is a good way to acclimatise to the crazy capital streets.

You can go to any of the private driving institutes in Abu Dhabi or the Emirates Driving Company, but whether you take the course or not, if you fail the road test three times your file will be transferred to the Emirates Driving Company where you will have to undergo the road training again.

On the day of your test, you'll present your theory certificate at the Emirates Driving Company in Musaffah. There you'll get on a bus and wait for your turn to drive the test car. When your test is over, you can get back on the bus (which will be following the test car) or hail a cab. You'll find out on the spot if you've passed or failed.

Getting your licence

On completion of the road test, you're ready to get your new license. Present the following documents at the Traffic and Licensing Department:

- Passport (original and copy)
- Three more recent passport-sized colour photos
- Eye sight examination result (the original and a copy)
- Something to indicate your blood type
- Pass receipt form (original and copy)
- AED 200.

If you find these instructions have changed or have any useful information to add, let us know via editor@AbuDhabiWeek.com and we'll post an update.

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