



**User manual  
'Application for the exchange of  
a foreign driving licence for a  
Dutch driving licence' (3 E 0397)**

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This user manual tells you what to do if you want to exchange a foreign driving licence or a linen driving licence. If you want to exchange a foreign driving licence, please refer to target group A. If you want to exchange a linen driving licence, please refer to target group B. In chapter 1, instructions have been categorized by target group.

## 1. Target groups

- A.** You want to exchange a foreign driving licence for a Dutch driving licence (Conditions can be found under the heading of target group A).
- B.** You want to exchange an old, linen, Dutch driving licence.

### Target group A

You want to exchange a foreign driving licence for a Dutch driving licence. The foreign driving licence must have been issued by a competent foreign authority in:

1. A different Member State of the European Union (EU), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)<sup>1</sup>.
2. A country outside of the EU/EFTA with which the Netherlands has an exchange agreement. These countries are known at your municipality and can be found on the RDW website ([www.rdw.nl](http://www.rdw.nl)).
3. A country outside of the EU/EFTA, only if you qualify for the '30% tax rule'. More information about this regulation can be obtained at the tax authorities in Heerlen .
4. Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten or Aruba.
5. A country other than mentioned under sections 1 to 4 inclusive. Besides, you had a Dutch driving licence that was valid after 30 June 1985.

### What to include in your application?

- A fully completed and signed 3 E 0397 application form.
- One colour passport photo that meets the criteria of the Dutch Photomatrix guidelines 2007. You can read more about this under the passport photo heading hereafter.
- The foreign driving licence\*.
- Possibly a translation of the foreign driving licence\*\*.
- The former Dutch driving licence (if the applicant still owns it)
- A copy of the approval of the tax authorities that the 30% tax rule applies to you (Dutch beschikking bewijsregel), which was issued by the tax authorities in Heerlen (only if you are categorized under section 3 of target group A).

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<sup>1</sup> Countries that are part of the European Union (EU): Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland, Sweden, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Croatia, and Bulgaria.  
Countries that are part of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA): Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland.

- A Declaration of Suitability (only if you are categorized under sections 2 to 5 inclusive of target group A), which was issued by the CBR. If you are categorized under section 1, you do not need a Declaration of Suitability. There are two exceptions to this. You do need to apply for a Declaration of Suitability if the driving licence from an EU/EFTA Member State;
  - is valid for less than the usual period of validity in the country of issue and you decide to renew your driving licence
  - has a registration/restriction (code) that does not match the codes that were established within the EU (excluding lenses, glasses or an automatic car)

Chapter 3 describes how to apply for a Declaration of Suitability .

Below, you can find important information about the application form and the documents to be sent.

### **Foreign driving licence**

The foreign driving licence needs to meet the following criteria:

- The driving licence must be valid.
- The driving licence must have been issued to you in a period of 1 year, in which you lived in the country of issuance of this driving licence for a minimum of 185 days.

Do you have a driving licence from an EU/EFTA country? In that case, the driving licence can have expired at the moment of applying. In that case, however, you do need to include a certified declaration from the foreign issuing authority. It should indicate there are no objections to issuing a Dutch driving licence.

### **Proof of 185 days**

The details on the application form should indicate that the foreign driving licence was issued in a period of 1 year, in which you lived in the country of issuance of this driving licence for a minimum of 185 days. If the details on the application form do not indicate this, you need to send proof. This does not apply to EU/EFTA driving licences.

### **Translation of the foreign driving licence**

If the foreign driving licence has exclusively been composed of punctuation that is not used in Dutch (in Japanese or in Greek, for example), a translation of the foreign driving licence should be included. The translation must have been made by a certified translator, the Embassy or the Consulate.

Documents need to be original documents (unless indicated differently) and these need to be handed in with the municipality in which you have been registered. After that, the municipality files the application with RDW.

Do you have a driving licence from a EU/EFTA country? Then you can choose

either to renew or replace your foreign driving licence. If your driving licence was issued outside the EU/EFTA, you can only renew it.

### **Renewing your driving licence**

Do you want to renew your foreign driving licence? Then you will receive a Dutch driving licence for categories AM, A1, A2, A, B and BE, which will be valid for a maximum of 10 years. For categories C1, C, C1E, CE, D1, D, D1E and DE, a maximum period of validity of 5 years applies. Did the CBR issue a Declaration of Suitability with limited validity? Then the period of validity of the driving licence may be different.

### **Replacing your driving licence**

Have you chosen to replace your foreign driving licence? Then you do not need to apply for a Health certificate (for example, if you have a driving licence with the category C or D) and you will be issued a Dutch driving licence based on your foreign driving licence. RDW then issues a Dutch driving licence that will remain valid for as long as the foreign driving licence is still valid. This is subject to a maximum limit. The period of validity is a maximum of 10 years for categories AM, A1, A2, A, B, BE and a maximum of 5 years for categories C1, C, C1E, CE, D1, D, D1E and DE (this applies when the foreign driving licence is valid for life, for example).

If you want to replace the driving licence, you must satisfy the following conditions:

1. At the moment of the decision to issue, the foreign driving licence must be valid for all categories (if it involves a period of validity shorter than 6 months, we recommend that you renew rather than replace your driving licence);
2. There may be no non-punitive orders on your driving licence. To check this, RDW will contact the European driving licence network (RESPER);
3. There may be no textual limitations/endorsements on your foreign driving licence.

If you do not satisfy the conditions, you can only renew your driving licence.

Did you forget to indicate on the application form whether you want to renew or replace your driving licence? In that case, when processing your application, RDW will automatically assume that you want to renew your driving licence.

Did you tick 'replacement EU/EEU/Swiss driving licence' on the application form but do you not satisfy the conditions for replacement? RDW will then process your application in line with the renewal process.

Please continue with chapter 3. If you have lost your driving licence, please go to chapter 2.

## Target group B

You want to exchange an old, linen, Dutch driving licence.

### What to include in the application?

- A fully completed and signed 3 E 0397 application form.
- One colour passport photo that meets the criteria of the Dutch Photomatrix guidelines 2007. You can read more about this under the passport photo heading hereafter.
- The old Dutch driving licence (the so-called 'linen' driving licence to which the passport photo has been attached using ring staples). If validity of the driving licence expired on or before 30 June 1985, the driving licence cannot be renewed.
- A Declarations of Suitability, in the following cases:
  - the applicant is 75 years old or over
  - the application (partly) involves category (or categories) C, C1, D, D1, CE, C1E, DE and/or D1E;
  - a Dutch driving licence with limited validity has been issued to you for medical reasons

Please continue with chapter 3. If you have lost your driving licence, please go to chapter 2.

## 2. Driving licence lost or stolen?

- If you have a foreign driving licence that was issued by Bonaire, Curaçao, Saba, Sint Eustatius, Sint Maarten, Aruba or an EU/EFTA Member State, please send the following:
  - An official report of the missing/theft of the driving licence that was drawn up by a Dutch police officer or a statement of loss from your municipality and
  - a certified statement from the authority that issued the driving licence, indicating its issuance and its validity.
- If you have a Dutch driving licence:
  - An official report of the missing/theft of the driving licence that was drawn up by a Dutch police officer or a statement of loss from your municipality.

In case of a driving licence from any other country, please include a valid foreign driving licence in your application.

## 3. Declarations of Suitability

In order to be allowed to drive, the law tells us to be 'fit to drive'. This means one is capable of driving, both mentally and physically. This is important for road safety. Chapter 1 (Target groups) tells you if you need a Declaration of Suitability. Below, you can find out how to get this certificate.

In order to get a Declaration of Suitability, you need a Health certificate. You can purchase a 'Health certificate' form via My CBR (<https://mijn.CBR.nl>). Please

go to the CBR website ([www.cbr.nl/gezondheidsverklaring](http://www.cbr.nl/gezondheidsverklaring)) to find other options to get a Health certificate. It can also be purchased at most municipalities, for instance.

There are different types of Health certificates. Please purchase the form that fits your situation;

- You want to exchange a car driving licence (possibly, including a trailer), a motor driving licence or a T driving licence and you are under 75 years old. Please buy the 'Health certificate' form.
- You want to exchange a car driving licence (possibly, including a trailer), a motor driving licence or a T driving licence and you are over 75 years old. In that case, please buy the form 'Health certificate including a examination report (75+)'
- You want to exchange a truck and/or bus driving licence (possibly, including a trailer). In that case, please buy the 'CDE Health certificate' form.

If you purchase a Health certificate via 'My CBR', the system selects the right type of declaration for you.

## **Additional research**

Sometimes, (based on your Health certificate) CBR finds you need to see a medical specialist or take a driving test. If this is the case, you are informed of this in writing. In case of a medical examination, the procedure takes longer. Therefore, it is important to send the Health certificate promptly. CBR aims to process all Declarations of Suitability applications as soon as possible, with a maximum term of four months. Once your Declaration of Suitability has been registered, you are notified by means of a letter from CBR.

Once you have applied for the exchange of a driving licence at RDW and CBR has registered your Declarations of Suitability, your application is processed. Registration of the Declarations of Suitability cannot be more than a year old at the moment of applying.

## **4. Waive category (categories)**

If you own a foreign driving licence including one of the driving licence categories C1, C, C1E, CE, D1, D, D1E and DE, and you do not want to be examined, you can temporarily waive heavy categories. This 'waiver foreign driving licence' can be found on the RDW website ([www.rdw.nl](http://www.rdw.nl)). You can also request the waiver by phone from RDW Customer Service. If you want to regain possession of one or several categories that you had waived, you need to get an examination and submit a Declarations of Suitability after all.

Do you have an EU/EVA driving licence on which all categories are still valid and you have one or more of the heavy categories (C1, C, C1E, CE, D1, D, D1E, DE)? Then you can also opt for a replacement driving licence instead of a new driving licence. The conditions that you must comply with are described under Target group A in this user manual (under the header 'Replacing your driving licence').

Do you want to replace your driving licence? Then please state this clearly on the application form.

## 5. Certificate of Driving Ability

If the application also involves an extension of the categories, the Dutch Driver Licensing Centre (CBR) needs to register a Certificate of Driving Ability. This registration cannot be over 3 years old at the moment of applying for a driving licence.

## 6. Charges

Charges (fees) are involved in processing your application. These charges are due upon filing the application at the municipality. Charges can vary among municipalities.

## 7. Application form

The application form needs to be completed fully and signed. Your signature needs to be placed within the indicated frame using black ink. Please start at the left and use the whole frame space to place a clearly legible signature. To this end, please press the pen firmly on the application form. Application forms without a signature placed within the frame are not accepted by RDW.

## 8. Colour passport photo

The colour passport photo needs to have been taken recently and straight from the front. Besides, the passport photo needs to meet several other conditions. These conditions are the same as those applying to the Dutch passport and the Dutch identity card. More information about the conditions can be found on the website [www.rijksoverheid.nl](http://www.rijksoverheid.nl) or at your municipality.

## 9. Procedure

If your application has been approved, you receive a letter stating that you can collect your driving licence at the municipality of your application after five working days. The driving licence is handed to you after proving your identity. Therefore, please bring your identity card.

**Attention:** RDW only processes applications that are accompanied by a fully completed application form and all the required documents. If you hand in your application and documents separately, processing may take longer.

## 10. More information

More information about the driving licence can be found on [www.rijbewijs.nl](http://www.rijbewijs.nl) or [www.rdw.nl](http://www.rdw.nl).