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Can you drive in mainland France with a license issued overseas?

Verified 04 août 2020 - Directorate for Legal and Administrative Information (Prime Minister)

The situation is different depending on whether you have obtained your license in a Dom, a Com or New Caledonia.

Permit obtained in a Dom

Yes, you can drive in mainland France with a valid driving license obtained in a Dom.


Permits obtained in a Com or in New Caledonia

Yes, you can drive in mainland France with a valid driving license obtained in a Com or New Caledonia, subject to conditions.

Répondez aux questions successives et les réponses s'afficheront automatiquement

You are French

Your valid license obtained in a Com or in New Caledonia allows you to drive in mainland France if it is one of the following:

- ▶ Permit obtained directly in a Com or in New Caledonia, without exchange procedure
- ▶ Permit issued in exchange for a European permit
- ▶ Permit issued in exchange for a non-European permit with which France practices [reciprocal exchange of licenses \[application/pdf - 147.2 KB\]](#)  (https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) .. For example, a permit obtained in New Caledonia issued in exchange for a permit obtained in New Zealand.

However, if you are in one of the following situations, you must request the exchange of your license obtained in a Com in New Caledonia for a metropolitan license in order to continue driving in metropolitan France:

- ▶ You are requesting a new license category (extension)
- ▶ You reside in a metropolitan area and have committed a traffic violation, resulting in a loss of points, restriction, suspension or cancellation of your license
- ▶ Your license has expired.


From **August 4, 2020**, the procedure is done online via a remote service available on the website of the [CHILDREN](#) ()..

The remote service is accessible with FranceConnect or with your ANTS IDs (if you do not have one, you are offered to create an account to have a personal space on the site of the ANTS).


Online application for foreign driver's license exchange

National Secured Securities Agency (NSA)

Accessible with an ANT account or via FranceConnect

Go to
online service 
(<https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/>)

To do the online process, you need the following documents (photographed or digitized):

- ▶ Color image duplex original driver's license color
- ▶ [Proof of identity](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31057?lang=en) (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31057?lang=en>)
- ▶ [Proof of domicile](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31847?lang=en) (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31847?lang=en>) recent (less than 6 months)
- ▶ Certificate of driving rights of less than 3 months issued by the authorities of the authority issuing the driving license. It must mention the absence of a measure of suspension/cancellation of driving rights
- ▶ [Digital Signature](https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee)  (<https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee>) (If you do not have access to a digital photo and signature service, you are offered to fill out and mail a photo-signature form (FPS) during the remote procedure)
- ▶ If you want to keep [heavy categories of your license](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N530?lang=en) (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N530?lang=en>) or if your license has been suspended, medical opinion following a visit to a registered doctor in your department of residence (list

downloadable on the prefectures website)

You are European

You are covered by this procedure if you are a Swiss, Monegasque, Andorran or European Economic Area (EEA)..

Your valid license obtained in a Com or in New Caledonia allows you to drive in mainland France if it is one of the following:

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- ▶ Permit issued in exchange for a European permit
- ▶ Permit issued in exchange for a non-European permit with which France practices [reciprocal exchange of licenses \[application/pdf - 147.2 KB\]](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) [↓](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) (https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) .. For example, a permit obtained in New Caledonia issued in exchange for a permit obtained in New Zealand.

However, if you are in one of the following situations, you must request the exchange of your license obtained in a Com for a metropolitan license in order to continue driving in metropolitan France:

- ▶ You are requesting a new license category (extension)
- ▶ You reside in a metropolitan area and have committed a traffic violation, resulting in a loss of points, restriction, suspension or cancelation of your license
- ▶ Your license has expired.

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- ▶ [Proof of domicile](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31847?lang=en) (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31847?lang=en>) recent (less than 6 months)
- ▶ Certificate of driving rights of less than 3 months issued by the authorities of the authority issuing the driving license. It must mention the absence of a measure of suspension/cancelation of driving rights
- ▶ Justification of normal residence in France at the date of application (at least 185 days with personal and/or professional ties). For example, tax/non-tax notices on income, employment contract, social security certificate, etc.
- ▶ [Digital Signature](https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee) [↗](https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee) (<https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee>) (If you do not have access to a digital photo and signature service, you are offered to fill out and mail a photo-signature form (FPS) during the remote procedure)
- ▶ If you want to keep [heavy categories of your license](https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N530?lang=en) (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/N530?lang=en>) or if your license has been suspended, medical opinion following a visit to a registered doctor in your department of residence (list downloadable on the prefectures website)

You have the nationality of another State

Your valid license obtained in a Com in New Caledonia allows you to drive in a metropolis if it is one of the following:

- ▶ Permit obtained directly in a Com in New Caledonia, without exchange procedure
- ▶ Permit issued in exchange for a European permit
- ▶ Permit issued in exchange for a non-European permit with which France practices [reciprocal exchange of licenses \[application/pdf - 147.2 KB\]](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) [↓](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) (https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) .. For example, a permit obtained in New Caledonia issued in exchange for a permit obtained in New Zealand.

However, if you are in one of the following situations, you must request the exchange of your license obtained in a Com or in New Caledonia for a metropolitan license in order to continue driving in metropolitan France:

- ▶ You are requesting a new license category (extension)
- ▶ You reside in a metropolitan area and have committed a traffic violation, resulting in a loss of points, restriction, suspension or cancelation of your license
- ▶ Your license has expired.

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To do the online process, you need the following documents (photographed or digitized):

- Color image duplex original driver's license color
- **Proof of identity** (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31057?lang=en>)
- **Proof of domicile** (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F31847?lang=en>) recent (less than 6 months)
- Certificate of driving rights of less than 3 months issued by the authorities of the authority issuing the driving license. It must mention the absence of a measure of suspension/cancelation of driving rights
- Proof(s) of the regularity of the stay in France (temporary residence card, residence card, multi-annual permit, etc.)
- **Digital Signature** [↗](https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee) (<https://permisdeconduire.ants.gouv.fr/Services-associes/Ou-faire-votre-photo-et-votre-signature-numerisee>) (If you do not have access to a digital photo and signature service, you are offered to fill out and mail a photo-signature form (FPS) during the remote procedure)
- If you wish to retain category C or D of the permit, medical advice following a visit to a registered doctor in your department of residence (list downloadable on the prefectures website)

▲ Warning : the validity of your license is limited if it was obtained in exchange for a license from a third country to the European Economic Area with which France does not practice reciprocal exchange of licenses [[application/pdf - 147.2 KB](#)] [↗](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) (https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) .. For example, a permit obtained in New Caledonia in exchange for an Argentine permit. You can only use it for 1 year from the acquisition of your normal residence in mainland France. After this period, your license is no longer valid or redeemable. You must take the test of the French driving license (<https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/vosdroits/F2828?lang=en>)..

Statute and miscellaneous references

- Route code: Articles R222-1 to R222-8 [↗](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006159563&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074228) (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichCode.do?idSectionTA=LEGISCTA000006159563&cidTexte=LEGITEXT000006074228>)
- Order of 8 February 1999 laying down the conditions for the recognition and exchange of driving licenses issued by States belonging to the EU and the EEA [↗](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005627531) (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005627531>)
- Order of 12 January 2012 laying down the conditions for the recognition and exchange of driving licenses issued by States outside the European Economic Area [↗](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000025175223) (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000025175223>)
- Order of 20 April 2012 laying down the conditions for the establishment, issue and validity of driving licenses [↗](http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000025803494) (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000025803494>)
Article 9

For more information, please contact

- Countries exchanging driving licenses with France (PDF - 147.2 KB) [↗](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf) (https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/liste_permis_de_conduire_valables_a_l_echange_20200331_cle89bfda.pdf)
Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs