

So... You want a Thai Drivers License? (and how to renew it as well!)

A self help guide developed by Darin Dunn



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**If you have a Work Permit skip #1 & #2 and proceed to #3!*

I – Intro

Getting a Thai drivers license is an adventure that will prove to be a challenge for even for the most patient of individuals. In Thailand the driver’s licenses for cars and motorbikes are separate cards. You will need a stack of forms, tests and fees for each. This resource is meant to serve as a guide on your quest to obtaining those little plastic cards. I promise you, when you finally get them you will find yourself sitting in a rocking chair staring at them for hours. A task accomplished is sweet to the soul, so lets get going!

Note: If you obtain an International Driving Permit from your nation’s motoring club (AAA Travel in the U.S. for about \$20) you will be allowed to opt out of the written test and the safety video.

Before you head to the Land Transportation Office (Koin-Song) you will need six items.

- 1) A Certificate of Residence from your Embassy, Consulate or from the Immigration office at Promenda Mall. (1050 Baht if using the US Consulate or 500 baht at the Immigration Office) *or* work permit. *(Note: If your Work Permit is in your spouse’s name it WILL NOT work for you.)*
- 2) Your Passport with valid Visa
- 3) Medical Certificate (physical) no more than a month old. (100 Baht)
- 4) A valid driver’s license from your home country
- 5) An explanation of the class listed on your license

The fees for your licenses will be 505 baht for the car and 255 baht for the motorcycle. This brings the totals fees for your License adventure to 1810 baht or approximately \$57 (U.S.)

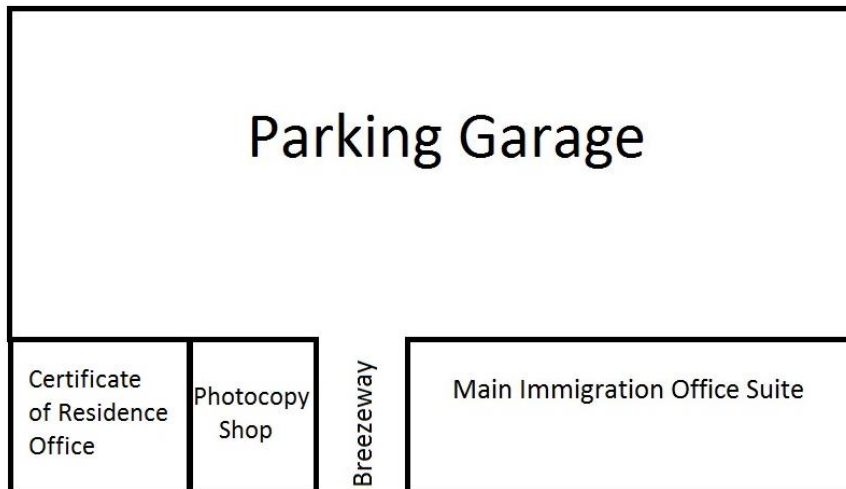
II – Certificate of Residence

We'll start with number one.

If you have a Work Permit skip #1 & #2 and proceed to #3!

The best case scenario is obtaining this form from the Immigration office at Promenada Mall. If you have a one year Visa you should be able to obtain this form from that office for 500 baht. It will take about two days to get it back after filling out the request forms there. If your visa is multi-entry or less than one year you MAY need to go to your Embassy or Consulate. Some have been able to obtain it anyway.

The place to obtain this is just to the left of the Immigration office at Promenda Mall: <https://goo.gl/maps/idtBHFwuNCR2>



They are open 9am – 4pm. Be sure you don't go during their lunch break from 12pm-1pm. You can take the forms there for your family members without them being present. The pick-up will be about two days later.

You will need a copy of your home lease contract, a copy of your landlord's government ID and two passport sized photos. Another option is to obtain a letter from your landlord stating you live in a certain house. Take these documents to their office. You turn in your paperwork and they tell you which day to come back. You should be in and out quickly as this office is fairly efficient.

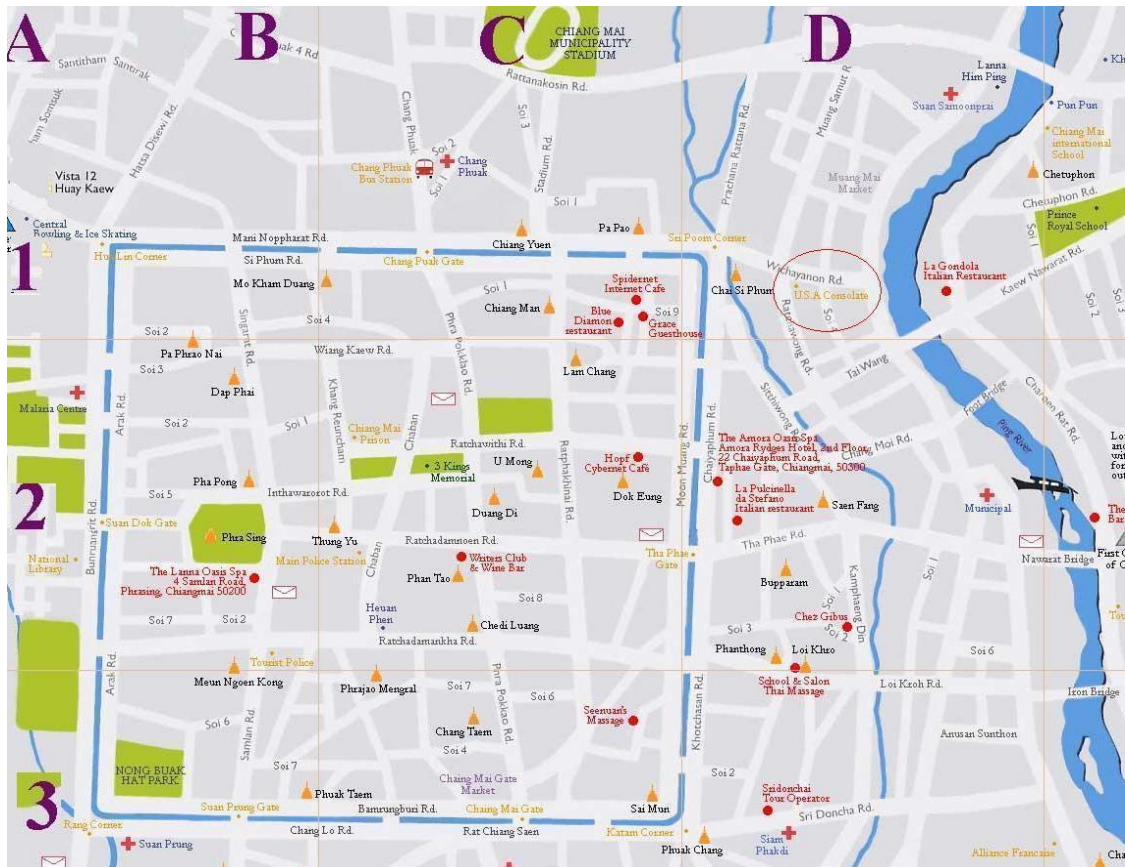
Upon your return you will receive a document confirming that you live at your address. The driver's license dept. will honor this *if it is less than one month old*. It would be a good idea to make a copy of this form for your records. You can use this form for renewing licenses as well as vehicle transfers, etc..

If you cannot obtain this form from the Immigration Office you will need to go to your embassy or consulate to obtain a notarized document stating your address. The U.S. consulate in Chiang Mai is now handling U.S. citizen services by appointment only. You will need to visit the following site to make an appointment:

<https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?PostCode=CHN++++++&CountryCode=THAI++++++&CountryCodeShow=&PostCodeShow=&Submit=Submit>

United States Consulate (D1, circled on map below)
 387 Wichayanont Road, T. Changmoi, A. Muang, Chiang Mai, Thailand 50300
 Tel (053) 252-629, Fax (053) 234-472 or (053) 252-633

<https://goo.gl/maps/mLtc8G9amLL2>



The road along the river is a one-way street so you will need start north of the consulate and work your way down until you see a large white chedi used as a traffic circle. From there you will see the large walls of the consulate and the American Flag.

The cost for the notarized form is \$35 (U.S.) or about \$1050 (BHT). Upon entering the consulate you will need to show your passport and surrender all electronic devices (phones, etc.) They will hold your items and give you a card to redeem them later. Upon entering, check in at Window 1.

While you are at the Embassy/Consulate you may need to have your license guaranteed if you are unable to find your class information on the web. See number four below.

III – Medical Certificate

Next you will need a medical certificate or physical from any local hospital. These physicals are quick and painless. They will listen to your heart measure your height and weight, check your blood pressure and temperature, along with a quick test for color blindness.

There are several hospitals around the moat. I recommend Chiang Mai Ram located near Central Mall (Kad Suan Geaw).

The price for the physical is 100 baht. I went midday and was in and out in under an hour. I've been told that "Christian Clinic" in town or the "McKean Hospital Clinic" out near Hang Dong district are just 30 baht and less than 10 minutes depending on if others are waiting. You may want to consider those options as well.

Chiang Mai Ram (Circled in A1) (other hospitals also marked with red crosses):



Chiang Mai Ram Hospital: <https://goo.gl/maps/J1NdDJG88k>

IV and V – Valid License From Your Home Country/Explanation of Class of License

The next item you will need is a valid driver's license from your home country. You will need to be able to show the Driver License Office what the class listing on your license means. Here is a site that may give you a head start to finding this information. It can be tricky.

<http://www.dmv.org/apply-license.php>

After you find this information print it out and bring it with you. If you cannot find these items your Embassy/Consulate can issue you a form guaranteeing your license.

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If your license is not in English you will also need your Embassy/Consulate to translate it and issue you a form with an explanation in Thai script.

VI – The Driver’s License Office (Land Transportation Office) or “Koin-Song”

Make sure you have all of the necessary documents. You will also need two copies of each document including your passport’s main page, your visa and the immigration stamp you received upon entering the country. You can make copies at the Driver License Office on the first floor all the way to the end. Here’s the check list again:

- 1) A Certificate of Residence from your Embassy, Consulate or from the Immigration Office.**
- 2) Your Passport with valid Visa**
- 3) Medical Certificate (physical) no more than a month old.**
- 4) A valid driver’s license from your home country**
- 5) An explanation of the class listed on your license**

The Driver’s License Office (Transportation) or “Koin-Song” is located on Hong Dong Road approximately 3 KM south of airport plaza immediately before you cross under a large overhead arch/pedestrian walk way. It’s a large purple building with purple fences just before Big C. You will want to get started no later than 9am because the various tests and safety classes are all very structured around a time schedule throughout the day.



Chiang Mai Land Transportation Office: <https://goo.gl/maps/UDT9H7puBvH2>

When you arrive you will need to proceed to the second floor to the information desk. Smile and hand in your forms to the attendant.

After each of your papers are stamped twice you will be directed to window 28 with your documents. When called you will step across the hall for a series of tests that will involve pulling strings, stepping on pedals and reading charts.

Note: If you obtain an International Driving Permit from your nation's motoring club (AAA Travel in the U.S. for about \$20) you will be allowed to opt out of the written test and the safety video.

Next, you will watch a one hour safety video on a computer. They do have an English language version. After that, the written test will be electronic and will consist of 50 questions. You must get at least 45 correct. You will be given one hour but you can get through it in 15 mins or so. They can give you a booklet to study if you request it but you should be able to pass it in one or two tries without studying. They will let you take it multiple times. Testing is open from 10am – 12pm.

You can prepare with this study guide:

<http://darindunn.com/upload/DMVManual.pdf>

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After passing your test you will need to proceed to a building in the far north east corner of the property for your motorcycle driving test. The test begins at 1pm and closes at 3:00pm. You will be required to drive on 2X4s for 10 meters or so which is a bit of a challenge but they will give you a few tries. After that you will be asked to signal, turn right, weave through cones, observe a stop sign and return to base.

After you complete your driving test gather your results from the test along with your results from the written test and return to the information booth on the 2nd floor of the main building and take a number.

At this point you will pay the 210 baht and 150 baht fees and they will take your photo. They will process and print your licenses in a matter of mins.

Then, hold your new licenses high above your head and exit the building yelling for joy.

Happy driving! See you on the road!



If you have any suggestions or updates for this booklet please email me at darin@darindunn.com

Maps courtesy of:

<http://interactive-map.chiangmai-news.com/thailand-chiang-mai-interactive-map/interactive-map.jpg>

<http://www.maejogolfclub.com/images/Maejo%20Map%20w800.gif>

Clip Art Courtesy of Microsoft

Addendum 1 – Renewing your Driver’s License

If your current two year license is due to expire you cannot renew it early, but you can renew it up to one year after it expires. After your 2 year license expires you will then be issued 5 year licenses from then on provided you maintain a visa other than a tourist visa.

If you going from a 2 year to a 5 year license you will need:

- 1) Your passport and visa**
- 2) Certificate of Residence from the Embassy, Consulate or Immigration Office. Or Work Permit or Residence Book (yellow book).**
(Note: If your Work Permit is in your spouse’s name it WILL NOT work for you.)
See page 3 of this document for more information.
- 3) Your current Thai Driver’s License (60 days before expiration date)**
- 4) Medical Certificate – no more than 30 days old (see page 6)**
- 5) Fees are: Car 505 baht, Motorcycle 305 baht, Smart Card license 100 baht/each
Change of address 50 baht**

You will need a copy of each document for each license (car and motorbike) as well as your originals.

You shouldn’t be required to take any further tests.

You may go to the office M-F 8:30am-15:30pm

If you going from a 5 year to another 5 year license you will need:

- 1) Your passport and visa**
- 2) Certificate of Residence from the Embassy, Consulate or Immigration Office. Or Work Permit or Residence Book (yellow book). If using your Work Permit, bring copies of every non-blank page.**
(Note: If your Work Permit is in your spouse’s name it WILL NOT work for you.)
See page 3 of this document for more information.
- 3) Your current Thai Driver’s License (90 days before expiration date)**
- 4) Medical Certificate – no more than 30 days old (see page 6)**
- 5) Fees are: Car 505 baht, Motorcycle 255 baht, Smart Card license 100 baht/each
Change of address 50 baht**

You will need a copy of each document for each license (car and motorbike) as well as your originals.

You will be required to take an eye exam, reaction test and watch a 1 hour training video (in English). The eye exam is a color blindness test, the reaction test measures your ability to operate a gas pedal when you see a green light and then hit the brake pedal when you see a red light.

The video is shown at 10:30am and 1:00pm.