



Driver's Eligibility Certificate and License Information

<https://ncadmin.nc.gov/frequently-asked-questions-driving-eligibility-certificates>

BACKGROUND

The term "Driving Eligibility Certificate" (also known as "DEC") refers to the official State of North Carolina school form required only of North Carolina drivers who are under age 18. One is required of each person under age 18 who does not yet possess a high school diploma but wishes to obtain/retain a North Carolina driver's permit/license. North Carolina does not permit persons under age 18 to drive unless they are:

1. Currently enrolled in and regularly attending a North Carolina school; or enrolled in and physically attending an out-of-state boarding or an out-of-state day school, and
2. Are making academic progress in that school toward graduation. and have not been suspended from that school for more than ten days for possessing an illegal substance on the school campus; possessing a firearm or weapon on the school campus; or, assaulting a school staff member.

The DEC form is used to indicate whether or not a North Carolina high school student is meeting the two above requirements.

Persons under age 18 not yet possessing a high school diploma must be issued a DEC by the principal of the NC school in which he/she is currently enrolled and regularly attending.

The North Carolina DMV offices statewide will accept NO substitutes for it. DNPE supplies DEC forms only to [conventional K-12 non-public](#) as well as [home schools](#) operating within NC's geographical borders which meet all legal requirements for such schools. The DEC form is required in addition to the official State of North Carolina Driver Education course completion certificate which indicates that the student has successfully completed a State of North Carolina approved student driver education course of study.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why would a Driving Eligibility Certificate be revoked?

There are three reasons why a Driver Eligibility Certificate could be revoked.

- **DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL PRIOR TO AGE 18**

As of August 1, 1998 any public, private, federal, home-schooled, or community college student under age 18 who does not make adequate academic progress or drops out of school will have their driving permit or provisional license revoked. (§ 20-11)

Under the Dropout Prevention Guidelines, a dropout student is one who has withdrawn from school before the end of the academic term and whose enrollment in an educational setting cannot be verified for 30 days. Parents should be notified in writing that the student's Driver Eligibility Certificate will be revoked. Parents may submit a hardship request to the principal or principal's designee to maintain the student's Driving Eligibility status.

- **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

Disciplinary action includes an expulsion, a suspension for more than 10 consecutive days, or an assignment to an alternative educational setting for more than 10 consecutive days. (§ 20-11(n1))

Under the Lose Control/Lose License guidelines, the Driving Eligibility Certificate is revoked for one year. Unlike the Dropout Prevention guidelines that end when a student turns age 18, the revocation of a Driving Eligibility Certificate for disciplinary action can



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extend beyond age 18 if the disciplinary action took place during the time the student was age 17.

- **NOT MAKING ADEQUATE ACADEMIC PROGRESS**
At the end of each semester, students not passing 70% of the maximum possible courses are identified. Parents are notified that the student is not making adequate academic progress and have the option of submitting a hardship request to the principal or principal's designee to maintain the student's Driving Eligibility status.

What constitutes a hardship request to receive a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

The school principal or principal's designee may determine specific circumstances exist that constitute a hardship thereby allowing a student to receive a Driving Eligibility Certificate. A hardship is defined as "a demonstrable burden on the student or the student's family..." 16 NCAC 06E.0301 (c) (3)

How does the Driving Eligibility Certificate become reinstated? *

Under the "Lose Control/Lose License" § 20-11 (n1) (1) statute, the Driving Eligibility Certificate is reinstated one year after the disciplinary action occurred.

However, if the local education agency determines the student displayed exemplary behavior and is attending school, a student may be eligible for the Driving Eligibility Certificate six months after the ineligibility occurred. § 20-11 (n1) (2), (3), (4)

Furthermore, if the school administrator determines the student has exhausted all administrative appeals related to the disciplinary action and needs the certificate to drive to and from school, a drug or alcohol treatment counseling program, as appropriate, or a mental health treatment program, and no other transportation is available, the student is eligible for a Driving Eligibility Certificate. § 20-11 (n1) (3)

What is the appeal process for the revocation of the Driving Eligibility Certificate?

The local education agency (school, school district, school board) determines the process by which decisions concerning the issuance of a driving eligibility certificate shall be appealed. 16 NCAC 06E.0301 (d)

How do technical errors regarding Driving Eligibility Certificates from local public schools become resolved?

Public schools should work with their central office coordinator and the help desk at DPI. Send an e-mail to: dpi.incidents@its.nc.gov and type in DEC Correction in the subject box.

* **NOTE:** To reinstate driving privileges, the DMV must have electronic confirmation from the child's private school, public school, community college, or for home school students-the Division of Non Public Education as well as the paper DEC when the child and parent/guardian visit the local DMV office. DMV may also charge a restoration fee

What is a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

A Driving Eligibility Certificate is used to verify that a student is meeting academic and enrollment expectations for the state of North Carolina and therefore in combination with the other requirements outlined in § 20-11 (d) (1), (2), and (3) may obtain either a limited driver's learner permit or a provisional (limited or full) driver's license.



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How long is a Driving Eligibility Certificate valid?

The Driving Eligibility Certificate is valid for 30 days. § 20-11(n)(3)

Who needs a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

A person under age 18 seeking a driver's learner permit or provisional driver's license needs a Driving Eligibility Certificate. A person over age 18 may also need a Driving Eligibility Certificate if the Driving Eligibility Certificate was revoked prior to age 18 due to disciplinary action during high school or community college. § 20-11(n1)

How does a minor enrolled in a public school within North Carolina, obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

Upon successful completion of a Driver Education program, the student may obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate from the school once adequate academic progress (pass at least 70% of the maximum of possible courses each semester and meet promotion standards established by the LEA) 16 NCAC 06E.0301 has been verified by the school.

How does a minor enrolled in a private school or home schooled within North Carolina, obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

The Division of Non-Public Education at www.ncdnpe.org lists directions on obtaining a Driving Eligibility Certificate. Please note, home schools must be registered with the Division of Non-Public Education for 6 months in order to obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate. For more details please call the Division of Non-Public Education directly at: 919.733.4276.

How does a minor enrolled in a Community College / Basic Skills / GED program obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

Once a student has enrolled in a local Community College Basic Skills / GED program for 6 months, the Basic Skills program determines academic eligibility and issues the Driving Eligibility Certificate. For more details, please contact the Basic Skills office of your local community college or visit:<http://www.nccommunitycolleges.edu/>

How does a minor enrolled in a public or private school outside North Carolina, obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

Driver education is provided to students attending school within the state of North Carolina, the local education authorities have the option of charging up to \$45.00 in fees per student. § 20.88-1 Minors attending school outside the state of North Carolina but who reside in North Carolina can attend one of the DMV certified commercial driving schools throughout North Carolina. Students attending school outside North Carolina can obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate from the local school system central office in which they have permanent residence. The local education agency determines what evidence is needed to verify an out of state student's Driving Eligibility. Please contact the Driver's Training Coordinator at your local school district central office for the school system's criteria. A North Carolina Driver Education Certification of Completion obtained from the commercial driving school is also presented to the local central public school system office. Both the DEC and the certificate of completion of Driver's Training are presented to the local DMV office.

How does someone under 18 residing in North Carolina but not attending school obtain a Driving Eligibility Certificate?

In North Carolina, prior to age 18, everyone must show adequate progress toward a high school diploma, or its equivalent in order to obtain a driver's license. (§ 20-11)



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How does a public school obtain the Driving Eligibility Certificates?

Driving Eligibility Certificates are distributed through the school district central office. Procedures to order DEC's for public school systems are located further down on this page.

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