

# California Driver's License – Important Facts

If you will be driving in California and if you plan on purchasing a motor vehicle (a car, scooter or motorcycle), you must apply for a California Driver's License. California law also requires you purchase car insurance. Most car insurance companies will require you have a California Driver's License. A new F or J visa nonimmigrant can apply for a California driver's license after entering the United States. Proper timing is important when applying for a California driver's license. Please read the information below before applying for your driver's license.

## Five Simple Tips

- 1. Make sure your record in the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) is up-to-date and in ACTIVE status.** SEVIS is the database that contains information for all F, M and J nonimmigrants in the United States. The DSO or ARO (whichever applies to you) must register your SEVIS record when you report to the school. This puts you in ACTIVE status and makes you eligible to apply for your driver's license. Talk with your DSO or ARO before you apply for a driver's license
- 2. Wait at least 10 days after you arrive in the United States and after you have checked in with your DSO or ARO to apply for your driver's license.** You may want to apply for a driver's license right away, but be patient. The 10-day wait allows time for all the government databases to update with your arrival information.
- 3. Check your forms.** Check all of your forms to make sure your information is correct. This is data integrity. Data integrity is very important because if you have different information on different forms, it will cause delays.
- 4. Know what you are applying for and if you are eligible.** While you are waiting, talk with your school's designated school official (PDSO/DSO) or sponsor's responsible office (ARO/RO) to learn more about California's driving rules and regulations.
- 5. Bring all your paperwork.** When you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), remember to bring all of the following immigration documents:
  - Form I-20 or Form DS-2019
  - Form I-94 (arrival/Departure Record)
  - Passport/Visa



## Merced, CA DMV Information

### Merced DMV Office Contact Information

1313 W. 12th St. Merced CA 95340  
Phone #: (800) 777-0133

### Merced DMV Appointment System

<http://www.dmv.ca.gov/foa/welcome.do?localeName=en>

### Merced DMV Office Hours

Monday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Tuesday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Wednesday: 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Thursday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Friday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
Saturday and Sunday: Closed

### Services offered in the following languages:

Audio testing for the Class C (Basic) driver's license is available in these languages. Call ahead to assure availability.

Armenian, Chinese/Mandarin, Hindi, Hmong, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese.

### Payment Methods available at this location:

Cash, Debit, Check and Money Order