

A guide to driving in

CYPRUS

VISITOR INFORMATION AT A GLANCE

Cyprus has a population of around one million, comprised of two main ethnic communities, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots

There are more than 801000 registered vehicles.

In this number, there are 550000 passenger cars, 134200 trucks, 1930 taxis, 52400 Motorcycles, 11000 hired vehicles without a driver, 3950 buses.

The island of Cyprus is situated at the north-eastern end of the Mediterranean basin, covering an area of 9,251 sq km.

Greek and Turkish are the official languages. Also, English is extensively spoken, especially in tourist areas.

The international car ID code is 'CY'

Please see next page for comprehensive Information on specific road rules and TISPOL's advice on safer driving.

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Driving facts

The minimum driving age is 18 years old. The minimum driving age for learner drivers of salon cars is 17.5 years old.

Riding a motorbike is permitted from the age of 17.

Motorway speed limits

The maximum speed limit is 100 km/h for buses, passenger cars and motorcyclists. The minimum speed limit is 65 Km/h.

The maximum speed limit is 80 km/h for trucks (heavier than 3,000 kg) and also for vehicles with a trailer. The minimum speed limit is 65 Km/h.

Driving a vehicle on a highway by a person who holds a learner's license is not allowed, except for training purposes only and provided that he or she is accompanied by a licensed driver instructor, or for testing purposes for obtaining full driving license.

Vehicles that have not been manufactured for speeding above 65 Km/h, are strictly not allowed to be driven on motorways (highways).

Driving Rules in Residential Areas

Here, the maximum speed is 50 km/h, if there is no other traffic signal to determine.

Speed limits for specific categories of motor vehicles

As maximum speed limit for trucks, trailers, articulated vehicles and trailers which have weight greater than 3,000 kg on roads with two lanes, the limit of 64 km/h has been set, while on roads with four lanes, a limit of 80 km/h has been set.

Where road signaling provides lower speed limit, this lower speed limit applies.

Annual road deaths

Number of road deaths 2010: 60

Number of road deaths 2011: 71

Number of road deaths 2012: 51

Number of road deaths 2013: 44

Number of road deaths 2014: 45

Number of road deaths 2015: 57

Number of road deaths 2016: 46

Number of road deaths 2017: 53

Visitors:

Visitors that bring their car for personal use during their stay can drive it on the roads of Cyprus provided the vehicle is accompanied by a certificate of registration and a valid circulation license of the country of origin. If the later expires during their stay in Cyprus, the corresponding fee must be paid, so that a Cyprus circulation license is issued, by the competent authority (Road Transport Department). The vehicle must be covered by a valid Insurance Certificate, covering a third party liability. Also, the driver must be a holder of a valid driving license.

Periodic Inspection for roadworthiness:

Vehicles must be inspected and pass the roadworthiness test at specified intervals, otherwise, their circulation license is invalidated / cancelled.

Private vehicles must be inspected four years after their first registration as new and then every two years, at inspection centers of the private sector. All other vehicles (e.g. buses, trucks) are, in general, inspected at the Road Transport Department's Inspection centers, one year after their registration and then every year.

Road Policing

In Cyprus every uniformed police officer has a legal authority to carry out traffic checks. Cyprus Police, in line with TISPOL policy, has recognised the value of moving from a 'Traffic Policing' model to a «**Road Policing**» model, where more effective and efficient use is made of specialist traffic police officers.

Cyprus Police is focused not only on traffic offences but also on criminal activities on the roads in order to secure the safety and security of European citizens and to deny criminals use of the roads. This strategy is in line with European Union Internal Security Strategies (ISS) and Transport policies.

Changes in Legislation

Changes were made in 2010, to traffic regulations making the use of headlights on motorbikes obligatory during daytime hours. Therefore, if you are going to drive a motorcycle or moped, bear in mind that the headlights must be switched on during the daytime also.

The Law on Registration Number Plates was first implemented in 2010, under which the police can entrap a vehicle, with no registration plates, or if involved in other similar offenses (e.g. registration number plates not readable). This law is of great importance, in order to facilitate tackling the criminals.

Drink-drive

Since the 6th of May, 2015, a new alcohol limit has been prescribed for the following categories of drivers: Persons who have been holders of a driving license for less than three years, learner drivers, persons driving motorbikes, motorcycles, tricycles, quadricycles, drivers of lorries of a maximum weight that exceeds 3.5 tons, drivers of buses with more than eight passenger seats, not including the driver's seat, taxi drivers when driving on duty and drivers of vehicles that carry dangerous goods.

The new prescribed limit for the above mentioned categories is 9 micrograms of alcohol in 100 milliliters of breath or 20 milligrams of alcohol in 100 milliliters of blood.

The standard drink drive limit is 22 micrograms of alcohol per 100 millilitres of breath, enforced by a number of mobile police units. Penalties are harsh, involving detention, court appearances and the confiscation of your vehicle. A fine of 1000 euros is the lightest penalty and the heaviest is two years imprisonment or a fine of 5000 euros or a driving ban of up to one year (deprivation of your driving licence) or all of the above, plus 3-6 penalty points on the driver's licence. At the same time, the strictest penalties apply when someone does not cooperate with the police and does not give any sample of breath.

Enforcement of the Drug-test Method in order to combat driving under the influence of drugs

In Cyprus, after a decision taken by the Council of Ministers, as from **15 January, 2018**, the new legislation (Road Safety Law) for driving under the influence of drugs came into effect.

During roadside checks, any uniformed police officer can ask from any driver (suspected or not), on the spot, to give a saliva sample in order to conduct a preliminary test, which lasts for 5 minutes, approximately. The taking of the saliva sample can, also, be done at the nearest Police Station.

If the device indicator is positive, the police officer will ask for an extra saliva sample on the spot, for laboratory testing purposes, which is conducted at the State General Laboratory. The extra sample must be received with the contribution of the driver and then it will be transferred to the State General Laboratory for final testing purposes.

Sanctions are harsh, involving detention, court appearances and vehicle confiscation. The Law provides the following penalties:

- I. Imprisonment less than 3 years or

- II. Fine that does not exceed 3500 euro
- III. Driving license deprivation for a period smaller than 3 years or
- IV. All of the above or any of the above
- V. 3 – 6 penalty points on the driver's licence

Enforcement

The use of hand-held mobile phones or other devices while driving is prohibited. Drivers wishing to use their mobile phone whilst driving must use a hands-free device. Nevertheless, this is not recommended.

Seatbelts are obligatory both in the front and back seats of motor vehicles.

Driving a motorcycle: If you are going to drive a motorcycle or moped you must have the following in mind:

The law states that both the driver and passenger must wear a helmet. A passenger can be carried on suitable motorcycles/mopeds provided that he / she is over 12-years-old and sits astride the seat.

If you will be driving a motor vehicle during your stay, please note that a valid driving licence is required. Keep in mind the following:

European citizens may drive using their country's driving licence.

Non-European visitors may drive using their country's driving licence for a maximum period of 30 days or on a valid international driving licence.

In Cyprus, law enforcement officers are authorised to give on-the-spot fixed penalty fines. In certain cases where offences are not within the fixed penalty system, offenders receive a summons to court.

If a driving licence is revoked or repealed after a court decision, then it can be regained and be valid again, after the period ordered, by the court, expires.

Policy for Cautioning People who commit minor traffic offences

Cyprus Police utilise cautioning for certain traffic offences. This applies to all jurisdictions / divisional police headquarters. A formal type of cautioning is used, which means that **a written notice or a warning** is issued on the spot, to the

offender driver, instead of a fine ticket or instead of a charge / case that would be otherwise forwarded before the court. The written notice or warning, which constitutes a caution, is issued at the discretion of the police officer. There are guidelines and orders to the police officers, about the whole policy.

Only for some types of traffic offences cautions are issued and specifically for minor offences (that are not considered serious or flagrant). If in a period of twelve months the offender repeats the same violation, then it is not possible for the Police to issue him or her second Police Notice or Warning, but a fine is issued or according to the seriousness of the offence, he or she is prosecuted before the court.

As regards the **WARNING**, the driver is formally required to report in person within **five (5) days** at any Police Station, in order to present proof that he or she has complied with the respective legislative provisions. In such a case no measures will be taken against the driver. In case the driver fails to report within the above-mentioned period at the above-mentioned time and place, the driver has to consider the notice as a warning that he or she will be charged with the offence (s).

If within a time period of **twelve (12) months**, the driver is caught by the Police committing the same traffic offence, then he or she will be charged. At the same time, the driver is advised that in future he or she abides by the Traffic Laws and Regulations, for his or her own benefit, the benefit of other road users and for Road Safety.

As regards the **NOTICE** the driver is formally informed that no measures will be taken against him or her and that however, if within a time period of **twelve (12) months**, he or she is caught by the Police committing the same traffic offence, then he or she will be charged. The driver is also advised that in future he or she abides by the Traffic Laws and Regulations, for his or her own benefit, the benefit of other road users and for Road Safety.

In both cases (Notice and Warning), if the offence is regulated with the issue of a fine and the driver does not abide by the Traffic Laws and Regulations and commits again the same offence, a fine is issued that has to be paid. This may be paid 12 hours after its issue.

The out of court fine is payable at any commercial bank or cooperative credit institution and anywhere else, where there is access to the internet, through the website of the Police <http://www.police.gov.cy>

In the event the out of court fine, is not paid within fifteen days from the date of issue, the out of court fine is increased by an amount equal to half the amount of the abovementioned out of court fine and may be paid within another fifteen days (in other words in thirty days from the issue of the notice).

No prosecution is exercised if the out of court settlement is effected within the period of thirty days from the date the notice is issued. Upon payment of the fine it is deemed that there is an acceptance as to any penalty points credited in an electronic manner.

For the payment of the out of court fine a relevant certificate may be issued. Part payment of the out of court fine is not acceptable. If the out of court fine is not paid within the abovementioned period of thirty days, no payment will be accepted and the offender shall be subject to a criminal prosecution.

If the penalty points at the time of payment amount to or shall exceed or have exceeded the total points referred to in The Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Law, as amended, payment of the out of court fine shall not be accepted and the offender shall be subject to prosecution.

Highways:

Vehicles move in the left lane. Use of the right lane is only allowed when:

Over taking another vehicle

The left lane is not free

Giving priority to a vehicle entering the highway

The following is forbidden on highways:

- To stop and/or park a vehicle
- Use by pedestrians.
- Use by cyclists, motorcyclists or agricultural vehicles

Unusual traffic laws

Remember to drive on the **LEFT** in Cyprus, like in the UK but unlike most of the rest of Europe.

Be careful before sounding your horn in Cyprus. Horns should not be used on any road between 22:00 and 06:00.

Horns should not be used at any time in residential areas except on emergency.

Useful regulations and advice

What documents must I be able to produce if requested by the police?

If stopped, you should be able to show your valid driving licence, vehicle registration documents, proof of insurance, proof of roadworthiness, vehicle circulation licence.

Do I need to carry a reflective jacket in my car? If so, how many?

There is no obligation for that, but people are advised to do that. Especially at night, they are strongly recommended to do that.

Do I need to carry a first – aid kit or a fire extinguisher?

First – aid kits and fire extinguishers must always be carried by taxis, buses and public use Lorries. The drivers of these vehicles must have the above items in a proper place and in such a condition that they can be used at any moment, during an emergency.

This legal obligation does not cover private cars, but nevertheless, drivers are recommended to bring always such equipment in their car, for their own safety, in case of emergency.

Any other requirements I should be aware of, regarding the equipment or paperwork I need for a journey in or through your country?

It is compulsory for drivers to carry two red warning triangles, with a base, in their vehicle and use it to warn other traffic, if they are involved in an incident, breakdown or a road traffic collision or if they park or immobilize their vehicle. They have to place one of the triangles at the back side of their car, in a distance of 6 metres, in residential areas and in a distance of 50 metres, outside of residential areas, including the highways.

Winter driving

What items are required or recommended for journeys made in winter?

There are no specific requirements. Winter in Cyprus usually brings wet weather, so extra care is recommended.

Passengers

Is there a minimum age or height for a passenger to ride in the front seat?

There is not any age limit, but for children apply specific rules, that have to be followed strictly. You may only use approved safety systems of the European Union for your children. Restraints should be used, depending on the weight, age and size of each child.

Do you have any specific rules regarding the carriage of dogs and other pets?

Yes. If animals are transported by cars, they should be transported in cages or boxes that are specifically made for this purpose.

Breakdown and collision advice

Please give brief advice on what I should do if my vehicle breaks down, on the motorway and on other roads.

If you are in a rented car, contact the rental company, giving them details of what has gone wrong, as well as your location. If you are travelling in your own car, and do not have breakdown recovery insurance, then you can request assistance direct from a recovery firm.

You will have to pay for this service.

Please give clear advice on what I am required to do if I am involved in a collision.

If you are involved in a serious or slight road traffic collision, while driving on a road in Cyprus, the police should always be contacted. When you call the emergency number (**112 or 199**) it is directed to **the Police** in the first instance. The Police will call an ambulance or the fire service to the scene, if required. At the same time, you should contact your insurance company, in order to visit the scene of the collision.

If you are involved in a road traffic collision, with material damages only, while driving on a road in Cyprus, the police should be contacted if these damages are serious or if driving offences occurred or under special circumstances, where, for example, the road is blocked. Otherwise, you should only contact your insurance company.

Local knowledge

Are there any dangers to road users from wildlife? If so, in which parts of your country?

No, but if animals exist in a region and you have to be more careful, you will be informed accordingly, by the traffic signs.

Which roads do you suggest should be avoided by visitors (because they are very busy at certain times, or they have a high collision rate)?

There are no specific roads to avoid. However, it is not unusual for a 'good' road to come to a sudden end and for it to continue as a dirt track. Be especially careful around roadworks sites, where signage may not be clear and workers themselves may take unnecessary risks.

We have a modern and efficient road system that enables easy travel between all major towns and many places of interest.

And finally.....

«You'll be given the warmest of welcomes in Cyprus! This beautiful island lies at the crossroads of three continents, where East meets West and has a long history that dates back 10,000 years. As you travel around, you will discover that this island, with its clear blue beaches and its green mountain range, is also a large open – air museum, where you can see evidence of its chequered past, making it a mosaic of different civilizations and periods.

We hope you enjoy your time with us in Cyprus and take the opportunity to explore the island. At the same time, we want you to be safe on our roads. Traffic police are busy enforcing different areas of road traffic legislation, in order to ensure that the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads of Cyprus continues to drop and disappear!!!!

Bear in mind the drink drive limit, the speed limit and your obligations in general, such as wearing a seat belt or a helmet. So, please go **safe** and go **sober**. Welcome to our country. » Spyros D. Spyrou. TISPOL, Cyprus

More information

For more information about driving in CYPRUS please see the European Commission Road Safety Link - 'Going Abroad'

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/going_abroad/cyprus/index_en.htm

or

Cyprus Police website: www.police.gov.cy

or Cyprus Police and SBA Police website: www.drivetogether.eu

or Road Transport Department website: <http://rtd.mcw.gov.cy>

or Cyprus Tourism Organization website: www.visitcyprus.com