

Applying for a US Driver's License and Driving in the United States

Applying for a Driver's License

To obtain a driver's license, you will need to visit one of the nearby locations of the Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles, or Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV). You should bring with you your passport, I-94, and DS-2019 that is valid for at least 30 days. A Social Security Number may also be required, or a letter from Social Security Administration stating that you are not eligible for an SSN. One of the following motor vehicle locations to apply for a driver's license may be nearest to you:

7979 Independence Blvd (Phone 225-925-6146)

12690 Perkins Rd. (Phone 225-366-6600)

Both offices open from 8:00 until 4:00.

For detailed information about traffic laws, obtaining a driver's license, office locations, and more, see <https://omv.dps.state.la.us/>.

Driving a Car

Most people in Baton Rouge have cars. Public transportation is limited but is available as follows:

LSU Tiger Trails Transit System: Provides free bus rides for all LSU faculty, staff, students, and visitors both on and off campus. For hours of service and routes see:

<https://sites01.lsu.edu/wp/tigertrails/downtownvet-trail/>.

LSU Campus Transit: Offers a free shuttle service every night from 5:30 p.m. to 3 a.m. Simply call (225) 578-5555 and a shuttle will come right to you.

Capital Area Transit System (CATS) is the regional public transportation service, with fixed bus routes across the entire Metropolitan area. Many CATS routes connect with LSU Tiger Trails routes such that you can get to far away destinations from your local LSU bus stop. For information and routes check out www.brcats.com/.

Capitol Park Trolley Service: Provides free bus rides around the Downtown area from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday: http://downtownbatonrouge.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/printable_trolley_map2015.pdf.

When driving a car, remember the following:

- Fasten your seat belt while driving and make sure everyone in the car does the same.
- Do not text while driving.
- Follow speed limits posted on signs along the road; speeding tickets can be expensive.
- It is illegal to pass a stopped school bus that is loading or unloading children.
- Driving under the influence of alcohol or certain drugs is a crime.

A Department of State Policy implemented on November 5, 2015, requires consular officers to revoke nonimmigrant visas of individuals arrested for, or convicted of, driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated (or similar arrests/convictions), when such arrest or conviction occurred within the previous five years.

This means that a consular officer can revoke an individual's visa (visa stamp in the passport), even if the individual is physically in the United States. The consular officer will inform the visa holder (usually by e-mail), if his or her visa is revoked or cancelled. If this happens, the individual may continue to stay in the United States, but their visa is no longer valid for future travel to the United States. An individual whose visa has been revoked, and who departs the United States, must re-apply for a visa and may return to the United States if a new visa is granted. For more information on this, see the following link:
<https://fam.state.gov/fam/09FAM/09FAM040311.html>.

Annual Vehicle Safety and Emissions Inspections

Louisiana requires yearly safety and emissions inspections. There are many locations in Baton Rouge where a car can be inspected. Check the sticker on the car you buy to learn when the inspection sticker expires. To find an inspector, look for a large bright orange sign at the business entrance announcing that they're an official State of Louisiana vehicle safety and emissions inspector. To have your car inspected, you must provide unexpired 1) proof of car insurance, 2) vehicle registration, and 3) your driver's license. You should have all three items in your car at all times.

The inspection costs about \$20 and if your car passes inspection, a sticker will be placed on the windshield, with a new expiration date. If the car fails inspection, you will be told what the car needs to pass. You will have 30 days after a failed inspection to make repairs and have the car re-inspected. For more information about car inspections, visit the following website:
<http://www.dmv.org/la-louisiana/smog-check.php#LA-Vehicle-Safety-Inspection>.

Just in case...

If you get pulled over by police, do not step out of your car. Simply open the window and wait for the police officer to come to you. He or she will ask for your 1) driver's license and 2) the registration for your vehicle and 3) proof of insurance, so make sure you always have these things while you are driving!

If you are involved in an accident resulting in injury, death, or property damage, stop your vehicle immediately if it is clear and safe. Do not leave the scene of the accident. Call the police and ask for an ambulance if it is needed. Call your insurance company as soon as it is practical to report the accident.

Taking a Taxi

Yellow Cab of Baton Rouge is one of the main taxi services in the area. Get more information at <http://www.br taxi.com/>. (225) 926-6400 is the number to call a cab. You can also search online for other taxi services, such as Uber: <https://www.uber.com/cities/baton-rouge/>.

The standard tip for the driver is 15% of the fare.

Riding a Bicycle

Most roads in Baton Rouge do not have bike lanes or a bike path. It is likely that if you decide to use your bicycle for transportation, you will be riding on the road along with cars and other

vehicles. The following website contains useful information about bicycling in Baton Rouge: <http://bikebr.org/>.

Many people ride their bikes along the Mississippi River Levee. The path is 4.5 miles long and has lighting, rest areas, water fountains, parking, and scenic views, making a great place for family recreation. In addition, it extends all the way to the Riverfront Promenade in Downtown Baton Rouge, so it provides a great link between LSU campus and that part of the city. More information and a map of the path can be found at <http://www.downtownbatonrouge.org/aroundBike.asp>.

Safety Tips

FOR EMERGENCIES, DIAL 9-1-1.

For non-emergencies, call the Baton Rouge police at (225) 389-2000 or the LSU Police at (225) 578-3231 (or 8-3231 from any campus telephone).

Baton Rouge is a lovely city with friendly residents, but there are areas of the city which have higher rates of crime. The Baton Rouge Police Department has a very comprehensive list of safety tips at: <http://brgov.com/dept/brpd/safety.htm>.

Here are some general tips:

- Avoid walking alone at night. Call Campus Transit for a ride instead.
- Stay aware of your surroundings, especially in parking garages, deserted or dimly-lit areas, and while withdrawing money from an ATM (automatic teller machine at a bank).
- Don't leave belongings visible in your parked car.

For additional information, see the Louisiana Drivers Handbook at: <http://www.dmv.org/louisiana/driver-handbook.php#Louisiana-Drivers-Handbook>.