

CHAPTER 604  
LICENSE EXAMINATION

[Prior to 6/3/87, see Transportation Department[820]—(07,C)rules 13.3 and 13.17]

**761—604.1(321) Authority and scope.**

**604.1(1)** The department is authorized to determine by examination an applicant's ability to operate motor vehicles safely upon the highways and to issue all driver's licenses.

**604.1(2)** This chapter of rules shall apply to the examination for all driver's licenses. Information on the additional examination procedures and requirements for a commercial driver's license or commercial learner's permit is given in 761—Chapter 607.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.2, 321.3, 321.13, 321.177, and 321.186. [ARC 2071C, IAB 8/5/15, effective 7/14/15; ARC 2337C, IAB 1/6/16, effective 2/10/16]

**761—604.2(321) Definitions.**

*"Binocular field of vision"* is the sum of the temporal measurements or the sum of the nasal measurements.

*"Monocular field of vision"* is the sum of the temporal measurement and the nasal measurement for one eye.

*"Representative vehicle"* is a vehicle which is characteristic of and requires operating skills comparable to those vehicles that may legally be operated under the class of license or endorsement desired.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.174 and 321.186. [ARC 9991B, IAB 2/8/12, effective 3/14/12]

**761—604.3(17A) Information and forms.**

**604.3(1)** Applications, forms, and information about driver's license examinations are available at any driver's license examination station. Assistance is also available from the office of driver services at the address in 761—600.2(17A).

**604.3(2)** The "Iowa Driver Manual" and the "Iowa Motorcycle Operator Manual" are also available from the department.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 17A.3.

**761—604.4 to 604.6** Reserved.

**761—604.7(321) Examination.**

**604.7(1)** An examination shall include:

- a. A vision screening if the person has not filed a vision report.
- b. A knowledge test of Iowa traffic laws and highway signs.
- c. A driving test of the person's ability to operate a motor vehicle.

**604.7(2)** The examination required for a driver's license depends upon the class of license requested, applicable endorsements, and the qualifications of the applicant.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.186 and 321.186A.

**761—604.8 and 604.9** Reserved.

**761—604.10(321) Vision screening.**

**604.10(1) Requirement.** Vision screening or a vision report is required of an applicant for a driver's license.

**604.10(2) Method.** At driver's license examination stations, a vision screening instrument shall be used to screen the applicant's vision. An applicant who has corrective lenses may be screened with or without the corrective lenses.

**604.10(3) Report.** A vision report shall be submitted on Form 430032 signed by a licensed vision specialist and shall report the person's visual acuity level and field of vision as measured within 30 days prior to the date of the application. In lieu of Form 430032, a vision report signed by a licensed vision

specialist on the specialist's letterhead may be accepted if it contains all the information specified on Form 430032.

**604.10(4) Exception for persons renewing electronically.** An applicant renewing a driver's license electronically pursuant to 761—subrule 605.25(7) is not required to complete a vision screen or submit a vision report to complete the renewal. This subrule does not preclude the department from requiring a vision screen or vision report of a person who has renewed a driver's license electronically when the department has reason to believe that the person is not capable of operating a motor vehicle safely.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.186, 321.186A and 321.196 as amended by 2013 Iowa Acts, House File 355, section 1.

[ARC 9991B, IAB 2/8/12, effective 3/14/12; ARC 0895C, IAB 8/7/13, effective 7/9/13; ARC 1073C, IAB 10/2/13, effective 11/6/13]

**761—604.11(321) Vision standards.** The visual acuity and field of vision standards for licensing and the applicable restrictions are as follows.

**604.11(1) Visual acuity standards.**

*a. When the applicant is screened without corrective lenses.* If the visual acuity is 20/40 or better with both eyes or with the better eye, no restriction will be imposed. If the visual acuity is less than 20/40 but at least 20/70 with both eyes or with the better eye, the applicant shall be restricted from driving when headlights are required.

*b. When the applicant is screened with corrective lenses.* If the visual acuity is 20/40 or better with both eyes or with the better eye, the applicant shall be required to wear corrective lenses. If the visual acuity is less than 20/40 but at least 20/70 with both eyes or with the better eye, the applicant shall be required to wear corrective lenses and shall be restricted from driving when headlights are required.

*c. Other standards.* If the visual acuity in the left eye is less than 20/100, the applicant shall be restricted to driving a vehicle with both left and right outside rearview mirrors. However, if the applicant has a visual acuity of 20/40 in the right eye and less than 20/100 in the left eye without corrective lenses and has corrective lenses that improve the vision in the left eye to better than 20/100, the applicant shall have the option of being restricted to driving with corrective lenses or driving a vehicle with both left and right outside rearview mirrors.

**604.11(2) Field of vision standards.**

*a.* If the binocular field of vision is at least 140 degrees, no restriction will be imposed.

*b.* If the binocular field of vision is less than 140 degrees but at least 110 degrees, or one eye has a monocular field of vision of at least 100 degrees, the applicant shall be restricted to driving a vehicle with both left and right outside rearview mirrors.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.186, 321.193, and 321.196.

[ARC 9991B, IAB 2/8/12, effective 3/14/12]

**761—604.12(321) Vision referrals.**

**604.12(1) Referral.**

*a.* If an applicant on first screening cannot attain 20/40 but can attain 20/70 with at least one eye, the department shall not issue a license to the applicant. Instead, the department shall advise the applicant to consult a licensed vision specialist.

*b.* A vision report, pursuant to subrule 604.10(3), shall be required before the department will reconsider licensing.

**604.12(2) License.**

*a.* The department shall affix a sticker to the applicant's license stating: "Renewal or license issuance denied due to vision."

*b.* If the applicant's license is valid for less than 30 days, the department may issue a temporary driving permit with restrictions appropriate to the applicant's visual acuity level and field of vision. The temporary driving permit is valid for not more than 30 days from the end of the current license validity.

**604.12(3) Report.** If the vision report recommends a restriction, the department shall issue a restricted license even though it would not be required by departmental standards.

**604.12(4) Applicant refusal.** If an applicant refuses to consult a licensed vision specialist, the department shall issue or deny the license based on the results achieved on the vision screening.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.181, 321.186, 321.186A, 321.193 and 321.196.

**761—604.13(321) Vision screening results.**

**604.13(1) Two-year license.** An applicant who cannot attain a visual acuity of 20/40 with both eyes or with the better eye shall be issued a two-year license. This restriction may be waived by the department when a vision report pursuant to subrule 604.10(3) certifies that the vision has stabilized and is not expected to deteriorate.

**604.13(2) License denied.**

*a.* An applicant who cannot attain a visual acuity of 20/70 with both eyes or with the better eye shall not be licensed, subject to discretionary issuance under subrule 604.13(4).

*b.* If the applicant's binocular field of vision is less than 110 degrees, or the monocular field of vision is less than 100 degrees, the applicant shall not be licensed, subject to discretionary issuance under subrule 604.13(4).

**604.13(3) Reapplication.** An applicant who cannot meet the vision standards in subrule 604.13(2) may reapply when the vision improves and meets the vision standards. If a suspension or denial notice was served, reapplication must be made to the office of driver services at the address in 761—600.2(17A), and not at a driver's license examination station.

**604.13(4) Discretionary issuance.**

*a.* An applicant whose license is restricted under rule 761—604.11(321) or who cannot meet the vision standards in subrule 604.13(2) may submit a written request for review by an informal settlement officer.

*b.* Based upon consideration of the applicant's vision screening results or vision report, driving test and driving record, the written recommendation of the applicant's licensed vision specialist, and traffic conditions in the vicinity of the applicant's residence, the officer may recommend issuing a license with restrictions suitable to the applicant's capabilities. However:

(1) An applicant who cannot attain a visual acuity of 20/100 with both eyes or with the better eye may be considered for licensing only after recommendation by the medical advisory board.

(2) An applicant who cannot attain a visual acuity of 20/199 with both eyes or with the better eye shall not be licensed.

(3) If an applicant's binocular field of vision or monocular field of vision is less than 75 degrees, the applicant may be considered for licensing only after recommendation by the medical advisory board.

(4) An applicant who cannot attain a binocular or monocular field of vision of 21 degrees shall not be licensed.

*c.* The officer's recommendation denying discretionary issuance or regarding the extent and nature of restrictions is subject to reversal or modification upon review or appeal only if it is clearly characterized by an abuse of discretion.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.186, 321.186A, 321.193 and 321.196.  
[ARC 9991B, IAB 2/8/12, effective 3/14/12]

**761—604.14 to 604.19** Reserved.

**761—604.20(321) Knowledge test.**

**604.20(1) Written test.** A knowledge test is a written test to determine an applicant's ability to read and understand Iowa traffic laws and the highway signs that regulate, warn, and direct traffic. A test may be revised at any time but each test states the minimum passing score.

**604.20(2) Three types of tests.** There are three types of knowledge tests: an operator's test, a chauffeur's test, and a motorcycle test. The requirement for a license depends upon the class of license desired, applicable endorsements, and the qualifications of the applicant.

**604.20(3) Oral test.** An applicant who is unable to read or understand a written test may request an oral test. The oral test may be administered by an examiner or by an automated testing device.

**604.20(4) Waiver.** Rescinded IAB 1/8/92, effective 2/12/92.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 321.186.

**761—604.21(321) Knowledge test requirements and waivers.**

**604.21(1) Knowledge test requirements.** The knowledge test requirements are as follows:

*a. Operator's test.* An operator's knowledge test is required for all classes of driver's licenses and all types of special driver's licenses and permits.

*b. Motorcycle test.* A motorcycle knowledge test is required for all:

- (1) Motorcycle instruction permits.
- (2) Class M driver's licenses.
- (3) Motorcycle endorsements.

*c. Chauffeur's test.* A chauffeur's knowledge test is required for all:

- (1) Chauffeur's instruction permits.
- (2) Class D driver's licenses except those with an endorsement for "passenger vehicle less than 16-passenger design."

**604.21(2) Knowledge test waivers.** The department may waive a knowledge test listed in subrule 604.21(1) if the applicant meets one of the following qualifications:

*a.* The applicant has passed the same type of test for another Iowa driver's license or an equivalent out-of-state license that is still valid.

*b.* The applicant has a valid, equivalent driver's license issued by a foreign jurisdiction with which Iowa has a nonbinding reciprocity agreement.

*c.* The applicant has a military extension and is renewing the applicant's Iowa driver's license within six months following separation from active duty.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.180, 321.180A, 321.180B, 321.186, 321.189, 321.196 and 321.198.

**761—604.22(321) Knowledge test results.**

**604.22(1) Proof of Passing score.** When necessary, the department shall give the applicant a form, valid for 90 days, which certifies that the applicant has passed the knowledge test.

**604.22(2) Retesting.** An applicant who fails a knowledge test may repeat the test at the discretion of the examiner, but at least two hours shall elapse between tests.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 321.186.

**761—604.23 to 604.29** Reserved.

**761—604.30(321) Driving test.** A driving test is a demonstration of an applicant's ability to exercise ordinary and reasonable control in the operation of a motor vehicle under actual traffic conditions. The test is also called a road test, field test, or driving demonstration. A motorcycle skill test is an off-street demonstration of an applicant's ability to control the motorcycle in a set of standard maneuvers, and a motorcycle driving test is an on-street demonstration.

**604.30(1) Vehicle type and safety.**

*a.* For the driving test, the applicant shall provide a representative vehicle as defined in 761—604.2(321).

*b.* The examiner or other authorized personnel shall visually inspect the vehicle. If a vehicle is illegal or unsafe, or is not a representative vehicle, the examiner shall refuse to administer the test until corrections are made or an acceptable vehicle is provided.

**604.30(2) Criteria and route.** Form 430024, "Your Driving Test," explains the criteria for passing the test and shall be given to the applicant before any required test, except a motorcycle skill test. The applicant shall be directed over one of the routes which have been preselected by the examiner to test driving skills and maneuvers.

**604.30(3) Test score.** The examiner shall use the standard departmental score sheet and shall enter the test score and the licensing decision in the spaces provided. At the end of the test, the examiner shall explain the test score. The test score result is valid for 90 days.

**604.30(4) Retesting.** If an applicant fails a driving test, the test may be rescheduled at the discretion of the examiner.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.174 and 321.186.  
[ARC 9991B, IAB 2/8/12, effective 3/14/12]

**761—604.31(321) Driving test requirements and waivers for noncommercial driver's licenses.**

**604.31(1) Driving test requirements.** The driving test requirements for noncommercial driver's licenses are as follows:

- a. *Instruction permits.* A driving test is not required to obtain an instruction permit.
- b. *Class C driver's licenses.* For a Class C driver's license other than an instruction permit or a motorized bicycle license, an operator's driving test in a representative vehicle is required, except that an autocycle as defined in Iowa Code section 321.1 shall not be used for the driving test.
- c. *Class D driver's licenses.* For a Class D driver's license, a driving test in a representative vehicle for the endorsement requested, as set out in 761—subrule 605.7(3), is required.
- d. *Class M driver's licenses and motorcycle endorsements.* The driving test for a Class M driver's license or motorcycle endorsement consists of two parts: an off-street motorcycle skill test and an on-street driving test.

(1) The off-street motorcycle skill test is required. The on-street motorcycle driving test is also required if the applicant does not have another driver's license that permits unaccompanied driving. Neither motorcycle test is required for the purposes of operating an autocycle.

(2) A motorcycle shall be used for these tests. If a three-wheeled motorcycle is used, the driver's license shall be restricted: "Not valid for 2-wheel vehicle." An autocycle is not considered a motorcycle or a three-wheeled motorcycle for testing purposes.

e. *Motorized bicycle licenses.* For a motorized bicycle license, an off-street or on-street driving test may be required. A motorized bicycle shall be used for the test.

**604.31(2) Driving test waivers.** The department may waive a required driving test listed in subrule 604.31(1) if the applicant meets one of the following qualifications:

a. The applicant is applying for the applicant's first Iowa driver's license that permits unaccompanied driving following successful completion of the appropriate Iowa-approved course or courses. The appropriate Iowa-approved courses are the following: driver education, other than driver education by a teaching parent under rule 761—634.11(321), for a Class C driver's license other than motorized bicycle; driver education and motorcycle rider education for a Class M driver's license or motorcycle endorsement; and motorized bicycle education for a motorized bicycle license. However, if an applicant is under the age of 18, a driving test is required if so requested by the applicant's parent, guardian, or instructor.

b. The applicant is renewing a Class C, Class D or Class M Iowa driver's license or endorsement within 14 months after the expiration date.

c. The applicant has passed the same type of driving test for another Iowa driver's license or endorsement that is still valid or has expired within the past 14 months.

d. The applicant has a military extension and is renewing the applicant's Iowa driver's license within six months following separation from active duty.

e. The applicant is applying for a Class C Iowa driver's license that permits unaccompanied driving and has an equivalent out-of-state license that is valid or has expired within the past year.

f. The applicant is applying for a Class D Iowa driver's license and has an equivalent out-of-state license that is valid or has expired within the past year.

g. The applicant is applying for a Class M driver's license or a motorcycle endorsement and has an equivalent out-of-state Class M driver's license or motorcycle endorsement that is valid or has expired within the past year.

*h.* The applicant has a valid, equivalent driver's license issued by a foreign jurisdiction with which Iowa has a nonbinding reciprocity agreement.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.1, 321.174, 321.178, 321.178A, 321.180, 321.180A, 321.180B, 321.186, 321.189, 321.193, 321.196 and 321.198.

[ARC 7902B, IAB 7/1/09, effective 8/5/09; ARC 1612C, IAB 9/3/14, effective 10/8/14; ARC 2071C, IAB 8/5/15, effective 7/14/15; ARC 2337C, IAB 1/6/16, effective 2/10/16; ARC 2985C, IAB 3/15/17, effective 4/19/17; ARC 4586C, IAB 7/31/19, effective 9/4/19]

**761—604.32(321) Driving tests requirements.** Rescinded IAB 1/8/92, effective 2/12/92.

**761—604.33 and 604.34** Reserved.

**761—604.35(321) Determination of gross vehicle weight rating.** For a vehicle that has no legible manufacturer's certification label, the applicant may provide documentation of the gross vehicle weight rating, such as a manufacturer's certificate of origin, a title, a vehicle registration document, or the vehicle identification number information for the vehicle. In the absence of the above documentation, the registered weight of the vehicle shall be presumed to be the gross vehicle weight rating.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code section 321.1.

**761—604.36 to 604.39** Reserved.

**761—604.40(321) Failure to pass examination.**

**604.40(1)** An applicant who fails to pass a required examination or reexamination shall not be licensed.

*a.* If the applicant does not have a valid Iowa license, the department shall deny the applicant a license.

*b.* If the applicant has a valid Iowa license, the department shall suspend the license for incapability. However, if the applicant's license is valid for less than 30 days, the department shall deny further licensing. The department shall serve a notice of suspension or denial.

*c.* See 761—615.4(321) for further information on denials and 761—615.14(321) for further information on suspensions for incapability.

*d.* An applicant may contest a denial or suspension in accordance with 761—615.38(321).

**604.40(2)** Limitations on the hearing and appeal process.

*a.* After a suspension or denial for failure to pass a required knowledge or driving test, a person who contests the suspension or denial shall be deemed to have exhausted the person's administrative remedies after three unsuccessful attempts to pass the required test.

*b.* After the three unsuccessful attempts, no further testing shall be allowed until six months have elapsed from the date of the last test failure, and then only if the applicant demonstrates a significant change or improvement in those physical or mental factors that resulted in the original decision. A request for further testing must be submitted in writing to the office of driver services at the address in rule 761—600.2(17A).

*c.* Notwithstanding paragraphs "a" and "b" of this subrule, no testing shall occur if the director determines that it is unsafe to allow testing.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code chapter 17A and sections 321.177, 321.180A and 321.210.

**761—604.41 to 604.44** Reserved.

**761—604.45(321) Reinstatement.** A person whose license has been suspended or denied for failure to pass a required examination or reexamination shall meet the vision standards for licensing, pass the required knowledge examination(s), and pass the required driving test(s) before an Iowa license will be issued.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.177 and 321.186.

**761—604.46 to 604.49** Reserved.

**761—604.50(321) Special reexaminations.** The department may require a special reexamination consisting of a vision screening, knowledge test and driving test of any licensee.

**604.50(1)** The department may require a special reexamination when a licensee has been involved in a fatal motor vehicle accident and the investigating officer's report of the accident indicates the licensee contributed to the accident.

**604.50(2)** The department may require a special reexamination when a licensee has been involved in two accidents within a three-year period and the investigating officer's report of each accident lists one of the following "Driver/Vehicle Related Contributing Circumstances" for the licensee:

- a. Ran traffic signal.
- b. Ran stop sign.
- c. Passing, interfered with other vehicle.
- d. Left of center, not passing.
- e. Failure to yield right-of-way at uncontrolled intersection.
- f. Failure to yield right-of-way from stop sign.
- g. Failure to yield right-of-way from yield sign.
- h. Failure to yield right-of-way making left turn.
- i. Failure to yield right-of-way to pedestrian.
- j. Failure to have control.

**604.50(3)** The department may require a special reexamination when a licensee has been involved in two accidents within a three-year period and the investigating officers' reports for both accidents list a driver condition for the licensee of "apparently asleep."

**604.50(4)** The department may require a special reexamination when a licensee who is 65 years of age or older has been involved in an accident and information in the investigating officer's or the person's own report of the accident indicates the need for reexamination. A circumstance that may indicate a need for reexamination includes, but is not limited to, any one of the following:

- a. The licensee made a left turn that resulted in the accident.
- b. The licensee failed to yield the right-of-way at a stop sign.
- c. The licensee failed to yield the right-of-way at a yield sign.
- d. The licensee failed to yield the right-of-way at an uncontrolled intersection.
- e. The licensee failed to yield the right-of-way at a traffic control signal.
- f. The licensee's vision may be a contributing factor to a nighttime accident.
- g. The licensee has a physical disability-related license restriction other than "corrective lenses" and the accident involved one of the circumstances listed in paragraphs "a" to "f" above.

**604.50(5)** The department may require a special reexamination when recommended by a peace officer, a court, or a properly documented citizen's request. A factor that may indicate a need for reexamination includes, but is not limited to, any one of the following:

- a. Loss of consciousness.
- b. Confusion, disorientation or dementia.
- c. Inability to maintain a vehicle in the proper lane.
- d. Repeatedly ignoring traffic control devices in a nonchase setting.
- e. Inability to interact safely with other vehicles.
- f. Inability to maintain consistent speed when no reaction to other vehicles or pedestrians is required.

This rule is intended to implement Iowa Code sections 321.177, 321.186 and 321.210.

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