

Beach View Apartments **Puerto Rico**

www.beachviewapartments.com

877-812-1067 (Toll Free)

Driving in Puerto Rico

If this is your first trip to Puerto Rico, you might want to wait until you get “the feel of the land” before doing your own driving. Many Puerto Rican drivers might be judged “reckless” by safe driving standards in such things as: sudden stops, turning without adequate signals, crisscrossing recklessly and a high incidence of drunken driving.

During the first 120 days since arrival, a non-resident may operate motor vehicles in Puerto Rico if that person possesses a valid, unexpired license issued by any state of the United States of America or by any foreign country that imposes requirements similar to Puerto Rico's to grant a driver's license.

The former *ley 141 de 1960* which regulated driving in Puerto Rico has been superseded by *ley 22 de 1999*, which became effective as of January 7, 2001.

Maximum speed limit is 55 MPH, strictly enforced at many places, particularly during long weekends. Severe laws against drunken driving are also strictly enforced. Lower speed limits apply to residential areas, school zones and other areas. The new Ley 22 allows speed limits of 65 MPH in certain expressways. However, as of January 7, 2001, no 65 MPH zones have been designated.

The leftmost lane on the driver's side of certain avenues is reserved as an exclusive traffic lane for public transportation buses *carril exclusivo*. The lane is identified by diamond-shaped white signs painted on the lane at regular intervals. Bus traffic along the exclusive lanes is in the opposite direction to regular traffic. This fact makes it quite dangerous for regular traffic to use that lane. Exclusive traffic lanes are located along Ponce de León, Muñoz Rivera and Fernández Juncos avenues. These avenues begin at Old San Juan, crossing Puerta de Tierra, Miramar, Santurce, Hato Rey and Rio Piedras.

You may turn right on red stoplights, after coming to a full stop, except where expressly forbidden by traffic signs to that effect.

A special law permits ignoring red stoplights in the period from midnight to 6:00 AM. You should make a full stop at the light and exercise due care before continuing. The law was enacted to help prevent holdups, carjackings and similar crimes at stop lights during late evening hours.

The use of seat belts is mandatory by law, and includes all passengers riding in private passenger cars (including rented or leased cars).

If you are carrying a load that extends beyond the length of your vehicle, you should attach a red banner at the end of the load during day times and a red light during the night.

In case of a traffic accident, you are required to provide your name and address, and to show your driver's license, to the people affected by the accident. You should require the same information from any other drivers involved. You should notify the state police within four hours if the accident caused any damages that may be estimated to be in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).

Distances between locations are measured and posted in kilometers. A kilometer is about 5/8 of a mile. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62. To convert miles to kilometers, divide by 0.62

Speed limits are posted in miles per hour (MPH).

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Most traffic signs and signals are in Spanish. Some of the most frequent are listed below, along with their English translations.

- Area de descanso - Rest Area
- Autobus escolar - School bus
- Brazos mecánicos - Mechanical arms
- Calle sin salida - Dead-end street
- Carretera en construcción (adelante) - Road under construction (ahead)
- Carril - (Traffic) lane
- Carril exclusivo - Exclusive (bus) lane
- Carril reversible (adelante) - Reversible lane (ahead)
- Carril termina - Lane ends
- Ceda (adelante)- Yield (ahead)
- Cinturón de seguridad - Seat belt
- Construcción en proceso - Construction in progress
- Curva - Road bend
- Curva peligrosa - Dangerous bend
- Despacio - Slow
- Entrada - Entrance
- Envejecientes (cruzando) - Senior citizens (crossing)
- Escuela - School
- Estación peaje - Toll station
- Estacionamiento reservado - Reserved parking
- Este - East
- Estrecho - Narrow
- Excavación profunda - Deep trench
- Hombres trabajando (adelante)- Men working (ahead)
- Intersección - Intersection; junction
- Kilómetro - Kilometer
- Luz amarilla - Yellow light
- Luz roja - Red light
- Luz verde - Green light
- Milla - Mile
- Niños (cruzando, jugando) - Children (crossing, at play)
- No cruce - Do not cross
- No entre - Do not enter
- No estacione - Do not park
- No pare - Do not stop
- No vire con luz roja - Do not turn right on red light
- Norte - North
- Oeste - West
- Pague peaje (adelante) - Pay toll (ahead)
- Pare - Stop
- Paseo . . .sólo para paradas de emergencia - Shoulder . . .for emergency stops only
- Pavimento termina - Pavement ends
- Peaje (adelante)- Toll (ahead)

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- Peatón, peatones - Pedestrian (s)
- Peligro (adelante) - Danger (ahead)
- Posibilidad de ganado en el rodaje - Cattle may invade the roadway
- Precaución - Caution
- Prohibido - Forbidden
- Puente - Bridge
- Puente estrecho - Narrow bridge
- Resbala mojado - Slippery when wet
- Salida (adelante) - Exit (ahead)
- Semáforo (adelante) - Traffic light (ahead)
- Solo - Only (traffic only in the direction of the arrow)
- Sur - South
- Termina zona ___ MPH - ___ MPH zone ends
- Transporte colectivo autorizado solamente - Authorized public buses only
- Tránsito - Traffic
- Velocidad máxima - Top speed
- Vehículo - vehicle

Vehicle Prices

Vehicle prices are high in Puerto Rico. This is due to transportation costs to Puerto Rico and also to rather high taxes on vehicles brought into the island. Taxes apply to both new and used vehicles. You will have to pay taxes on your own vehicle if you decide to bring it to the Island. For rates and other details (in English) call Sea Star Line, a maritime shipping agency, at 787-721-2330.

Vehicle Taxes

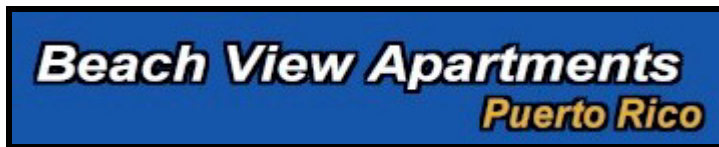
For information on estimated tax liability based on your car's make, model and year of the vehicle (or the vehicle identification number (VIN), use the interactive form at http://www.hacienda.gobierno.pr/vehiculos/eng_index.html

Vehicle Maintenance and Repair

Vehicle maintenance and repair is troublesome. Ask around for a responsible auto mechanic or take your chances with the big names from the Yellow Pages (Under *Automóviles / Reparación* for general repair; *Automóviles / Hojalatería y Pintura* for bodywork and painting; and under *Electromecánica* for electro-mechanical work).

Driver's License

For longer stays, the person must obtain a Puerto Rico driver's license. Any person who possesses a valid, unexpired license issued by a state of the United States of America or by any foreign country that has established reciprocity with Puerto Rico for the purposes of issuing drivers' licenses, may obtain a Puerto Rico driver's license simply by requesting one and paying the corresponding fees. The license issued by the state or foreign country will not be withheld.



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[Driving in Puerto Rico](#)

A person must be at least eighteen years old to qualify for a driver's license. A person between sixteen and eighteen years old may be issued a license to drive his (her) own vehicle or a vehicle owned by his (her) legal guardian. The legal guardian must accept in writing his (her) obligation to pay any traffic fines imposed to the minor and/or any damages caused by the minor while operating a motor vehicle.

Driver's Tests

The candidate must approve both a written and a practical test. To sit for the written test, a candidate needs:

a learner's permit request form

4 2x2 recent photos

a recent medical certificate on the space provided for that purpose on the request form

payment of a \$10 fee.

Form, photos and medical certificates are available at reasonable fees, usually with little or no waiting, from any of several vendors located near the entrance to the government facilities. The written test is offered daily at Departamento de Transportación y Obras Públicas, Centro de Servicios al Conductor, Carolina, P.R. , telephone number (787) 722-2929.

Upon approving the written test, the person will be issued a learner's permit. The learner's permit authorizes the person to operate a motor vehicle while accompanied by another person who possesses a valid driver's license and who is qualified to operate the vehicle. Three months after the issue date of the learner's permit, the person may take the practical test. A learner's permit is valid for a maximum of two years. The learner who has not qualified for a driver's license at the end of that period, must request and repeat the written test to qualify for another learner's permit.

To take the practical test, a candidate needs:

a driver's license request form

4 2x2 recent photos

a recent medical certificate on the space provided for that purpose on the drivers license request form

payment of a \$10 fee.

Form, photos and medical certificates are available at reasonable fees, usually with little or no waiting, from any of several vendors at the entrance to the government facilities.

The candidate will be assigned a date and time to take the test at a specified location. Candidates who approve the practical test will be issued a driver's license. The license is valid for a period of four years. Upon expiration, it may be renewed for additional four year periods. To renew a license, a form must be filled and submitted along with 4 recent 2x2 photographs, a medical certificate and payment of the corresponding fee. Expired licenses will be renewed without penalty within ninety days from date of expiration. After ninety days and within five years, expired licenses will be renewed by payment of the fees that would apply to a new license.

A number of companies offer their services in renewing driving licenses, paying traffic fines and handling most documents related to such transactions. Find them under *Licencias - Servicios* in the Yellow Pages.

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Also, a number of companies operate driving schools. Driving schools must be duly authorized by the government. Their services normally include assistance in obtaining the learner's permit and the driver's license. Services and fees vary from one company to the next. Shopping around is advisable. Driving schools are listed in the Yellow Pages under *Escuelas / Conducir*.

Handicapped Persons

Learner's permits and driver's licenses may be issued to people with partial physical handicaps who meet all other requirements. The handicaps must be offset by mechanical devices in the vehicle or by limitations as to the type of vehicle, the places where the person may operate a vehicle or the times of day when the person may be authorized to do so, or by any other conditions deemed necessary to protect public safety.

Maximum Speed Limit

The maximum speed limit is 55 MPH, strictly enforced at many places, particularly during long weekends. Severe laws against drunken driving are also strictly enforced. Lower speed limits apply to residential areas, school zones and other areas. Speed limits of 65 MPH are permitted in some designated expressway sections.

Reserved Lanes

The leftmost lane on the driver's side of certain avenues in the San Juan Metropolitan area is reserved as an exclusive traffic lane for public transportation buses *carril exclusivo*. The lane is identified by diamond-shaped white signs painted on the lane at regular intervals. Bus traffic along the exclusive lanes is in the opposite direction to regular traffic. This fact makes it quite dangerous for regular traffic to use that lane. Exclusive traffic lanes are located along Ponce de León, Muñoz Rivera and Fernández Juncos avenues. These avenues begin at Old San Juan, crossing Puerta de Tierra, Miramar, Santurce, Hato Rey and Rio Piedras.

Traffic lights

You may turn right on red stoplights, after coming to a full stop, except where expressly forbidden by traffic signs to that effect. The law permits ignoring red stoplights in the period from midnight to 5:00 AM. You should make a full stop at the light and exercise due care before continuing. The law was enacted to help prevent holdups, carjackings and similar crimes at stoplights during late evening hours.

Seat Belts

The use of seat belts is mandatory by law, and includes all passengers riding in private passenger cars (including rented or leased cars). Children under twelve years old must use the rear seat. Children four and under must use properly buckled car seats.

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Accidents

In case of a traffic accident, you are required to provide your name and address, and to show your driver's license, to the people affected by the accident. You should require the same information from any other drivers involved. You should notify the state police within four hours if the accident caused any damages that may be estimated to be in excess of one hundred dollars (\$100.00). If there are any victims in the accident and they can be moved without harm, you should provide transportation for them to the nearest hospital for treatment. Vehicle license payments include an amount for compulsory no-fault accident insurance. Both parties to the accident should notify the state police and save the *numero de querella*, the file number assigned by the police department to the accident report.

Distances

Distances between locations are measured and posted in kilometers. A kilometer is about 5/8 of a mile. To convert kilometers to miles, multiply by 0.62. To convert miles to kilometers, divide by 0.62. Speed limits are posted in miles per hour (MPH).