

# Driving in Italy

Extracted from the RAC UK website: <http://www.rac.co.uk>

## Driving licence

Driving licences issued abroad can be used in Italy only by visitors who have reached the minimum ages required for holders of Italian licences for the same category of vehicle even if they are qualified to drive at a lower age in their country of residence.

A foreign driving licence does not entitle the holder to drive a motor vehicle in Italy until the age of 18yrs old.

Visitors may drive private or commercial vehicles registered abroad if they are in possession of an International Driving Permits (1926, 1949, 1968)

## Important documents

Vehicles from the UK may be imported into Italy for up to 6 months in any period of 12 months. When driving in Italy the following documents should be carried:

- Full, valid driving licence\*
- International Driving Permit (1926, 1949, 1968) (Available from <http://www.rac.co.uk/travel/driving-abroad/international-driving-permit>)
- Proof of insurance (third party or above)
- Proof of ID (Passport)
- Proof of ownership (V5C Certificate)

Visitors driving in Italy are required by law to carry the following items and hefty on-the-spot fines can be issued for failing to carry these:

- Reflective jackets (must be worn if involved in a breakdown or an accident or alongside a road where stopping or parking is prohibited)
- Warning triangle (compulsory in every vehicle with 4 wheels or more)
- Headlamp beam deflectors (Depending on your car, you will either need deflector stickers or have to adjust the beam manually)
- Motorcyclists: It is compulsory for riders and passengers of mopeds and motorcycles to wear a crash helmet.

It is prohibited to carry a child under 4 years old on a moped or a motorcycle. It is possible to carry a passenger on a moped on condition that the rider/driver is an adult (18 and over) and that the registration certificate states that the moped is designed to carry a passenger.

## Rules of the road

### Overtaking & passing

The vehicle to be overtaken must keep as far to the right as possible and not accelerate.

On roads with three traffic lanes, overtaking is allowed only when a vehicle travelling in the opposite direction is not already in the middle lane.

It is prohibited to overtake a vehicle that is overtaking another vehicle or a vehicle that has slowed down or stopped near a pedestrian crossing to allow pedestrians to cross.

Overtaking is forbidden on the approach to and on level crossings. It is also prohibited in the following cases:

- At bends
- On the brow of a hill
- At intersections
- At all places where visibility is limited

### Priority

Priority must be given to vehicles coming from the right or travelling on rails, except where indicated by road signs. They must give way to pedestrians already on crossings and to cyclists near cycle paths.

Drivers must give right of way to all police and emergency vehicles when they are using special audible or luminous warning signals.

### Warning of approach

Priority must be given to vehicles coming from the right or travelling on rails except where indicated by road signs. They must give way to pedestrians already on crossings and to cyclists near cycle paths.

Drivers must give right of way to all police and emergency vehicles when they are using special audible or luminous warning signals.

## Seat belts

Any person must wear a seat belt whenever one is fitted on the front and rear seats in all vehicles registered in Italy or abroad.

## Travelling with children

Children travelling in foreign-registered cars must be secured according to the legislation in force in the country of origin.

## Speed limits

The following national speed limits apply:

	Motorways	Outside built-up areas	In built-up areas
Normal traffic conditions	130 km/h	90 km/h	50 km/h

*Speed must be reduced at night according to visibility, near intersections, bends, schools or places frequented by children, on roads with a steep gradient or especially narrow roads and in built-up areas.*

*Speed limits in case of precipitation (rain, snow, etc.):*

- roads outside built-up areas: 90km/h
- motorways: 110km/h

*Radar detectors are prohibited. The Points Of Interest (POI) function of a car navigation system can be used to indicate the position of fixed speed cameras.*

## Penalties

### On-the-spot fines

The police can impose a fine on the driver of a foreign-registered vehicle or a vehicle with EE plates and collect one quarter of the maximum fine on-the-spot. A receipt must be given.

If the driver wishes to contest the fine or for any reason refuses to pay, they must deposit a guarantee for half the maximum amount either in cash (foreign currency is accepted), or in the form of a surety.

If they refuse to deposit the guarantee, the police may confiscate his/her vehicle until they pay the fine. For vehicles registered in the EU, the guarantee required is equivalent to a quarter of the maximum fine.

### Confiscation of vehicles

Vehicles can be confiscated by the police in many cases (e.g. when the driver has no licence, when the number plates are forged, when the EE-Escursionisti Esteri registration documents have expired, etc.).

Mopeds and motorcycles can be confiscated for 3 months in the following cases:

- failure to wear a safety helmet
- carrying a passenger unless allowed (specified in certificate)

## Parking

### Parking regulations

In built-up areas, stopping and parking are only permitted on the right-hand side of the road in a street with two-way traffic. In a one-way street, parking and stopping are permitted on the right or left-hand side of the street provided at least 3m of clear space is left free in the middle of the road.

### Paid parking

Zones where payment is required have been created in major towns in areas near the centre. These zones are indicated by blue road signs. The zones can be free of charge for some hours of the day and on Sundays, as indicated locally by panels.

Areas where parking is limited to certain duration are indicated by blue stripes. Motorists must buy a ticket from a machine.

### Enforcement of parking regulations

Wheel clamps are used in particular cases instead of towing away, for example when the vehicle is parked on the pavement.

Vehicles are towed away when causing an obstruction to the circulation of traffic.

In both cases, a fine must be paid which includes the fine, the cost of removing the vehicle and of impounding it.

### Disabled parking access

Cars displaying the international sticker for the disabled can be parked on spaces specially marked by yellow lines and the yellow international symbol of the wheelchair. In areas where parking is prohibited these cars are exempt from the restrictions in the case of an emergency.

In most areas it is necessary to pay if payment is required, however, disabled motorists may park without time limit where parking is free of charge but restricted by time. Although the Italian law does not specifically mention foreign badge holders, the Italian police should allow them the same concessions as Italian badge holders.

## Traffic lights

### Traffic lights

The international 3-colour traffic light system is used.

Green, amber and red arrows are used at some intersections

A flashing red light is used near a level crossing, at the entrance to a mobile bridge or near a ferry boarding point to indicate to road users that they must stop.

A Flashing amber light indicates that traffic must slow down and proceed with caution, respecting the priority rules.

## Drink/drug driving

### Legal limit

The general legal limit of alcohol in the blood of drivers is 0.05%.

### Alcohol

The police can request a driver suspected of being under the influence of alcohol to take a breath test.

A driver involved in an accident can be tested by the medical services at the request of the police.

A driver suspected of being under the influence of narcotics can also be tested and receive a sanction.

## Roads & fuel

Tolls are levied on most Italian motorways.

Tolls can be paid in cash or with the following cards: Eurocard, Mastercard, and Visa. (Debit cards Maestro and Electron are not accepted)

## Service areas

There are many services stations on Italian motorways offering a wide range of facilities to motorists, e.g. fuel, restaurant, motel, shop.

## Availability of fuel

Only 25% of petrol stations on ordinary roads (inside and outside towns) are open from 00:00 to 24:00 hours on Sundays and public holidays. Petrol stations that open on Sundays remain closed on Mondays.

Night service (3% of petrol stations) begins at 22:00 hours in winter and 22:30 hours in summer and lasts until 06:00 hours.

Opening hours are clearly displayed at petrol stations, as are the addresses of the nearest garages that are open.

The above hours do not apply to petrol stations on motorways, on ring roads classified as motorways or in the immediate vicinity of frontier posts.

### Means of payment

Credit cards are generally accepted at petrol stations.

### Emergencies

Special emergency telephones are situated every two kilometres on motorways. There are two types of telephone:

1. You can speak to the emergency centre;
2. You must press either a button bearing a spanner to call for mechanical assistance or a button bearing a red cross to call for medical aid.

A red light confirms that the message has been received at the central motorway alarm system.