

Illegal Driving Instructors – How to spot them

Are illegal driving instructors working in your area? It is vitally important that you know who is teaching you, your son or daughter to drive.

What should you look for?

All licensed driving instructors have to by law display an appropriate licence clearly in the front windscreen of their car whilst they are providing paid tuition. The licence will be either pink with a triangle on it, which denotes that the instructor is a trainee. Or it will be green with an octagon on it which denotes a fully qualified driving instructor. These shapes will be visible from the outside of the car.



The inside must show a photograph of the instructor and a valid date. It will also have the instructors name and number on it.



There is no excuse for an instructor not to show their licence. In fact, there is up to a £1,000 fine if they get caught not displaying it. If there is no licence, you need to start asking questions... Anyone can get hold of a set of dual controls, a roof sign and some training materials to make them look genuine.

From the 12th March 2007 all new driving instructors have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check. This is done before they are allowed to be placed on the register of approved driving instructors. All existing instructors are being checked as well and within the next 1 to 2 years all instructors should have all been checked.

Only 7,000 trainee instructors (who display the pink licence) and 8,000 Approved Driving Instructors (who display the green licence) have been checked so far, despite there being 41,000 instructors on the register. The Driving Standard Agency (DSA) update states:

“To date refusal / removal proceedings have been started against only 12 PDIs and 8 ADIs.”

I feel this is 20 people too many who may have a history of fraud or offences of a sexual nature in their past.

If you or your loved ones are learning to drive with an illegal driving instructor, they will **not** have passed the DSA enhanced CRB check and could have anything in their history! What's more, they may not have the appropriate instructor insurance.

Some potential instructors who have failed their examinations continue teaching despite having no qualifications. Illegal instructors survive by being really nice, down-to-earth and friendly. They become your friend so that you won't ask questions or change to a professional instructor. They may offer you cheap driving lessons, but you get what you pay for; driving is a skill for life.

Are they taking you for a ride?

Always remember to look for a pink or green dated licence which should be on show at all times in the window.

Professional Instructors have gone through a rigorous testing system and will be continually tested and CRB checked. They too are helpful, friendly and down-to-earth, but if they display inappropriate behaviour it is important you report it to the Driving Standards Agency.

By Kathy Higgins Dip DI November 2007

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The Driving Standards Agency is the government agency responsible for the running of the ADI register and conducting the driving tests www.dsa.gov.uk

CRB Checks have been brought in to protect the public.

Both the pink and green licence are made of hard plastic and measure 10.5 cms by 10.5 cms. They have a valid date on them and a unique instructor number, as well as a photograph of the instructor that is less than 4 years old.

Driving instructor examinations consist of 3 parts which include theory, driving ability and teaching skills. Instructors have 3 attempts only at the driving and teaching examinations.