

CAREER KIT

DoorDash Driver Starter Kit: 90-Day Earnings Plan

How to Become a DoorDash Driver

2026-10 edition

Inside: at-a-glance summary · step-by-step path · costs & requirements · 90-day action plan · documents checklist · exams · interview questions · resume bullets · common mistakes · 13-week tracker · resources

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At a glance

To become a DoorDash driver (a Dasher), you sign up in the Dasher app, verify your ID, consent to a background check, and meet the age and vehicle rules for your area. There is no training or fee, and approval usually takes a few days to two weeks. Earnings vary by market, hours and tips, and you pay your own car costs and taxes as an independent contractor.

Timeline	A few days to 2 weeks (background check)
Typical cost	\$0 to sign up; you cover gas, car upkeep and insurance
Education	None required
License	Valid driver's license for car delivery; none for bike or walking where allowed
Median pay	Varies by market; no official data for app-based delivery
Job outlook	No BLS projection for app-based delivery; light truck drivers +6% (2025–35)

Step-by-step path

1. Check the requirements for your area

Time: 15 minutes · Cost: \$0

DoorDash's official requirements page lists the current rules. In general you need to be at least 18 (some areas set a higher age), have a Social Security number, and have a smartphone. To deliver by car you need a valid driver's license and auto insurance; some cities also allow bikes, e-bikes, scooters or walking.

2. Sign up in the Dasher app or website

Time: 10–20 minutes · Cost: \$0

Download the official Dasher app or go to DoorDash's Dasher signup page. Enter your name, contact details, delivery area and vehicle type. Use your legal name exactly as it appears on your ID and Social Security records.

3. Verify your identity and consent to a background check

Time: 3–14 days · Cost: \$0

Upload your driver's license or ID and take a selfie when asked. DoorDash uses a third-party company to run a criminal background check and, for car Dashers, a motor vehicle record check. You can follow the status by email or in the app.

4. Set up payouts and get your gear

Time: 1 day · Cost: \$0–\$50 for a bag and phone mount

Add a bank account or debit card for payouts. An insulated delivery bag and a phone mount make deliveries easier and safer. If you plan to deliver alcohol where allowed, you must be 21 and complete any extra steps the app requires.

5. Do your first deliveries and learn your market

Time: First 1–2 weeks · Cost: Gas and car wear

Start during busy meal times, usually lunch and dinner, and watch which areas and restaurants send you orders. Check the pay and distance shown before you accept an offer. Keep notes on what you earn per hour after gas so you know which times are worth it.

6. Track mileage and set aside money for taxes

Time: Ongoing · Cost: \$0–\$10 per month for a mileage app

Dashers are independent contractors, so no taxes are withheld. Track every business mile with an app or log, because you may deduct mileage at the IRS standard rate. Set aside part of each payout for income and self-employment tax, and make quarterly estimated payments if you owe.

Costs & requirements

Estimated costs (USD)

Item	Low	High	Note
Signup and background check	\$0	\$0	DoorDash does not charge Dashers to apply.
Insulated delivery bag	\$0	\$40	
Phone mount and car charger	\$10	\$40	
Mileage tracking app (per year)	\$0	\$120	Free options exist.
Rideshare or delivery insurance add-on (per year)	\$0	\$300	Ask your insurer whether personal coverage applies while delivering.
Total	\$10	\$500	

Requirements

Age	Generally 18 or older; some areas set a higher minimum. Check DoorDash's requirements page for your city.
ID and SSN	A government-issued ID and a Social Security number for the background check and tax forms.
Background check	Consent to a criminal background check and, for car delivery, a motor vehicle record check.
Vehicle	Any car in most markets; bikes, e-bikes, scooters or walking are allowed only in some areas.
Driver's license and insurance	Required for car delivery: a valid driver's license and your own auto insurance.
Smartphone	An iPhone or Android phone that can run the current Dasher app, plus a data plan.

90-Day Action Plan

Tick each box as you finish the task. Do the phases in order; it is fine if a phase takes a little longer.

Phase 1: Get approved and start safely

Days 1–30

Goal: Pass the background check and complete your first 50 deliveries.

- ☐ Read DoorDash's official requirements page and confirm the age and vehicle rules for your city.
- ☐ Call your auto insurer and ask whether your policy covers delivery driving.
- ☐ Sign up, upload your ID and consent to the background check.
- ☐ Set up payouts and buy an insulated bag and phone mount.
- ☐ Start a mileage log on day one, before your first delivery.
- ☐ Deliver during lunch and dinner peaks for two weeks and note orders per hour.
- ☐ Learn parking spots and pickup doors at the busiest restaurants near you.

Phase 2: Find your best hours and zones

Days 31–60

Goal: Know your real earnings per hour after costs.

- ☐ Total your weekly earnings, miles and gas, and work out net pay per hour.
- ☐ Compare weekday vs weekend and lunch vs dinner earnings.
- ☐ Pick your two most profitable time blocks and zones and focus on them.
- ☐ Decline offers that pay too little for the distance, based on your own numbers.
- ☐ Keep your customer ratings high with fast, accurate drop-offs and clear photos.
- ☐ Open a separate savings account and move a share of each payout for taxes.

Phase 3: Optimize and plan ahead

Days 61–90

Goal: Lock in a routine and decide if gig delivery fits your long-term plan.

- ☐ Review three months of earnings and set a weekly income target.
- ☐ Calculate quarterly estimated taxes or ask a tax preparer to help.
- ☐ Schedule car maintenance (oil, tires, brakes) based on your added miles.
- ☐ Try one other delivery platform side by side to compare pay in your area.
- ☐ Set a weekly hours limit to avoid burnout and extra car wear.
- ☐ If you want steadier pay, research local delivery driver jobs or CDL programs.
- ☐ Save your earnings records and mileage log for tax season.

Documents checklist

Gather these early. Keep originals in one folder and scans in the cloud.

- ☐ Valid driver's license (or state ID for bike or walk delivery)
- ☐ Social Security number
- ☐ Proof of auto insurance in your name
- ☐ Vehicle registration
- ☐ Bank account or debit card for payouts
- ☐ Smartphone with the current Dasher app
- ☐ Mileage log or tracking app
- ☐ Copy of your background check report (if you need to dispute anything)
- ☐ Monthly earnings statements from the Dasher app
- ☐ Annual tax form (1099) and records of business expenses

Interview questions

1. What does the background check look at?

Tip: Criminal records and, for car delivery, your driving record. Request your own MVR first.

2. Does my personal car insurance cover deliveries?

Tip: Ask your insurer directly; many policies exclude business use without an add-on.

3. How do I get paid?

Tip: Set up payouts in the app; check the payout schedule and any fees for instant transfers.

4. What times are busiest in my area?

Tip: Usually lunch, dinner and weekends; confirm with your own first two weeks of data.

5. How do I decide which offers to accept?

Tip: Compare the pay with the miles and time; use your own minimum per mile.

6. What happens to customer tips?

Tip: Check DoorDash's current pay page; it explains how tips are passed to Dashers.

7. What if I can't find the customer?

Tip: Message or call through the app and follow its steps before leaving the order.

8. What if a restaurant order is late or wrong?

Tip: Wait a reasonable time, report it in the app, and never open sealed bags.

9. Can I deliver alcohol?

Tip: Only if you are 21+, it's allowed in your area, and you check the customer's ID.

10. What do ratings and completion rates affect?

Tip: Read the help center; they can affect access to some features and your account.

11. How do I handle taxes as a contractor?

Tip: Track miles, save part of every payout, and see the IRS Gig Economy Tax Center.

12. What should I do after an accident while delivering?

Tip: Get safe, call 911 if needed, document the scene, and report it in the app and to your insurer.

Resume bullet examples

Adapt these to what you actually did. Use numbers wherever you can.

- Completed 500+ food and grocery deliveries as an independent contractor with a 4.9+ customer rating.
- Managed my own schedule and routes to deliver orders on time during peak meal hours.
- Communicated with customers and restaurants through an app to resolve late or missing items.
- Tracked mileage, earnings and expenses weekly and filed quarterly estimated taxes.
- Maintained a clean driving record and passed a criminal and motor vehicle background check.
- Handled cash-free, contactless deliveries with photo confirmation and accurate drop-offs.
- Verified customer age and ID for alcohol deliveries in line with state law.

Common mistakes to avoid

1. Not tracking mileage from the first day and losing a large tax deduction.
2. Spending every payout and owing a big tax bill in April.
3. Accepting every offer, including long trips that pay less than your gas.
4. Assuming personal auto insurance covers delivery without asking.
5. Ignoring car maintenance as your miles add up.
6. Using unofficial sites or apps that ask for fees or account logins.
7. Comparing gross pay instead of net pay per hour after costs.

13-week progress tracker

Fill this in by hand each week.

Week	Focus	Done?	Notes
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			

Resources, salary & disclaimer

Resources

- **DoorDash: Dasher requirements**

<https://dasher.doordash.com/en-us/about/requirements>

- **DoorDash Dasher Help Center**

https://help.doordash.com/dashers/s/?language=en_US

- **IRS Gig Economy Tax Center**

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/gig-economy-tax-center>

- **IRS: Standard mileage rates**

<https://www.irs.gov/tax-professionals/standard-mileage-rates>

- **FTC: Employer background checks and your rights**

<https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/employer-background-checks-and-your-rights>

Salary

Bottom 10%	Median	Top 10%
Light truck drivers: less than \$30,800	No official median for Dashers. Closest BLS comparison, light truck drivers: \$44,860 per year	Light truck drivers: more than \$80,310

Outlook: BLS does not track app-based delivery separately. Dasher earnings depend on your market, the hours you work, order volume and tips, minus your own gas and car costs.

Source: BLS Occupational Outlook Handbook, Delivery Truck Drivers and Driver/Sales Workers, May 2025 data (employee drivers, not app-based Dashers) —

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/transportation-and-material-moving/delivery-truck-drivers-and-driver-sales-workers.htm>

Disclaimer. Requirements vary by state and change over time. Verify with the official sources listed. This guide is not legal or career advice.