

National Ankylosing Spondylitis Society

Information on how to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if you have a medical condition

What the DVLA needs from you

If you already hold a driving licence and you develop a medical condition which could affect your driving, by law you must inform the DVLA. You must also let the DVLA know if a medical condition you have already informed them about gets worse.

If you are unsure whether or not to inform the DVLA about a medical condition then inform your GP. He or she should be able to give you advice on whether you should drive while medical enquires are being made.

If you are applying for a driving licence, the application form has a health section which you must fill in. You must inform the DVLA if you suffer from any of the medical conditions listed on the form or your medical condition affects your driving. Once your application has been received, the law allows you to drive as long as:

- You have held a licence before
- You are not disqualified
- You have not been, and would not be, refused a licence for medical reasons.

What is involved-the first stage

Firstly, you are normally asked to fill in a medical questionnaire to give more details about your condition.

(This may not be needed if you are applying for a lorry or bus licence and you have provided a medical examination report (D4) with your application).

You will be asked to give your permission for a medical advisor from the DVLA to ask for medical information from your doctor if needed.

What happens next-the second stage

If it is possible a decision on the information you have provided will be made.

If more information is needed, a medical advisor may:

- Contact your doctor or consultant (or both)
- Arrange for you to be examined by a local medical officer or specialist
- Ask you to take a driving assessment, eye test or driving test

What happens next-the third stage

Once the medical advisor has all the information he or she needs, a decision will be made about your licence by the DVLA.

The decisions made by the DVLA:

- You may be able to keep your licence or get a new one.
- You may be given a driving licence for a period of one, two or three years if the medical advisor decides that your medical fitness needs to be reviewed in the future.
- You may get a driving licence which states that special controls need to be fitted to the vehicles you drive so you can overcome the effects of a physical disability.
- Your licence may be withdrawn or your application withdrawn. This is only done when the DVLA enquiries confirm that, as a result of your medical condition you are not fit to drive.

If this course of action is taken then the DVLA will:

- Explain why the decision was made and, if possible, tell you when you can reapply for your licence
- Send a notice which will explain your right to appeal to a magistrate's court if you live in England or Wales, or to a sheriff's court if you live in Scotland.

How are the medical standards on fitness to drive set?

- Standards for safe driving are set by the EC Directive 91/439/EEC and are based on the advice of the Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panels.
- There are six separate panels covering the major conditions and disorders. The panels are made up of experts from particular medical fields. These experts provide advice on how the particular medical conditions affect safe driving.
- The panel meet regularly and review standards in the light of medical research and advancements in medical science.
- There are higher standards in place for driving lorries and buses (because of the size and weight of the vehicle and also the length of time drivers may spend at the wheel).

- The standards for driving are set out in a booklet 'At a glance guide to the current medical standards of fitness to drive' which is available to download from the following website:

[At a glance guide to the current medical standards of fitness to drive](#) for GPs and consultants to view.

How quickly can I expect a decision?

The DVLA aims to complete enquiries as quickly as possible. The time taken to deal with a case depends on the medical conditions and the information needed.

If a decision can be made based on the information first provided then 88% of cases have a decision made within 15 working days.

If more information is needed about a medical condition (from you, your GP or other sources), or if you applying for a lorry or bus licence, the aim is to make a decision on 85% cases within 90 working days.

The DVLA will keep all the information provided by you or your doctors confidential and use it only for the purposes allowed by law. Under the Data Protection Act, if you pay a small fee then the DVLA must let you see the personal information that they have about you. However, the DVLA registration under the act allows certain information to be withheld.

How you can help with the process

- Fill all forms in clearly in black ink and CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Make sure you fill in all relevant parts of the form.
- Provide as much detail as possible about your medical condition.
- Provide full details (name, address, e-mail address and fax number) of your doctors. This includes both your GP and any consultant who may be treating you. You will have to give these details if we send you a medical questionnaire to fill in.
- Be able to quote your medical case number (this will be on any letter sent to you), your driver number or your full name and date of birth when you contact the DVLA.
- Inform the DVLA about any change to your medical condition

More information

The D100 booklet gives more information on the conditions that the DVLA must be told about: [D100 booklet](#).

How to contact the DVLA

By post:

Drivers Medical Group
DVLA
Swansea
SA99 1TU

By telephone:

Telephone: 0870 600 0301 between 8am and 5.30pm Monday to Friday, and between 8am and 1pm on Saturdays.

If you have hearing or speech difficulties, contact by textphone on 01792 766366. Please note this number will not respond to an ordinary phone.

By e-mail or fax:

E-mail-eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Fax: 0845 8500095

Please quote your medical case number, driver number or full name and date of birth.

If you are following up a letter you have received from the DVLA, please phone the number on the letter, or write to the person named on the letter, quoting the reference.

Further information

If you do not have access to the internet and wish to access the websites listed in this fact sheet, then please contact us and we will download, print and post them to you.

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Member experience of the driving assessment

By a NASS member, AS News Autumn/Winter 2007

As promised I am giving you an update on my driving assessment. Firstly I would say that the whole process was very relaxed and I felt that they were doing all possible to help me. My eyes, reactions, strength and co-ordination were all checked and also spinal movement, or in my case lack of it. The driving assessment, which went very well, was made easier by a couple of excellent mirrors in the car. One which clips on an existing mirror gave me super rear panoramic views and helped me greatly.

I passed all the tests OK and they have suggested that I should drive only automatics, with power steering and extra mirrors. As I already drive an automatic with power steering and have no wish to ever drive a manual car again, this is fine with me. This information will be passed, by me, to the DVLA on their form D497 which came in the post today, together with a copy of the report from the assessor, who sees no reason why I cannot continue to drive.

The DVLA have asked that I send my driving licence back to them for a new one to be issued, free of charge, with any restrictions that they may see fit to add. The important thing is that having been thoroughly assessed they feel that I am still able to drive safely. From my point of view, I feel comforted that I have updated the relevant people rather than hide behind the issue that I am not sure if I should notify or not, and therefore do not do it.

I would advise anyone to contact their local centre: the details are available on the Motability website on www.motability.co.uk. The driving assessment cost me £45 and lasted in total two hours. The replacement licence is free and the panoramic mirror cost £18 plus £4 postage and is available from Mobility Conversions in Manchester www.mobilityconversions.com.