

Chest
Heart &
Stroke
Scotland



DRIVING

WITH A MEDICAL CONDITION



ESSENTIAL GUIDE

This Essential Guide is about driving with a medical condition.

It explains:

- the law around driving with a medical condition
- what voluntary surrender of your licence means
- what the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) medical investigation involves
- the law around driving with a chest or heart condition or after a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA)
- information on getting back to driving.

The law around driving with a medical condition

By law, you must tell the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) about any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive safely. Your doctor or specialist will be able to tell you if you need to tell the DVLA.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell the DVLA about a medical condition that affects your ability to drive safely. You may be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident as a result.



Telling the DVLA

For safety reasons, the DVLA has strict rules about who can and cannot drive.

If your doctor says you are not fit to drive, you must tell the DVLA and you must not drive.

You can choose to voluntarily surrender your licence OR to allow the DVLA to conduct their own assessment and make a decision about your licence.

Information about how to contact the DVLA is included at the end of this guide.



Voluntary surrender of your licence

You may choose to voluntarily surrender your licence. This means that you do not intend to drive until your doctor considers it is safe for you to do so. You will need to complete the DVLA form "Declaration of surrender for medical reasons". No further action will be taken by the DVLA at this time.

At a later date, if you would like to start driving again, you must apply to the DVLA for your licence back. Depending on your circumstances, you may be able to drive while your application is with the DVLA.

For more information, see the DVLA guidance "Can I drive while my application is with DVLA?" You can find this by going to **www.gov.uk** and searching for "INF188/6".

DVLA medical investigation




The DVLA will conduct an investigation to consider anything to do with your health that may affect your driving. For the investigation:

- You must complete a medical questionnaire.
- Your doctor or specialist may have to provide information - you will need to give permission for the DVLA to request this.
- You may have to be independently assessed by another doctor and/or need to attend the Scottish Driving Assessment Service for a driving assessment.

If you are reapplying for your licence after voluntary surrender, you will also need to complete a driving licence application form.

Following the investigation, the Drivers Medical Group at the DVLA will make a decision about your licence. It may take a few months before you find out the result.

The decision could be one of the following:

- ✓ you keep your licence
-  you are given a licence for a fixed time period only - when this period ends, you can reapply for another licence and the DVLA will check that you now meet the medical standards for driving
-  you are given a licence that requires vehicle adaptations and/or special controls
-  your licence is revoked (taken away).

If your licence has been revoked or refused for medical reasons, you can reapply for your licence later if your condition improves and your doctor thinks you are safe to drive again.

Provisional Disability Assessment Licence

If you are reapplying for your licence after it has been revoked, the DVLA may issue you with a Provisional Disability Assessment Licence (PDAL).

The PDAL allows you to take an on-road driving assessment and, where appropriate, allows for a period of re-training before the assessment.

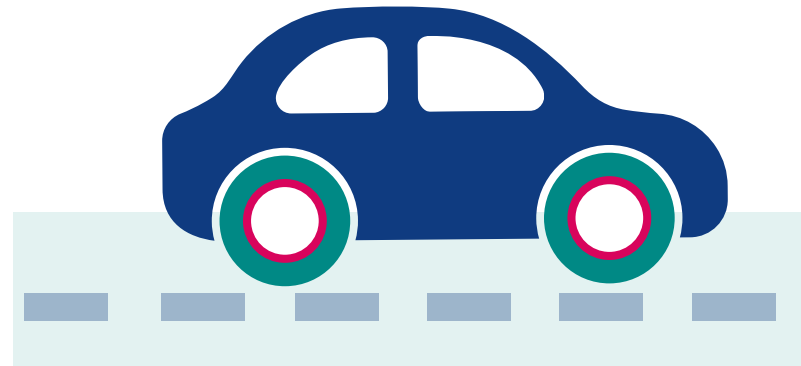
The Scottish Driving Assessment Service will conduct the assessment.

This assessment is not a driving test. It is used to find out if you are ready to go back to driving.

After your assessment, your assessor will produce a report on your driving.

A copy of your driving report will go to a DVLA medical doctor.

The doctor will use the report, along with any other medical information, to make a decision about your driving.



Driving with a chest or heart condition or after a TIA or stroke

If you have been diagnosed with a long-term chest or heart condition, or if you have had a transient ischaemic attack (TIA) or a stroke, your doctor can advise you if you need to tell the DVLA.

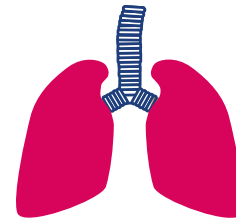
If you do not have to tell the DVLA, by law, you may still have to stop driving for a set amount of time. This will depend on your condition, your symptoms and what sort of licence you have.

Even if you are allowed to drive, you must be sure that, at all times, you are able to safely control a vehicle. If you have any concerns about your ability to drive safely, speak to your doctor.

Driving with a long-term chest condition

If you have a long-term chest condition, there are no restrictions to your driving. You do not need to tell the DVLA unless you experience dizziness, fainting or loss of consciousness.

If you use oxygen and transport oxygen cylinders or an oxygen concentrator in your car, you should tell your insurance provider. This should not affect the cost of your insurance.



Driving with a heart condition

Group 1 - Car or motorcycle licence

You **do not** need to tell the DVLA if you:

- have had a heart attack
- have had coronary artery bypass surgery
- have heart valve disease or have had heart valve surgery
- have had coronary angioplasty
- have angina.

While you do not have to tell the DVLA about these conditions, in some cases, you must stop driving for a set amount of time and not drive again until your doctor or specialist tells you it is safe to do so.

Rules for selected heart conditions

If your heart condition causes sudden dizziness or fainting, you must tell the DVLA and must stop driving until your doctor or specialist tells you it is safe to do so.

These rules also apply to conditions for which you have had a **pacemaker** or **implantable cardioverter defibrillator** (ICD) fitted. You must tell the DVLA if you have been fitted with either of these.



Angina

You do not have to tell the DVLA and you can continue to drive unless symptoms occur when you are 'at rest' (not doing any activity), when you are driving or when you feel emotional. If this happens, you must stop driving until your symptoms are under control.

Acute coronary syndrome, including a heart attack or heart operation

You do not have to tell the DVLA but must stop driving for at least 1 month.

Coronary angioplasty

You do not have to tell the DVLA but you must stop driving for at least 1 week if the angioplasty has been successful, or at least 4 weeks if it has not been successful.

See www.gov.uk/heart-attacks-and-driving for more information on driving after a heart attack or angioplasty.

Heart Failure

If you have heart failure, you need to tell the DVLA if you have symptoms that:

- affect your ability to drive safely
- distract you when driving
- happen when you are at rest.

Group 2 - Bus, coach or lorry licence

For most heart conditions, if you have a bus, coach or lorry licence, you will need to tell the DVLA and your licence may be revoked. In some cases, after a set amount of time either your doctor can assess you or the DVLA will do their own assessment and let you know if you are allowed to drive again.

Your doctor should be able to advise you on the rules that apply to your condition.

Driving after a stroke or TIA

A stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA) can affect your ability to drive safely.

Driving after a stroke or TIA depends on your condition, your symptoms and what licence you hold.

Disability of your arms and legs may not stop you from driving. In some cases, vehicles can be adapted to allow people to continue to drive. If there are rules placed on the types of vehicle you can drive, these must be shown on your driving licence.

See **www.gov.uk/stroke-and-driving** for further information.

Group 1 - Car or motorcycle licence

You are not allowed to drive for at least 1 month after a stroke or single TIA.



After 1 month, if your doctor says you are safe to drive and you have a valid driving licence, you can drive again. You do not need to tell the DVLA.



After 1 month, if your doctor says you are not safe to drive, you must tell the DVLA and you cannot drive. You still need to tell the DVLA even if you do not intend to drive.



By law you must tell the DVLA if:

- you still have complications affecting your ability to drive safely 1 month after your stroke or TIA
- you have had more than 1 'recent' TIA. The DVLA generally takes 'recent' to mean within 1 month. You are not allowed to drive until you have had 3 months free from attack. If your doctor agrees it is safe for you to drive after 3 months, you can do so while the DVLA is carrying out their enquiry
- you have had any kind of seizure
- you needed brain surgery as a result of your stroke
- anyone providing your medical care is concerned about your ability to drive safely.

Group 2 - Bus or lorry licence

If you have had a stroke or TIA you must tell the DVLA. Your licence will be revoked for at least 12 months.

You may be able to reapply for your licence after this time if you have no ongoing complications and you are safe to drive.

Licensing may depend on medical reports and, in some cases, medical tests.

Taxi licence

The Transport Select Committee recommends that local councils apply the same restrictions to a taxi licence as Group 2 licence holders after a stroke or TIA.

Check with your local licensing council what the restrictions are in your area.

Getting back to driving

Scottish Driving Assessment Service

The Scottish Driving Assessment Service in Edinburgh offers driving assessments. This may be required as part of the DVLA fitness to drive investigation.

The service also offers information and advice on driving for people who have a medical condition, have been injured or have a disability. This includes information on vehicle adaptations and driving lessons.

You need to be referred to the service by your doctor (GP or hospital specialist) or by a DVLA doctor.

Driving lessons

- You may find it helpful to have refresher driving lessons to help rebuild your confidence.
- You can only have driving lessons if you have a valid licence and your doctor has agreed that you are safe to drive.
- If you have surrendered your licence or your licence has expired, you must apply to the DVLA to obtain your licence back before starting lessons.

If you have applied for your licence, you may have cover to drive under Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act, while the DVLA consider your application. For more information, see the DVLA guidance "Can I drive while my application is with DVLA?". You can find this by going to **www.gov.uk** and searching for "**INF188/6**". It is for drivers to decide whether Section 88 applies to them.

Insurance

You must let your insurance company know of any medical condition you have that may affect your ability to drive. You must also tell them of any adaptations to your vehicle.

Your insurance company may require a doctor's report to say it is safe for you to drive.

You may have to look around for an insurance company that will cover you.

Blue Badge scheme

The Blue Badge scheme allows people with difficulties getting around to park closer to where they need to go. Blue Badges are also known as disabled parking permits.

You can apply for a Blue Badge online from your local council. You may be charged up to £20 for a Blue Badge. Visit **www.mygov.scot/transport-travel/park-permit** for more information.

DVLA contact details and further information

DVLA general driver licensing enquiries

Tel: 0300 790 6801

Web: www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla

DVLA medical enquiries and declaration of a medical condition questionnaires

Tel: 0300 790 6806

Web: www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

Postal address: Drivers' Medical Enquiries, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU

Visit **www.gov.uk/browse/driving** for more information on driving and transport issues, including driving with a disability or medical condition, the Blue Badge scheme and using public transport if you are disabled.

Our publications are available for free to anyone in Scotland who needs them. Go to **www.chss.org.uk/publications** for all our resources, including other Essential Guides in this series.

For free, confidential advice and support from our **Advice Line nurses**, call: 0808 801 0899 (Mon-Fri 9.30am-4pm), text: NURSE to 66777 or email: advice@chss.org.uk.

Across Scotland, over one million people – that's one in five of us – are living with the effects of a chest, heart or stroke condition. We are here to help everyone who needs us. But we need your support to do this. Go to **www.chss.org.uk/supportus** to find out how you can help more people in Scotland.

If you would like this resource in an alternative format, please contact our Advice Line nurses.

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