



What you need to know about driving after a stroke

Life after Stroke

Introduction

After a stroke your ability to drive safely can be affected in various ways including:

- Physical impairment
- Visual impairment
- Difficulty concentrating

The information within this resource aims to provide practical advice and support regarding driving after your stroke.



Driving after a stroke

- A stroke can affect your ability to drive safely
- Driving after a stroke 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 recorded on your driving licence
- **NB:** If you have been told that you have had a ***TIA** you are not allowed to drive for 1 month

(*TIA or **Transient Ischaemic Attack**- symptoms lasting less than 24 hours)



Car or motorcycle licence

Car or motorcycle category licence holders



After a stroke or single TIA:

- You are not allowed to drive for at least 1 month
- If, after 1 month, you have no ongoing symptoms and have a valid driving licence, you can drive again. You do not need to tell the DVLA
- If you have ongoing symptoms after 4 weeks or you, a family member or health professional have concerns about your driving you must not return to driving and you must inform the DVLA
- If you do not intend to go back to driving after 1 month, you still need to inform the DVLA
- **NB:** The DVLA can provide additional advice on health conditions and driving: <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>

Driving other category vehicles

Some people may be required to hold other vehicle category licences. They may drive as part of their employment. This could include driving:

- Large Goods Vehicle (HGV)
- Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) which includes: Taxi, Minibus or Bus

The DVLA will be able to provide additional information and advice on health conditions and driving. Please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>

Driving and the law



Driving after stroke: the law (1)

The law around driving with a medical condition including stroke:

- 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 healthcare professional/specialist will discuss any concerns there may be for you returning to driving
- 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

Driving after stroke: the law (2)

By law you must tell the DVLA if you:

- Still have complications affecting your ability to drive safely 1 month after your stroke
- Have had more than 1 'recent' TIA. The DVLA generally takes 'recent' to mean within 1 month
- Have had multiple stroke or TIA events you are not allowed to drive until you have had 3 months free from attack. Your healthcare professional/specialist will discuss any concerns there may be for you returning to driving. If they agree it is safe for you to drive after 3 months, you can do so while the DVLA is carrying out their enquiry

Driving after stroke: the law (3)

By law you must tell the DVLA if you:

- Have had any kind of seizure
- Needed brain surgery as a result of your stroke
- Anyone providing your medical care is concerned about your ability to drive safely
- The DVLA will be able to provide you with information and advice on driving with a medical condition:
<https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>



Who do you need to inform?

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You do not usually have to inform the DVLA if you have had a single stroke or TIA. However, you need to let them know if:

- You have had more than one recent stroke or TIA
- You are having problems such as weakness of the arm(s) or leg(s), visual disturbance, or problems with coordination, memory or understanding
- You have had any kind of seizure
- You needed brain surgery as part of the treatment for your stroke
- You carry a current Large Goods Vehicle (LGV) or Passenger Carrying Vehicle (PCV) driving licence



Who else do you need to inform?

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Remember:

It is important to tell your car insurance company that you have had a stroke to make sure that your policy remains valid



**DVLA details and further
information**

DVLA contact details and further information

- DVLA general driver licensing enquiries: Tel: **0300 790 6801**
- Website: www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla
- DVLA medical enquiries and declaration of a medical condition questionnaires Tel:
0300 790 6806
- Website: www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving
- Postal address: Drivers' Medical Enquiries, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU.
- 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 is available @:
www.gov.uk/browse/driving



Limited mobility-Blue badge scheme

Driving with limited mobility: Blue Badge Scheme

- If your mobility is limited you may be entitled to apply for a disabled parking permit (Blue Badge)
- The Blue Badge scheme allows severely disabled people (travelling as a driver or passenger) to park in certain restricted areas, so that you can get closer to where you need to go
- To find out more or to apply for a Blue Badge if you live in Scotland, go to the government website www.mygov.scot/apply-blue-badge/ or contact your local authority

Getting back to driving



Getting back to driving: driving assessment

Driving Assessment Services across Scotland offer:

- Driving assessment and/or advice for people who wish to commence, resume or continue driving after illness or injury
- Advice on vehicle modifications to enable safe driving or passenger travel for those with a disability
- Assessment is free under the NHS, although a referral from a doctor is required, giving brief medical details relevant to driving, before an appointment can be arranged. Referrals are accepted from all Scottish Health Boards. More information on the **Scottish Driving Assessment Service** is available by visiting: [SMART Centre](#) or [DriveAbility Scotland](#)

Getting back to driving: driving assessment (2)

Driving assessments are carried out by a therapist and/or a doctor and generally include:

- **Physical Assessment** – range of joint movement, muscle strength and sensation, co-ordination and vision are tested. An assessment of reasoning, memory and concentration may also be included depending on the person's medical condition
- **Static Unit Assessment** – conducted with the person sitting in a test rig which allows us to identify the most appropriate methods for steering, braking and acceleration and is also used to measure reaction times
- **In-Car Assessment** – this is carried out in one of the centre's vehicles. Automatic and manual cars are available, and we also have examples of the most frequently used modifications

Getting back to driving: driving lessons

You may find it helpful to have refresher driving lessons. This can help to rebuild your confidence.

Remember:

- 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

Vehicle adaptations



Vehicle adaptations

Vehicle adaptations can be made to accommodate physical disability including:

- **Steering wheel ball-** If you have difficulty holding or turning a steering wheel or have the use of only one hand, having a steering wheel ball fitted means you will have more control when steering your car
- **Automatic transmission-** Driving an automatic vehicle and this is considered to be an adaptation
- **NB:** Vehicle adaptations have to be coded on your driving licence



**Other options if you can no longer
drive**

Other options available if you cannot drive

If you are not able to drive:

- Some local councils provide community transport schemes
- You may also be eligible for a National Entitlement Card (bus pass). This will allow you to travel free on most bus services and on many longer journeys between Scottish cities
- To find out more about this, and help with other forms of transport visit: www.mygov.scot/transport-help/

Information used to create this resource

Information used to create this resource is taken with kind permission from:

- STARs Advancing Module 10: [Resuming daily activities after stroke](#).
- CHSS Essential Guide: [Driving with a medical condition](#).

Other websites are also referred to/signposted in this resource include:

- Driver and Vehicle Licencing Agency (DVLA): [Driving with medical conditions](#).
- SMART centre: [Scottish Driving Assessment Service](#).
- DriveAbility Scotland [DriveAbility Scotland](#)

If you have any comments/changes/suggestions on CHSS Tailored Talks please contact:

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