

moving rightalong

OBLIGATIONS AND
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
OLDER DRIVERS



Information Sheet 4

Driver Medical Assessment



Government of South Australia

Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure

Moving Right Along: Obligations and Opportunities for Older Drivers encourages safer, greener and more active travel for older South Australians.

It comprises a series of Information Sheets about fitness to drive and legal responsibilities, driver assessments, ideas for maintaining the ability to drive safely and planning for the time when you, a family member or friend will decide to drive less or stop driving altogether.

Driver Medical Assessment

A Driver Medical Assessment is conducted by a health professional e.g. your medical practitioner to assess your medical fitness to drive a vehicle safely.

If you fit any one of the following criteria you are eligible for a Driver Medical Assessment:^{*}

- you are aged 70 or over **OR**
- you have a medical condition that may affect your ability to drive safely **OR**
- you are taking medication that may affect your ability to drive safely **OR**
- you drive a public passenger vehicle **OR**
- you operate under the National Heavy Vehicle Accreditation Scheme (NHVAS).

If you are aged 70 or over you will receive the Driver Medical Assessment form in the mail every year one month before your birthday.

Make an appointment to see your health professional who will complete sections of the assessment, sign it and witness your signature.

Send the completed form to:

Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure
GPO Box 1533, ADELAIDE SA 5001

Medical conditions or illnesses

Depending on the type and seriousness of a condition or illness, a Driver Medical Assessment of your health may be required by the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure to determine whether your driver's licence, or a particular class of licence, should be retained.

As a guide, the following medical conditions that **must** be notified, by law, include:

- alcohol dependency
- cancer
- cardiovascular diseases e.g. angina, cardiac arrest, heart failure, hypertension
- diabetes
- effects of taking prescription, over the counter or illicit drugs
- epilepsy
- gastrointestinal disorders
- hearing
- HIV/AIDS
- mental health issues
- metabolic and endocrine disorders
- musculoskeletal disorders e.g. arthritis, limb disability, limb loss and/or replacement
- neurological disorders e.g. dementia, stroke, Transient Ischemic Attack, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease, head injury
- psychiatric disorders
- renal failure
- respiratory diseases
- sleep disorders e.g. sleep apnoea, narcolepsy
- syncope i.e. fainting

- vestibular disorders i.e. vertigo, Meniere's disease
- vision and eye disorders e.g. cataract, glaucoma¹. When eyesight readings do not meet the minimum standard unaided, but are satisfactory while wearing spectacles or contact lenses, the permit or licence endorsement will state that spectacles or contact lenses must be worn at all times when driving. A Driver Medical Assessment is required where the applicant has had eye surgery or has lost sight in one eye.

Medication

If you have a condition or take medication for the treatment of a condition that may affect your fitness to drive you **must** have a Driver Medical Assessment at regular intervals. This ensures that the condition continues to be well managed and has not deteriorated. In each case the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure will advise you on the required frequency - usually between one and five years depending on the nature of the condition.

^{*}Information correct as at 1 July 2010

¹ Austroads. Assessing Fitness to Drive. 2006. [12 Nov 2009] www.austroads.com.au



Medical conditions and your insurance

- Most motor vehicle insurance companies require information about any factors that could affect your driving. If you have a crash and submit an insurance claim, it may be at risk if the insurance company considers that, at the time of the crash, the driver was not legally eligible to drive.
- You have a duty to declare any risks that may affect your insurance.
- If you are in doubt about reporting an existing illness or disability to the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure, consult your health professional. Your insurance company can also advise of any related clauses in their motor vehicle insurance policy that may put an insurance claim at risk.

Your legal responsibility

As a licensed driver in South Australia and regardless of your age, you are **legally required** to advise the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure in writing as soon as you are diagnosed with an illness, disease or disability, or take medication that could impair your ability to operate any motor vehicle effectively and safely.

Also, health professionals are **legally required** to notify the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure as soon as they consider that you suffer from a physical or mental illness, disability or deficiency, or take medication that would be likely to endanger the public if you drive a motor vehicle.

The health professional does not need your permission as this notification is **compulsory by law**.

Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure
GPO Box 1533, ADELAIDE SA 5001

The consequences for failing to notify the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure of a reportable medical condition and continuing to drive are severe.

If involved in a crash:

- you may be charged with related driving offences and with failing to notify the Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure of a reportable medical condition
- you may be sued for any damages to people or property caused by the driver in that crash
- your private car insurance coverage may be affected.

For resources and contact details of relevant government departments and other organisations refer to:

Information Sheet 11

Department for Transport,
Energy and Infrastructure

GPO Box 1533, ADELAIDE SA 5001
Telephone **13 10 84**