

# moving rightalong

OBLIGATIONS AND  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
OLDER DRIVERS



Information Sheet 4

# Driver Medical Assessment



**Government of South Australia**

Department of Planning,  
Transport 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.

Various health problems, medical conditions, injuries, disabilities and medications may affect our ability to drive. As we get older we may also notice a change in both physical and mental abilities that may affect our ability to drive.

Both your safety and the safety of other road users are influenced by your fitness to drive. Fitness to drive rules are designed so that licence holders are able to operate and drive a vehicle safely on our roads.

Fitness to drive responsibilities:

- The Registrar of Motor Vehicles is required to ensure that driver's licence holders are medically fit to drive in accordance with the national fitness to drive guidelines.
- You are required by law to report any medical condition that you have, or develop, at any time that could affect your ability to drive safely.
- You may be required to undergo a medical examination with a medical practitioner to confirm your fitness to hold a driver's licence. Compulsory medical assessments are required for some drivers and for some classes of licence.
- Health practitioners are required to report if a patient is diagnosed with a medical condition that may affect their ability to drive. The health professional is required to examine the person in accordance with the national fitness to drive guidelines. Assessing fitness to drive is available online [www.austroads.com.au](http://www.austroads.com.au) Hard copies can be ordered on line \$25.00 including postage (2014) or phone to order from CanPrint Communications P:1300 889 873

### **How to report a medical condition**

Please contact a Service SA customer service centre [www.sa.gov.au/contact-us](http://www.sa.gov.au/contact-us) or call 13 10 84 for information regarding reporting a medical condition.

### **Medical assessments and practical driving tests**

You will be asked to submit a compulsory medical assessment if:

- you have a medical condition recorded against your driver's licence, or
- you are aged 70 and older and hold a class of licence other than a for a car e.g. LR, MR, HR, HC, MC, R-DATE or R licence classes (annual requirement).

You will receive a Certificate of Fitness form in the mail which you must take to your medical practitioner to complete and you must return it by the due date or your licence may be suspended. You are responsible for the doctor fees.

You must pass a practical driving test (PDA) if:

- your doctor requests that you have a Practical Driving Assessment (PDA) with an assessment officer to help determine your fitness to drive, or
- you are 85 years of age or older and hold a class of licence other than a C Class (car) licence e.g. LR, MR, HR, HC, MC. R-DATE or R.

The PDA is not the same as the driving test that learner drivers are required to pass. It is an assessment of your ability to control the vehicle and to comply with road laws.

### **Will your medical condition affect your licence?**

How your licence or permit will be affected will depend on your medical condition, any medications you take and your health professional's recommendations.

Your licence or permit may be:

- issued or renewed without any changes
- amended to still allow you to drive, but under a driving restriction (for example, driving in daylight hours only, while wearing prescribed glasses, or a vehicle fitted with hand controls)
- suspended temporarily
- cancelled.

You have a right of appeal against any licensing decision you disagree with.

If your medical condition means that you cannot drive, or you simply don't want to, you should hand in your licence.

### **Medical conditions that can affect driving**

There are a wide range of medical conditions, or combinations of medical conditions, that can affect your fitness to drive. Some of the most common are listed below. Further information on how these

conditions can affect driving can be obtained from your health professional or from the national fitness to drive guidelines. Assessing fitness to drive is available online [www.austroads.com.au](http://www.austroads.com.au) Hard copies can be ordered on line \$25.00 including postage (2014) or phone to order from CanPrint Communications P:1300 889 873

Some of the medical conditions that can affect driving are:

- Alcohol/drug dependency
- Arthritis and other joint conditions
- Dementia and Alzheimers's Disease, Depression or other mental health conditions like Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Psychosis.
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Eyesight – Conditions such as glaucoma, cataracts, macular degeneration are medical conditions that will require a medical assessment. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses whilst driving this will be recorded as a condition on your licence but it is not a medical condition that will require a medical assessment.
- Heart disease
- High or low blood pressure
- Injuries and disabilities, including limb amputation or paralysis
- Parkinson's Disease and other neurological disorders
- Sleep disorders like sleep Apnoea
- Stroke



### Summary of fitness to drive requirements in South Australia

All driver's licence holders regardless of age	<p>Must report any medical condition or medication that may affect your ability to drive a motor vehicle safely.</p> <p>Drivers who have a medical condition recorded on their licence must complete compulsory medical assessments.</p> <p>If you are sent a medical assessment you must complete it and return it by the due date to avoid licence suspension.</p>
Licence holders aged 70 and older who hold a class of licence other than a for a car e.g. LR, MR, HR, HC, MC, R-DATE or R licence classes	<p>Must submit an annual medical assessment form due to the increased crash risk driving these vehicles poses.</p>
C Class (car) licence holders aged 70 and above	<p>From 1 September 2014, car licence holders (C Class only) aged 70 and older that do not have a medical condition recorded against their licence no longer need to visit a medical practitioner each year to submit a medical assessment to retain their licence.</p> <p>Drivers who already have a medical condition recorded on their licence still need to submit compulsory medical assessments.</p>
Licence holders aged 85 years of age or older who hold a class of licence other than a for a car e.g. LR, MR, HR, HC, MC, R-DATE or R licence classes	<p>Must pass a practical driving test annually to maintain that licence class.</p>
Health professionals	<p>Health professionals are required to notify the Registrar of Motor Vehicles when patients suffer an illness, deficiency or condition that would likely endanger themselves or others if they drive. Doctors may recommend a practical driving test to confirm that a patient is fit to drive.</p>

### Your legal responsibility

As a licensed driver in South Australia and regardless of your age, you are **legally required** to report any medical condition or medication that may affect your ability to drive a motor vehicle safely. Please contact a Service SA customer service centre [www.sa.gov.au/contact-us](http://www.sa.gov.au/contact-us) or call 13 10 84 for information regarding reporting a medical condition.

Also, health professionals are **legally required** to notify the Department of Planning, Transport 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**.

### The consequences for failing to notify 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 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.

## More information

- Safe driving tips for older drivers  
<http://mylicence.sa.gov.au/safe-driving-tips/older-drivers>.

## 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 of Planning, Transport 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.

## Moving Right Along Information Sheets

- 1 Road safety and older drivers
- 2 Fitness to drive
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- 5 Practical Driving Assessment
- 6 Travel options
- 7 Buying a safer car
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- 10 Are you worried about someone's driving?
- 11 For more information

For resources and contact details of relevant government departments and other organisations refer to Information Sheet 11.

### Information Sheet 4, version 5

Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

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[www.movingrightalong.sa.gov.au](http://www.movingrightalong.sa.gov.au)

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