



Examining patients who drive

Sub-sections

Key points

- Refer to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) information on visual standards for driving.
- The DVLA and Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) will decide if a person is medically unfit to drive.
- The patient must inform the DVLA or DVA if they have a condition which might affect safe driving.
- If you consider a patient does not meet the vision standards for driving you should advise them not to drive.
- If the patient continues to drive, and you cannot persuade them to stop, you should contact the DVLA or DVA and inform the patient. You may wish to discuss this with your professional or representative body first.
- Guidance on tints is provided.
- There is currently no legal eyesight requirement for a patient who drives a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair, although the DVLA does have recommendations for standards of vision.

A217

This guidance does not change what you must do under the law.

Examining patients

A218

Group 1 drivers must be able to read a number plate in good daylight at a distance of 20m and have binocular acuity of 6/12. They must also meet certain visual field requirements. There are additional requirements for Group 2 drivers.

A219

You should refer to the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency (for drivers in England, Scotland and Wales) (DVLA) or the Driver & Vehicle Agency (DVA) (for drivers in Northern Ireland) for information on visual standards required for driving various classes of vehicle.^{75, 76, 77}

A220

When advising drivers on the most suitable form of lens for their needs, you should consider the transmission of any tinted lens and whether it is suitable for night driving. An anti-reflection coating will improve the transmission of the lens.

References

⁷⁵ [Driver & Vehicle Licensing Agency \(DVLA\) \(2016\). *Assessing fitness to drive: a guide for medical professionals*](#) [Accessed 27 Oct 2017]

⁷⁶ [General Optical Council. *Advice from the DVLA. GOC eBulletin Sept 2013*](#) [Accessed 27 Oct 2017]

⁷⁷ [Driver & Vehicle Agency \(DVA\) *A guide to visual standards for drivers*](#) [Accessed 27 Oct 2017]

If you think a patient is unfit to drive

A221

The DVLA and the DVA have legal responsibility for deciding if a person is medically unfit to drive.

A222

The patient is legally responsible for informing the DVLA or DVA if they do not meet the vision standard for driving. Information on how they can do this is in the Useful information section below. However, if you think the patient may pose a very real risk of danger to the public, but you are not sure whether you should act, ask yourself:

- a what might the outcome be in the short or longer term if I do not raise my concern?
And,
- b how could I justify why I did not raise the concern?

A223

If you decide that the patient is unfit to drive, you should:

- a first tell the patient that they are unfit to drive and give the reasons. You may wish to discuss your concerns with a relative or carer, if the patient consents to this
- b tell the patient that they have a legal duty to inform the DVLA or DVA about their condition
- c put your advice in writing to the patient
- d record your advice and keep a copy of any correspondence to the patient on the patient record, and
- e notify the patient's GP, if appropriate, with the patient's consent.

A224

Sometimes the actions in para A223 might not achieve their aim, or would take too long to do so. You have a duty of confidentiality to the patient, but this is not absolute and can be broken if it is in the public interest to do so. Guidance from the Department of Health includes the example of reporting a driver who rejects medical advice not to drive as one where the public interest can be a defence to breaching patient confidentiality.⁷⁸

A225

If you conclude the public interest outweighs the duty of confidentiality, you should:

- a** notify the appropriate authority (DVLA or DVA) in writing, and, if appropriate, provide evidence of clinical findings (see useful information below)
- b** notify the patient's GP of the action being taken, and
- c** notify the patient, if appropriate.

A226

If you are considering informing the DVLA or DVA that the patient may not be fit to drive,⁷⁹ you may wish to contact your professional or representative body for advice. See section on [Confidentiality](#).

References

⁷⁸ [Department of Health\(2010\) Confidentiality: NHS Code of Practice. Supplementary guidance: public interest disclosures](#) [Accessed 27 Oct 2017]

⁷⁹ [DVLA. Health conditions and driving](#) [Accessed 27 Oct 2017]

Tints and driving**A227**

BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013⁸⁰ attributes filters for sunglare use into five groups, according to their range of luminous transmittance (Tv).

Filter category	Description	Range of luminous transmittance in the visible spectral range
0	Clear or very light tint	from over 80% to 100%
1	light tint	from over 43% to 80%
2	medium tint	from over 18% to 43%
3	dark tint	from over 8% to 18%
4	very dark tint	from over 3% to 8%

A228

Filters suitable for road use and driving shall be of categories 0, 1, 2 or 3 and in addition:

- a** the spectral transmittance of filters suitable for road use shall be not less than 0.2 x Tv for wavelengths between 475 and 650 nm, and
- b**

the relative visual attenuation coefficient Q of filters of categories 0, 1, 2 and 3 suitable for driving and road use shall be not less than 0.8 for red and yellow signal lights, not less than 0.6 for yellow, green and blue signal lights.

A229

Sunglass filters with a luminous transmittance of less than 75% are not suitable for road use in twilight or at night.

References

⁸⁰ [British Standards Institution \(2013\) BS EN ISO 12312-1:2013: *Eye and face protection. Sunglasses and related eyewear. Sunglasses for general use. Para 532*](#) [College members only], [accessed 31 Oct 2013]

Patients using mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs

A230

There is currently no legal eyesight requirement for a patient who drives a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair. The DVLA recommends that the person should be able to read a car's registration number from a distance of 12.3 metres (40 feet) and must monitor their ability to do this regularly.⁸¹

References

⁸¹ [DVLA. *Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs: the rules 5. Eyesight requirements*](#) [accessed 27 Oct 2017]

Useful information and links

Drivers with licences issued by the DVLA can [notify the DVLA online](#)

DVLA notification can be provided by healthcare professionals in confidence to:
medadviser@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Telephone 01792 782338
Medical Business Support
D7 West
DVLA
Swansea SA6 7JL

[Contact details for the DVA](#)

[General Medical Council \(2017\) *Confidentiality: patients' fitness to drive and reporting concerns to the DVLA or DVA*](#) [Accessed 27 Oct 2017]