

## ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR DRIVING

**Visual assessment:** Initial licence, age 80 and annually thereafter.

**Medical assessment:** Age 80 and annually thereafter (or earlier if your medical condition changes).

**On-road test:** Initial licence and upon recommendation of a medical practitioner.

**Following mandatory self-reporting:** As requested by the licensing authority and/or a medical practitioner.

## SPECIALISED DRIVER ASSESSMENT AND RETRAINING SERVICES

In order to continue to drive, people with Parkinson's are encouraged to consult specialised driver assessment services. These services are widely available and can be found by searching OT driving assessment WA. Results may include Indigo and DriverRehab.

Recommendations from the driver assessment service may include:

- a refresher course to update driving skills and compensate for deficits associated with Parkinson's
- conditional licence such as driving in daylight hours, taking prescribed medications and wearing prescribed visual aids
- Loss of driving licence.

Further information is available from your doctor or occupational therapist.

## ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

- Commonwealth Home Support Programs, home Care Packages and NDIS packages may include transport services so contacting your Package Coordinator is recommended
- DVA card holders are eligible through Repatriation Transport Scheme (1800 838 372)
- Taxi user subsidy scheme (1300 660 147)
- Local councils may be of assistance

Driving with a neurological condition is a complex and personalised subject. We encourage you to discuss the topic openly with your family and medical team.

Originally compiled by the allied health team at Parkinson's Clinic Osbourne Park Hospital and Occupational Therapists at Indigo. Reviewed by Janet McLeod (Parkinson's WA Inc.)

**inbrief**

## PARKINSON'S AND DRIVING



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## PARKINSON'S AND DRIVING

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological disorder which may affect movement, coordination, visual perception, information processing, reaction time and maintenance of attention. Driving involves all of these skills. As Parkinson's can also affect the ability to self-evaluate it is advisable to discuss your driving with family members and your doctor. They may offer a different perception of your driving skills.

In the early stages of Parkinson's, drivers often modify their driving habits to address the changes outlined above. This may include driving shorter distances and avoiding peak hour traffic and night driving.

As Parkinson's progresses, problems develop that can result in impaired driving performance. These include:

- reduced physical reaction time
- impaired problem solving
- reduced cognitive reaction time
- fluctuations in physical symptoms
- tremor
- fatigue
- difficulty performing dual/multiple tasks such as adjusting the radio, negotiating traffic or conversing with passengers
- lapses in concentration
- 'wearing off'
- Dyskinesia (involuntary movements)
- Difficulty planning routes.

## DRIVING AND MEDICATIONS

When driving, it is necessary to be alert and react quickly to changes in traffic conditions. As some medications can affect driving ability, it is not always possible to predict how medication will affect your driving. Reactions to medications vary between individuals and you may not realise a medication is affecting your driving ability. When a new medication is prescribed, check with your doctor or pharmacist whether or not it may affect your driving ability. Warning signs may include:

- fatigue and drowsiness
- sudden onset sleep
- dizziness, light headedness and fainting
- unclear thoughts
- unsteadiness
- change in mood, for example aggressiveness
- nausea.

## INSURANCE REGULATIONS

It is your responsibility to report any changes in your medical status to your insurance company. In some cases, failure to do so may result in your insurance being invalid.

Even though it is preferable you inform your insurance company of your diagnosis of Parkinson's, it is not mandatory. However, it is advisable you contact your insurance company for further details.

## MANDATORY SELF-REPORTING

The Department of Transport demands that a diagnosis of Parkinson's be self-reported. Notifying the Department of Transport does not necessarily mean you will lose your driving licence. Non reporting can incur a fine.

For further information contact:

**Department of Transport (DoT)**

**[www.transport.wa.gov.au](http://www.transport.wa.gov.au)**

**Report a medical condition  
or 1300 852 722**

## WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU IGNORE YOUR DOCTOR'S ADVICE?

If you fail to self-report a diagnosis of Parkinson's to the Department of Transport, or continue to drive against doctor's advice, you are not fulfilling your legal responsibility. If you are involved in an accident and it is found that your health condition was a contributing factor, you may be prosecuted and your insurance may not be valid.

If your doctor is aware that you continue to drive and that this poses a risk to you and other road users, they may feel obliged to notify the licensing authority directly. Some medical specialists will insist on a formal driving assessment.

This can be done through an Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment (OTDA) which differs to a Department of Transport Practical Driving Assessment. An OTDA incurs a cost. If an NDIS package is in place the cost may be covered. This does not apply to an Aged Care Package.