



HOW TO APPLY FOR A DRIVING LICENCE FOR THE FIRST TIME

Fact Sheet Number 1

Many thousands of people with disabilities are driving standard production cars adapted as necessary to suit their particular needs. There are a few simple guidelines to follow to help you apply for a licence for the first time.

First, apply to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) for a provisional driving licence. This can be done by filling in form D1 giving details of your disability or medical condition on the appropriate section of the form. The form is obtainable from main Post Offices, or it can be downloaded from the DVLA website <http://www.dvla.gov.uk>

When the DVLA has received this form, they will usually send a "medical-in-confidence" form which asks for more details of your disability or medical condition and seeks your permission to contact your doctor or specialist for a report to a Medical Adviser at the DVLA. A Medical Adviser will consider the report and will usually recommend issuing you with a provisional licence. If he or she is uncertain of the effect your disability may have on your ability to drive safely, you may be asked to attend a medical examination by an independent doctor in your area or by one of the DVLA's own medical specialists.

Inevitably, the process of medical checking and handling at DVLA takes a while, so if you want to start driving as soon as you are legally able, it is wise to apply for your provisional driving licence 2 or 3 months before this date. The minimum age for driving a car is 17, unless you receive the higher rate mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance, in which case you can start to drive at 16.

The length of time the licence is issued for will depend upon the medical facts. A licence valid until you are 70 is normally issued although the licence could be restricted to 1, 2 or 3 years for certain disabilities. You do not have to pay a fee to renew an expiring restricted-period licence. Licences may be renewed after the age of 70, but will then run for 3 years or less depending on the circumstances, with the possibility of further renewals.

Once you have your provisional licence, you can start learning to drive. If you have a physical disability, you may need to learn in an adapted car and many driving instructors now have cars with the more simple modifications. However, if you need very substantial or unusual modifications, you may have to buy a car first. Mobility Centres can

give you advice on adaptations to a car following assessment and may also be able to give you a list of Approved Driving Instructors in your county with adapted cars or experience of working with people with disabilities.

If you have a condition that may affect your ability to learn to drive, such as Cerebral Palsy, Dyspraxia, or Autism, learning to drive may take longer and may not be possible at all. In these instances, it is important to have a structured course of driving tuition with an instructor who you feels understands your needs. A few conditions, such as uncontrolled epilepsy, may prevent you from holding a driving licence. You can find details on the DVLA website <http://www.dvla.gov.uk>

You will be required to take a theory test which includes hazard perception as well as a practical test of your driving skills; further details can be found on the Driving Standards Agency website <http://www.dsa.gov.uk> or telephone 0115 901 2545. People who may have difficulty with the theory test, including the hazard perception part of the test, would be advised to consider taking these parts prior to embarking on driving tuition.

Provisional licences issued to people with disabilities normally give cover to drive as many vehicle categories as possible, subject to the driver being able to control the vehicles correctly. Apart from the description of entitlement, all other details on the licence will be the same as those issued to drivers who are not disabled. Once you have passed the driving test, your new licence will note any adaptations required to enable you to drive.

Remember that it is a legal requirement to notify DVLA of the worsening of any disability or medical condition that affects your ability to drive safely. Leaflet d100, obtainable from post offices, or the DVLA website explains the sorts of condition you should report.

Further information on any of the above can be obtained by contacting: -

The Forum of Mobility Centres

Telephone Freephone 0800 559 3636 or email: enquiries@mobility-centres.org.uk

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