

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. To find a specialised Occupational Therapy Driving Assessor contact:

OT Australia - Western Australia (08) 9388 1490
OR
Independent Living Centre of WA (Inc.)
Helpline: 1300 885 886 www.ilc.com.au

Recommendations from the driver assessment service may include:

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

Further information is available from your doctor or occupational therapist.

To offset the financial implications, some subsidies are available. To discuss eligibility contact the Disability Equipment Grant team at the Independent Living Centre of WA (9381 0600). Private health insurance rebates may apply.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORT OPTIONS

A social worker can direct you to specific services in your area. Options include:

- HACC Transport - Volunteer Task Force (9318 5777)
- Local council (contact your local shire)
- People Who Care - Volunteer Transport (9379 1944 – HACC assessment required)
- Repatriation Transport Scheme (enquiries 9366 8391 or 1300 550 455)
- Taxi User Subsidy Scheme (1300 660147)

Compiled and reviewed by Emily Cheetham and Sharon Summers (Occupational Therapists), Brenda Dee (Social Worker) and Dr Andrew Granger (Consultant Physician), Parkinson's Clinic, Osborne Park Hospital; Laurel Hocking and Simone Robinson (Occupational Therapists), Independent Living Centre of WA; Janet McLeod (Parkinson's Nurse Specialist), Parkinson's Western Australia Inc.

inbrief

PARKINSON'S AND DRIVING



IN THIS TOGETHER
parkinson's
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
The Niche, 11 Aberdare Road

Nedlands. WA. 6009.

info@parkinsonswa.org.au

Tel: (08) 9346 7373 www.parkinsonswa.org.au

July 2015 Parkinson's Western Australia

IN THIS TOGETHER
parkinson's
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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. As Parkinson's can 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'.

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. The penalty for non-reporting is \$500.00. Notifying the Department of Transport does not necessarily mean you will lose your driving licence.

For further information contact:

**Department of Transport
Driver Assessment Section
Phone 13 11 56
www.transport.wa.gov.au**

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.

“Driving is not a right but a privilege”

“I found it very hard to judge the distance between myself and whatever was oncoming”