

Your Health and Driving Safely



Could Your Medical Condition Cause an Accident?

Did you know that Massachusetts is a self reporting state? That means it is *your* responsibility to report any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive to the Registry of Motor Vehicles? The purpose of this brochure is to help drivers identify medical conditions that can lead to impaired driving. The RMV consulted with medical experts before developing regulations about minimum physical abilities necessary for driving, and these regulations apply to *all* licensed drivers and new applicants. Other standards may apply to commercial drivers.

Arthritis

Arthritis can make it difficult to perform physical activities. Even the simple ones required for driving such as turning your head and neck to check for traffic, reaching the brake pedal quickly in an emergency, and adjusting rear and side mirrors. If you're not sure about whether you can move fast enough in an emergency, see your doctor and consider having a driving evaluation at an outpatient rehabilitation center.

Vision

One of the most important requirements for safe driving is good vision. For an unrestricted license, you must have at least 20/40 vision in one eye (even with glasses) and 120 degrees peripheral vision. If you have 20/50, 20/60, or 20/70 vision and 120 degrees peripheral vision, you can still obtain a driver's license that allows you to drive during the day. If you wear a telescopic lens, special rules may apply.



Hearing

Hearing loss, by itself, does not impair a person's ability to drive. If your family members or doctor tell you that they've noticed a change in your hearing it's important to take note of these warnings. Check with your doctor about any concerns you might have.



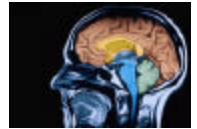
Loss of Consciousness

Many medical conditions can cause a person to lose consciousness or "pass out" without

warning. Heart conditions, breathing problems, diabetes, seizure disorders and sleep disturbances can effect mental alertness. If you've suffered a loss of consciousness or an episode of altered consciousness (such as low blood sugar, lightheadedness, or disorientation) you **MUST** turn in your driver's license for at least six (6) months. The RMV will provide you with a free Mass I.D. to use during that time. If, after six (6) months, your doctor certifies that you have been episode free, you can regain your driving privileges. The RMV will provide you with a new license free of charge.

Mental Abilities

Several medical conditions can effect mental alertness and clear thinking without causing the driver to "pass out." Trouble remembering things, confusion, stress, depression and anxiety are all conditions that can affect your ability to drive. Many conditions are temporary and you may only have to refrain from driving during a brief adjustment period.



Drugs and Alcohol

Some prescription medications can cause serious side effects (for example, drowsiness). Massachusetts's law forbids driving while under the influence of narcotic drugs, even with a valid prescription. Always check with your doctor before driving. Prescription medicine may also worsen the effects of alcohol. Also, elderly drivers may find that alcohol affects them more now than it did in their youth. Never drink and drive.



Where Can I Find Out More?

For more information about the law, contact the RMV at (617) 351-9222, our website at www.mass.gov/rmv or write to us at:

RMV–Medical Affairs Bureau
P.O. Box 199100
Boston, MA 02119

Driving Evaluation Programs

Below is a partial list of hospitals and driving schools that perform driving evaluations for a fee.

Berkshire Medical Center
The Center for Rehabilitation
Driver Evaluation Program
725 North Street
Pittsfield, MA 01201
(413) 447-2200

Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital
Driving Program, c/o Chris Powers
189 May Street
Worcester, MA 01602
(508) 791-6351

HealthSouth/New England
Rehabilitation Hospital
Driver Evaluation Program
2 Rehabilitation Way
Woburn, MA 01801
(781) 935-5050

55 Alive/Mature Driving Course (AARP)
(800) 424-3410

DriveWise
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
300 Brookline Avenue
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 667-2073

Northeast Rehabilitation
Health Network
Driving Program
70 Butler Street
Salem, NH 03079
(603) 893-2900

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital
Pre-Driving Assessment Program
125 Nashua Street
Boston, MA 02114
(617) 573-7000

VA Boston Healthcare System
940 Belmont Avenue
Brockton, MA 02310
(508) 583-4500

Weldon Center for Rehabilitation
Driving Advisement Program
233 Carew Street
Springfield, MA 01104
(413) 748-6800

AAA
Safe Driving for Mature Operators
Training Program
Call your local AAA for information

Central Massachusetts Safety Council
West Boylston, MA
(508) 835-2333 x23

Transportation Sources
Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 222-5000

Caravan for Commuters
Commuter Information Hotline
10 Park Plaza
Boston, MA 02116
(888) 426-6688

The Ride/Share-A-Ride
(617) 222-5438
(800) LIFT-BUS 543-8287

Cape Cod Transit Authority
585 Main Street
P.O. Box 2006
Dennis, MA 02638
(800) 352-7155

Department of Elder Affairs
(800) 882-2003

Registry of Motor Vehicles



Mitt Romney, Governor
Kerry Healy, Lt. Governor
Daniel Grabauskas, Transportation Secretary
Kimberly Hinden, Registrar