



## Driving – Just how easy is it?

Although driving may feel easy, it is in fact one of the most complex tasks we do.

Driving involves operating on many levels, all at the same time and under time pressure due to the rapidly changing traffic & road environment.

In brief – all these areas are used:

- Senses including vision, hearing, sensation and body awareness to understand the changing environment
- Physical skills including strength, co-ordination and timely/controlled speed of movement to operate controls
- Cognitive (thinking) skills such as concentration, memory, problem solving and planning to safely respond to traffic, road situations and plan a travel route
- Behaviour including keeping calm (avoiding road rage) in order to make safe decisions

## Driving Solutions



## Driving – How can health issues impact?

Many health conditions affect a person's physical, visual or cognitive skills, ultimately affecting their ability to drive safely. These conditions may be congenital (eg cerebral palsy), acquired (eg a stroke) or degenerative (eg Multiple Sclerosis).

Whilst considering whether your health is impacting upon your safe driving ability can be distressing, it is very important to discuss any concerns with your GP or health professional. This process may not result in having to cease driving, many people simply need to complete a practical driving assessment and consider training &/or vehicle modifications. In some cases, where it is deemed that a person is unable to continue to drive, useful alternatives are available including mobility aids, public transport, local council transport services and taxi vouchers.

## Driving – What are my legal responsibilities?

The South Australian Motor Vehicles Act advises that license holders have a responsibility to inform the Department of Transport if they have a medical condition that may affect their driving ability. It is also important to inform your insurance company to ensure coverage in the event of an accident.

Requirements to MAINTAIN your licence include:

- Aged 70 years or over or have a degenerative condition – annual review by your Medical Practitioner and submission of 'Certificate of Fitness to Drive' form.
- Aged 85 years or over – annual onroad test and submission of 'Certificate of Fitness to Drive' form by your Medical Practitioner.
- At any age, if your GP has uncertainty regarding your driving capacity, a practical driving assessment may be recommended.



## Types of driver assessments

1. Onroad Department of Road Transport Assessment will evaluate whether you are driving up to the licencing standard required in relation to safety and road law, with subsequent changes to your licence.
2. Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment provides a comprehensive assessment of physical, visual and cognitive skills and the impact of these upon driving performance. Recommendations are then made regarding rehabilitation potential with training guidelines and/or vehicle modifications if appropriate, with any subsequent changes made to your licence.

## Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment Unit – What is this?

Occupational Therapists are health professionals trained to assist people to overcome limitations or barriers caused by injury or illness, disability, psychological/emotional difficulties, developmental delays or the effects of ageing. The primary goal is to enable people to participate in important and valued activities of daily life, this of course includes driving.

Specifically trained Driver Trained Occupational Therapists operate this service.

It consists of 2 components:

1. A Pre Onroad Assessment looks at prerequisites for the driving task including physical, visual and cognitive skills, past driving experience and current driving needs. Relevant medical reports are also taken into account, this assessment is conducted in an office environment and takes 1.5 – 2 hours.
2. An Onroad Assessment to observe driving skills, taking into account individual factors such as driving habits/times/locations, physical ability to operate vehicle controls in a safe and timely fashion, road law and decision making, fatigue and stress. This is conducted in a dual control driving instructor's vehicle (with modifications available if required) and takes 1 hour.

Upon completion of these components, recommendations are made to the GP in regards to ongoing ability to drive and if appropriate a training program, conditional licence and/or modifications may also be recommended. The Occupational Therapist provides all required information regarding modifications, training program guidelines (includes liaison with driving instructor), review onroad assessments may also be required. In the event of a recommendation to cease driving, alternative transport options and resources are discussed with the client.

## What is the cost?

This service is offered on a fee for service basis.

## How do I make a referral?

Referrals can be made by the individual, their families/friends (with the individual's consent), GP or health professional.

Please note: a 'Medical Clearance to Drive Form' will also be required from your GP/specialist.

Information packs (including referral forms) are available, with all resources also accessible on the Multiple Sclerosis Society website, you can also refer by contacting:

Merrilyn Fietz, Driver Trained Occupational Therapist, Health Solutions – Driver Assessment Unit  
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