



National Driver Licence Service
An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta um Cheadúnais Tiomána

Medical assessment for fitness to drive



Medical Conditions and Driving

Road traffic crashes are caused by many factors: vehicular, environmental and human. Although it is difficult to assess the extent to which medical conditions increase the risk of drivers crashing, it is widely accepted that certain conditions affect your ability to drive safely.

Why is it important that you are fully fit to drive?

The Road Safety Authority (RSA) and the National Driver Licence Service (NDLS) aim to minimise the risk caused by any medical condition you might have both to you and to the community. Indeed, for many conditions, treatment and rehabilitation may improve your safety when driving.
















We also want to give consideration to your social, lifestyle and employment-related mobility and independence. Our aim is to help you be as independently mobile as possible for as long as possible. However, it is important to strike the right balance between mobility and safety for drivers, their families and other road users.

If you drive against advice, and evidence is found of this, the NDLS and the Gardaí will take action to revoke your licence. If you are involved in a crash or stopped by a member of An Garda Síochána, you may be asked to prove you are in full control of your vehicle. A charge can be brought against you even if you don't have a crash. If you cause harm to a person or property, the charge will be more serious. In these circumstances, driving becomes a statutory offence that may lead to a prison sentence. Finally, driving against medical advice will affect your car insurance.

Vehicle licensing categories

There are two groups of categories used to classify vehicles for licensing purposes (see page 2):

- Group 1 includes mopeds and light quadricycles (quads), motorcycles, cars and tractors.
- Group 2 includes buses and trucks.

Group 1 Vehicles and Licence Category	Group 2 Vehicles and Licence Category
AM 	C 
A 	C1 
A1 	CE 
A2 	C1E 
B 	D 
BE 	D1 
W 	DE 
	D1E 

Vehicle and Licence Categories

The medical requirements for a Group 1 driving licence are different to those for a Group 2 licence. The requirements for Group 2 are stricter than those for Group 1. This is because Group 2 drivers generally spend considerably more time driving and are therefore more exposed to risk and more likely to be involved in a crash. Furthermore, the vehicles Group 2 drivers operate are generally bigger and heavier than bikes and cars and can cause more harm if involved in a crash.

Notifiable medical conditions

On page 14 you will find a list of medical conditions that should be notified to the NDLS. These may be temporary, long-term or permanent and include:

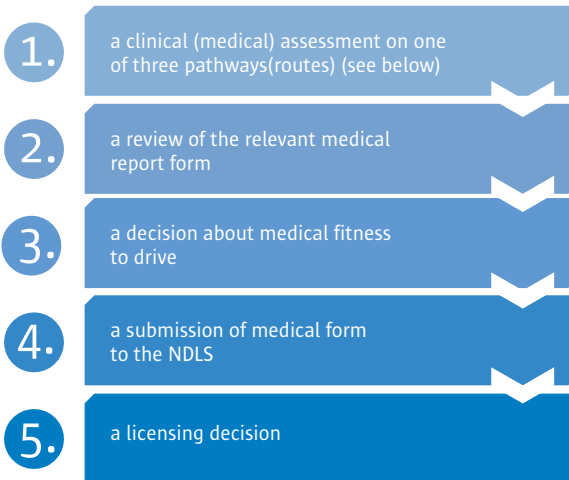
- conditions that involve a sudden loss or reduction in consciousness, such as epilepsy, certain heart conditions and fainting
- physical disability or constraints
- neurological conditions such as Parkinson’s disease and stroke
- visual impairment (including normal age-related vision changes)
- problems with self-regulation, such as psychiatric illness, substance dependence and cognitive impairment.

When to inform the NDLS

If your medical condition is one that must be notified to the NDLS, you will need to apply for a change of personal (medical) details on your driver record. Your doctor will complete a Driving Licence Medical Report Form for you. If you are required to submit a medical report form to renew your driving licence or learner permit, the licence code 101 is added to your licence. For more information, see www.ndls.ie/medical-fitness/do-i-need-to-submit-a-medical-report.html

The assessment process

The process that assesses medical fitness to drive has five stages:

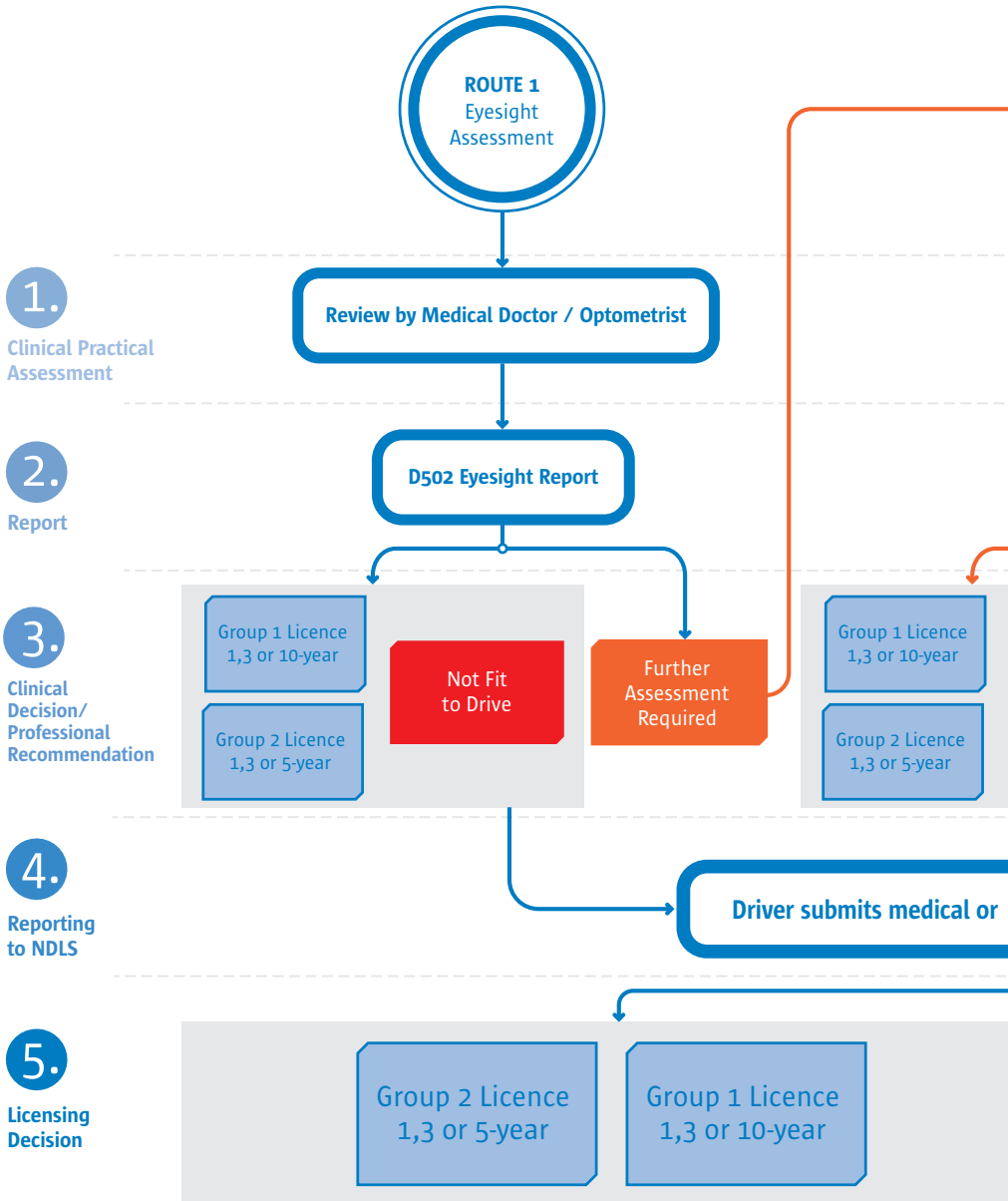


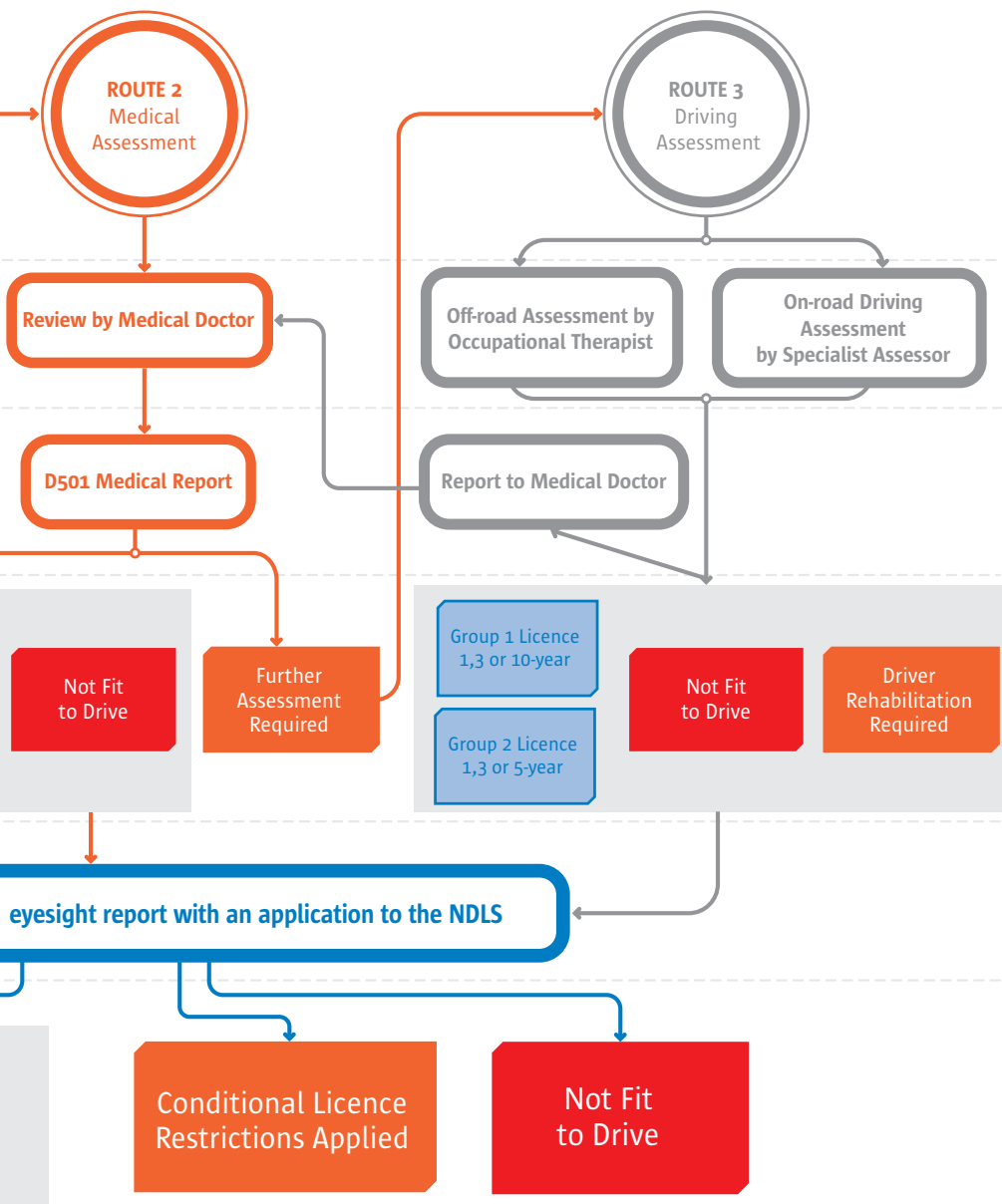
Routes to assessment

We use three routes to assess drivers' medical fitness to drive (see page 4 & 5). Sometimes more than one route is required.

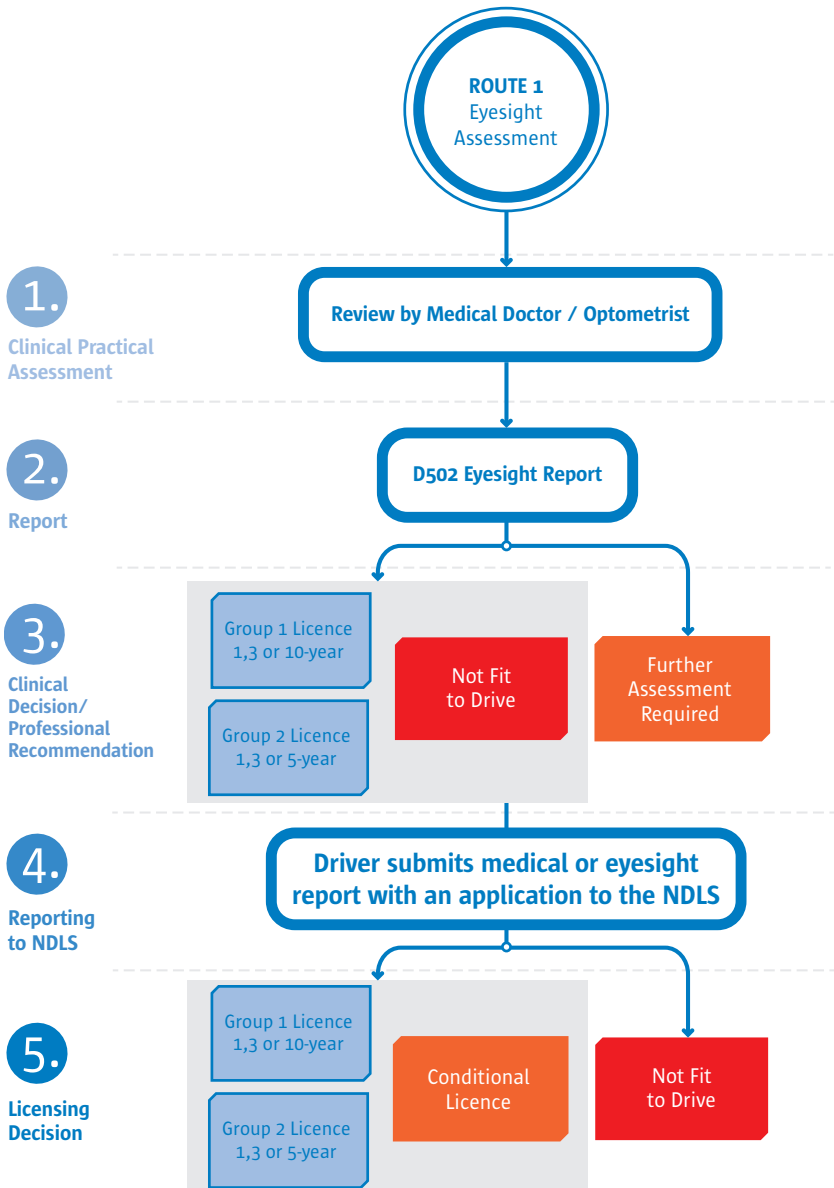
- Route 1 assesses eyesight.
- Route 2 assesses medical fitness to drive.
- Route 3 assesses medical fitness to drive where a more detailed off-road or on-road assessment (and sometimes both) is required.

Medical fitness to drive assessment driver licensing routes





Route 1: Eyesight assessment



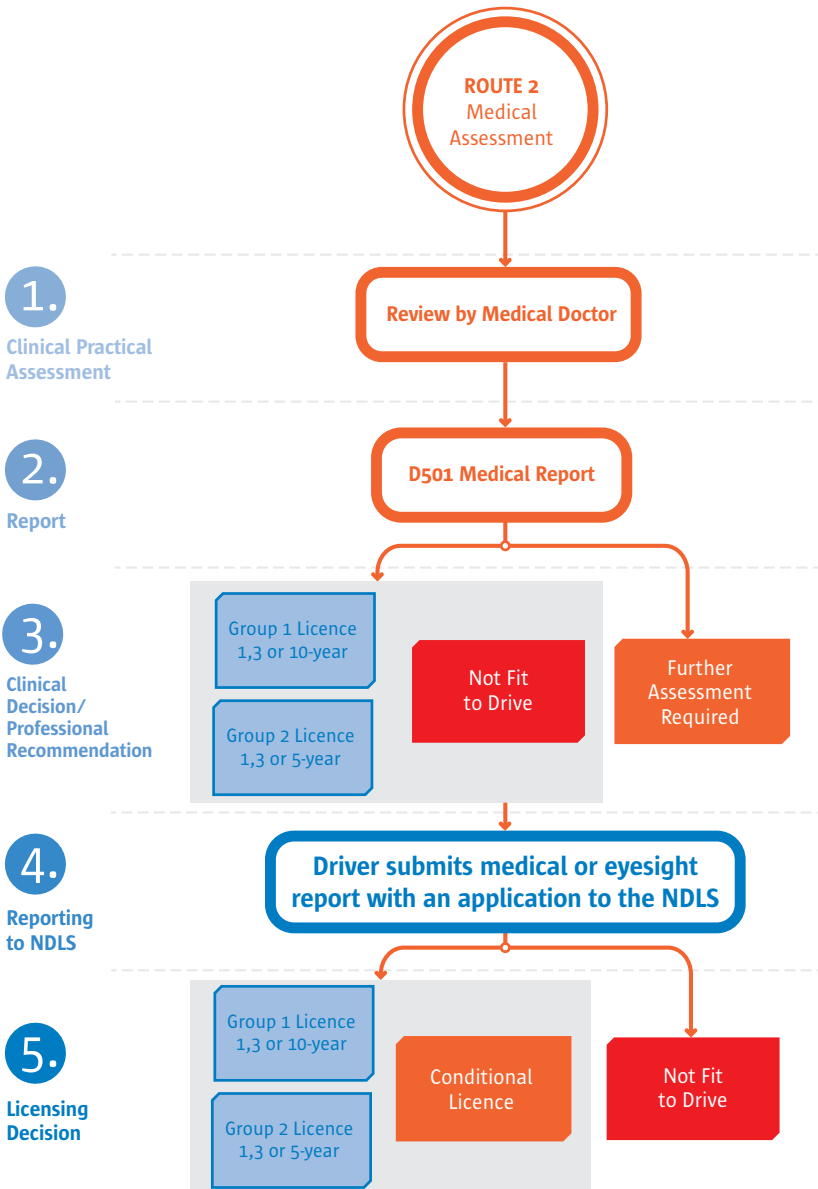
You must have your eyesight tested by a medical doctor or optometrist if:

- you are applying for a first-time learner permit
- you are exchanging a licence from a country outside the EU/EEA
- you previously wore glasses or contact lenses for driving and now no longer need to (for example, after corrective laser surgery)
- your vision has deteriorated because of a medical condition or ageing.

The doctor or optometrist will assess whether you meet the required standard and then complete the Driving Licence Eyesight Report Form. Where a medical report is being provided then an eyesight report is not required. If you do not meet the eyesight standards, for any reason, you will be informed of this and you must notify the NDLS. If you have an eye disease that is progressive in nature, your licence may be issued or renewed on condition that you undergo regular eye examinations. For example, some Group 1 drivers may require more specialised assessment via Route 3 and only be allowed to drive with restrictions (such as daytime-only driving). This condition does not apply for Group 2 drivers.

When your assessment has been completed, if you have been passed as fit to drive, you may make an application online on NDLS.ie or in person at an NDLS centre. You will then be issued with the appropriate licence.

Route 2: Medical assessment



You need to be assessed by a medical doctor if:

- you are applying for a learner permit and you have any of the medical conditions specified on the licence application (see page 14)
- you are renewing a Group 1 licence and you have any of the medical conditions specified on the licence application (see page 14)
- you are renewing a Group 1 licence and you are 75 years of age or over
- you are applying for or renewing a Group 2 licence
- you have ever suffered from alcohol misuse or dependence
- you have ever suffered from epilepsy
- you regularly take drugs or medication that may reduce your ability to drive safely.

Your doctor will review your health and complete the Driving Licence Medical Report Form, indicating whether or not you meet the required standard for the relevant licence. They may recommend restrictions on your licence. Here are some examples:

- Limited to daytime driving (one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset).
- Limited to journeys within a radius of 30 km from your place of residence.
- Limited to journeys with a speed not greater than 80 km/h.

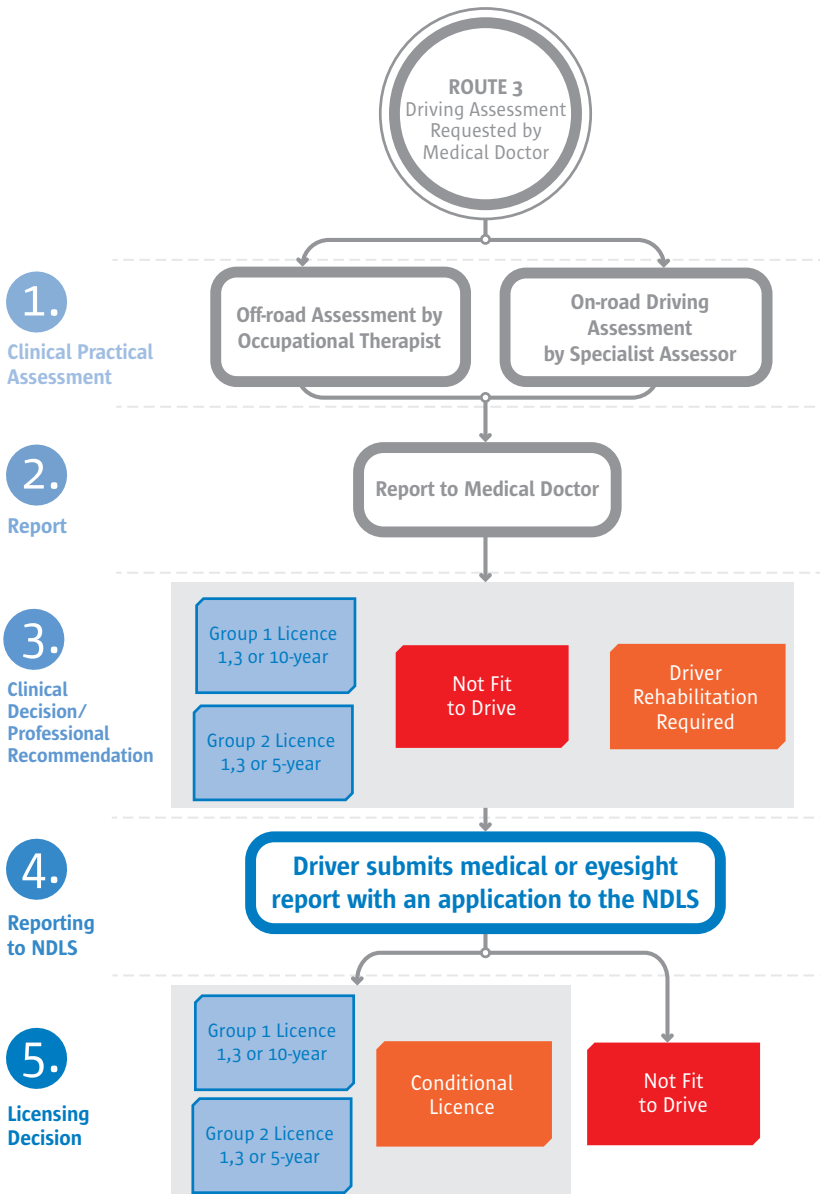
Your doctor may refer you for a more specialised assessment, such as an eye test (outlined in Route 1) or an on-road or off-road driving assessment (outlined in Route 3).

If you have a medical condition that is progressive in nature, your licence may be issued or renewed on condition that you undergo regular medical reviews.

You should not drive until this assessment is completed and your medical doctor confirms you are fit to drive.

When the assessment is complete, if you have been passed as fit to drive, you may make an application online on NDLS.ie or in person at an NDLS centre. You will then be issued with the appropriate licence.

Route 3: On-road and off-road assessment



If your doctor cannot make a recommendation on medical fitness to drive based on the medical examination alone, they may refer you for a specialised driver assessment by an occupational therapist (OT) or an on-road driving assessor (ORDA), or both. This route is mostly taken if you have a newly acquired illness, disability or mental-health condition, or where an existing condition is progressive in nature and may affect your ability to drive safely in the future.

Off-road assessment

The off-road assessment is conducted by an OT and is tailored for the individual driver. Depending on your medical condition, this can involve assessing thought processes and your physical capacity to drive your vehicle safely.

Based on the assessment you may be advised of the following outcomes:

- No deficit detected.
- An on-road assessment is required.
- The driver is currently not fit to drive.

A repeat assessment may be indicated if there is an improvement or further recovery.

The OT's report is then sent back to the referring doctor. If the off-road assessment indicates no deficits that might impact your ability to drive safely, your doctor will complete the Driving Licence Medical Report Form.

If you are passed as fit to drive, you may make an application online on NDLS.ie or in person at an NDLS centre. You will then be issued with the appropriate licence.

On-road assessment

If the assessment indicates that an on-road assessment is required, the OT will inform you and your doctor and will make the referral. They will liaise with the specialist ORDA, giving them any specific details they need to complete the on-road assessment (e.g., whether a specially adapted car will be required).

Specialist on-road driving assessment services are available all over the country. Your doctor or OT will refer you to a service that meets your needs. The ORDA will accompany you while you drive to be sure that your medical condition or disability does not impact on your ability to handle your vehicle, to drive safely in traffic, to plan your journey and to generally respond to the demands and unpredictability of driving on a public road.

The assessment can be done using your own car, but in some cases you may need to use a specially adapted car. Many assessment services provide cars that have been adapted for specific driver needs. These include cars with dual controls or modified pedals or steering wheels. It is important to check in advance that the ORDA has a car with the modifications you need to complete the on-road assessment.

You must have a valid driving licence to take an on-road driving assessment. If your existing licence has expired, you may apply for a temporary learner permit for the specific purpose of completing an on-road driving assessment. The application must be accompanied by a Driving Licence Medical Report Form indicating that a temporary permit is required and should be made directly to the Road Safety Authority. Further information can be obtained by emailing medicalfitness@rsa.ie.

Before your on-road driving assessment, the assessor will check the referral from your doctor or OT and that your driving licence is current and valid. They may also speak with the doctor or OT to discuss any specific requirements in your case.

If you are being assessed in your own car, the ORDA will check:

- that you have valid insurance to drive the car in which you are being assessed
- that the NCT on the car is current and valid
- that the car's tax is current and valid.

The assessor will ask questions to evaluate your difficulties in relation to driving and your needs in relation to car type or whether any vehicle adaptations are required to enable you to drive.

Based on the ORDA's assessment, you may be advised of the following outcomes:

- You are fit to drive with or without the use of vehicle adaptations.
- You are not fit to drive, but recovery time, driver rehabilitation or vehicle adaptations may help you to return to driving sometime in the future.
- You are not fit to drive.

Possible restrictions

If the assessment indicates no deficits that might impact your ability to drive safely, your doctor will complete the Driving Licence Medical Report Form, indicating whether or not you meet the required standard for the relevant licence. They may recommend restrictions on your licence, such as:

- Limited to daytime driving (one hour after sunrise and one hour before sunset).
- Limited to journeys within a radius of 30 km from your place of residence.
- Limited to journeys with a speed not greater than 80 km/h.

If you are not currently fit to drive but have a condition that may improve over time, your doctor and OT can advise you on a suitable time frame to allow for recovery before attempting a future assessment. This might include off-road and on-road elements. If vehicle adaptations are required, your OT and ORDA can discuss the options with you.

You should not drive until the required assessment or assessments are completed and your doctor confirms that you are medically fit to drive.

Be a responsible driver

It is your responsibility as a driver to:

- follow your doctor's advice
- take your prescribed medication correctly and consistently
- monitor and manage your medical condition(s)
- tell the NDLS and your insurance provider if you have a long-term or permanent injury or illness that may affect your ability to drive safely
- meet the requirements of your licence, including going for regular medical check-ups to make sure that your symptoms are managed well for safe driving
- get professional medical advice on your medical fitness to drive, which might include training with an ORDA or OT
- get further professional medical advice if you develop a new medical condition or if your medical condition changes.

If I need to, how do I inform the NDLS?

If following a consultation with your doctor, your medical condition is one that must be notified to the NDLS you will need to have a medical report form completed and make an application for a change of personal (medical) details. This can be done by

- applying in person at an NDLS centre, which is by appointment only.
Please see www.ndls.ie/how-to-apply/applying-in-person
- applying online*, provided you have a Public Services Card and a verified MyGovID account.

*If you have a code 101 on your existing licence and you are not renewing and you wish to update your medical details you will need to attend an NDLS centre to have this done.

The NDLS does not accept notifications of medical conditions by email or post.

For further information, please see www.ndls.ie/medical-fitness

If you have more questions, please email medicalfitness@rsa.ie or telephone **096 25000**.

Retiring from driving

If the outcome of an assessment is that you are not fit to drive, you will need to investigate alternative arrangements to meet your transportation needs. You may have to rely on family and friends or use public transport where this is available.

Surrendering your driving licence

When a driver has been advised by their doctor that they should cease driving or that they cannot drive for at least six months, they should surrender their driving licence or learner permit to the RSA at the following address:

Medical Fitness – Driver Licensing
Road Safety Authority
Moy Valley Business Park
Primrose Hill
Dublin Road
Ballina
Co. Mayo.

Include a short cover note to say that you are surrendering the licence on medical grounds.

If you continue to drive even though you have been advised that you are medically unfit to drive, your licence and insurance will not be valid. You will not be covered by insurance in the event of being involved in a crash, and you may be liable for legal sanction which could include a prison sentence.

Medical conditions that must be reported on all driving licence applications

A range of medical conditions, as well as treatments, may affect your driving ability. This list of conditions is provided as part of the driver licence and driver permit application forms. Please note the following list is not exhaustive.

- Diabetes treated by insulin and or sulphonylurea tablets (your doctor can advise whether you are on these or not) no need to tell us if managed by other tablets and/or diet
- Epilepsy
- Stroke or TIAs ¹ with any associated symptoms lasting longer than one month

1 A transient ischemic attack (TIA) is an event, with stroke symptoms that last less than 24 hours before disappearing (sometimes called a mini stroke).

- Fits or blackouts
- Any type of brain surgery, brain abscess or severe head Injury involving in-patient treatment or a brain tumour or spinal injury or spinal tumour
- An implanted cardiac pacemaker
- A serious hearing deficiency
- An implanted cardiac defibrillator (ICD)²
- Repeated attacks of sudden disabling dizziness
- Any other chronic neurological condition such as multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, Huntington's disease
- A serious problem with memory or periods of confusion ³
- Persistent alcohol misuse or dependency
- Persistent drug misuse or dependency
- Serious psychiatric illness or mental health problems⁴
- Severe learning disability⁵
- Parkinson's disease
- Sleep Apnoea syndrome
- Narcolepsy
- Any condition affecting your peripheral vision
- Total loss of sight in one eye
- Any condition affecting both eyes, or the remaining eye if the driver only has one eye (not including colour blindness or short or long sight)
- Any physical disability/mobility difficulty that may affect your ability to drive safely.

Further details about health and driving are provided on the NDLS website:

<https://www.ndls.ie/medical-fitness/do-i-need-to-submit-a-medical-report.html>

2 An Implantable Cardioverter Defibrillator (ICD) is an electronic device which monitors your heart continuously.

3 If in doubt please consult your family doctor.

4 If in doubt please consult your family doctor.

5 If in doubt please consult your family doctor.





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