

## Epilepsy—Driving

This leaflet explains current UK driving regulations for people with epilepsy.

Your entitlement to hold a driving licence will be affected if you have seizures. It is important to note that **ALL seizures count, even minor ones**. However, people with a history of epilepsy can hold a driving licence if they meet current legal requirements.

The same rules apply to learner drivers – driving with another driver in the car does not exempt you from the regulations.

Bear in mind that other factors may affect your ability to drive, e.g. drug side effects, antiepileptic drug changes or withdrawal. Seek advice from your epilepsy specialist or GP.

### Applying for a Driving Licence in the U.K.

You must complete a standard application form (D1) and send it to DVLA with the appropriate fee.

One of the questions on the application form asks 'Have you now, or have you ever had epilepsy?' The answer to give is YES if:

- you have had a diagnosis of epilepsy
- your epilepsy is well-controlled with or without medication
- you have had any seizure activity since birth—no matter how mild or minor—including one single seizure.

Another form will be sent to you by the DVLA's medical department asking for details. Further information will be required from your GP.

### Group 1—Ordinary driving licences

Light vehicles—private cars, mopeds, motorcycles, vehicles with a maximum authorised mass (MAM) of up to 3.5 tonnes with 1 – 8 passenger seats.

An ordinary driving licence will be issued if you:

- are free from **any** epileptic seizure while awake (with or without medication) during a period of 12 months from the date of the last seizure to the issuing of the licence.  
**or**
- can demonstrate a **sleep-only** epileptic seizure(s) pattern. This pattern must be established for one year or more, without a seizure occurring whilst awake.  
**or**
- have previously had seizures while awake, but for three years or more have only had seizures during sleep. If a seizure occurs when awake, you must stop driving immediately and report it to the DVLA, your GP and epilepsy specialist

## Group 1—Ordinary driving licences (cont)

You may also be able to apply for an ordinary Group 1 driving licence if you only have seizures which do not affect consciousness and which would not affect your ability to control a vehicle. A licence may be issued after one year, providing no other type of seizure has occurred. If any other type of seizure occurs, you must stop driving immediately and it must be reported to the DVLA.

**In all cases DVLA will need a detailed description of your seizures and how they affect you and to be fully satisfied that as a driver you will not be a danger to the public.**

A driving licence will be issued for a period of 1 to 3 years, and will then need to be renewed. After 5 years with no seizures, you may be given a licence valid until you are 70 years of age.

You don't need a licence to drive a mobility scooter or powered wheelchair, but you may have to register it and get a 'nil value' tax disc.

Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs come in 2 categories:

- 'class 2 invalid carriages' – can't be used on the road (except where there isn't a pavement) and have a maximum speed of 4 mph
- 'class 3 invalid carriages' – can be used on the road and have a maximum speed of 4 mph off the road and 8 mph on the road.

## Group 2—Large Goods Vehicles (LGV)/Passenger Carrying Vehicles (PCV) licences: for applicants who have had a single seizure

For driving licensing purposes, lorries are called LGVs and buses or coaches are called PCVs with a MAM of over 3.5 tonnes. You may be issued with a licence if you:

- have only had a single seizure
- have had a clear brain scan and EEG
- have not been prescribed antiepileptic drugs
- have been assessed as having a less than 2% risk per annum of further seizures
- have no other risk factors affecting driving.

## Group 2—LGV/PCV licences: for applicants who have had a diagnosis of epilepsy

A licence will be issued if the applicant:

- has had no epileptic seizure in the previous 10 years
- has not taken antiepileptic drug treatment during that 10 year period
- does not have any continuing liability to epileptic seizures, and has passed a medical examination by a medical consultant nominated by DVLA.

## Stopping or changing Antiepileptic Drugs (AEDs)

Due to the potential risk of seizures occurring during antiepileptic drug withdrawal, the DVLA medical panel recommends the licence holder should be advised **not** to drive from the start of the period of withdrawal, and for a period of 6 months after stopping medication.

If there are any changes to your medication, your GP might advise you to stop driving for a while, but you do not need to inform DVLA.

If you have a seizure while changing or stopping AEDs you should stop driving and inform DVLA.

**If a seizure occurs after the issue of a driving licence, the licence holder must stop driving immediately and inform DVLA.**

## Appeals against a DVLA decision

If DVLA revokes a licence, it will give its decision in writing. **The licence holder must return the licence to DVLA.** It is advisable to take a photocopy before returning the original licence by registered post. An appeal against a revoked licence can be lodged with the local Sheriff Court within 21 days of the date of the notice revoking the licence.

There is no need to take another driving test if the licence is renewed after a period of withdrawal. However, a few refresher lessons may help to restore confidence.

## Taxi driving licences

Taxi driving licences are obtained from the Vehicle Licensing and Enforcement Department of local councils. Each council sets its own criteria.

## Driving on private land

Driving regulations do not apply on private land. However, driving of vehicles, e.g. forklift trucks and farm machinery may still be restricted by Employer's Liability Insurance and Health and Safety legislation.

## Driving outside the U.K.

Driving regulations vary widely from country to country. When making travel plans, check out the local laws in relation to epilepsy and driving.

## Vehicle Insurance Cover

People with epilepsy can sometimes find it difficult to obtain competitive quotes for vehicle insurance. Epilepsy Connections may be able to provide information about insurance brokers experienced in sourcing quotes for people with medical conditions.

## Safe Driving

Driving can be affected by:-

- tiredness
- illness
- alcohol
- not taking regular food and rest breaks
- change of medication, withdrawn or missed doses
- side effects of AEDs
- side effects of over-the-counter drugs, e.g. medication for hayfever, travel sickness, which can cause drowsiness

For people with photosensitive epilepsy, light flickering through trees, passing geometric road markings at speed may provoke a seizure. Keep good quality polarised sunglasses with you.

**For advice and information, contact**

Drivers Medical Enquiries, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1TU

Tel: 0300 790 6806 (car/motorcycle)

0300 790 6807 (bus, coach, lorry)

Fax: 0845.850.0095

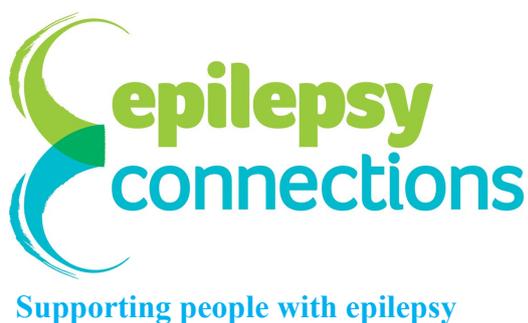
E-mail: <https://emaildvla.direct.gov.uk>

Web site: [www.gov.uk/government/organisation/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisation/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency)

## The Blue Badge Scheme

This is a European Union wide scheme which provides parking concessions to disabled people. Local authorities are responsible for administering the scheme and issuing Blue Badges to eligible applicants. Details of the scheme are available from Transport Scotland at [www.transportscotland.gov.uk/blue-badge-scheme](http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/blue-badge-scheme)

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