

# Returning to Driving

## For Toronto Rehab patients who want to drive again

Driving is important to your independence. Changes to your medical condition may make it dangerous for you to drive.

This brochure will help explain what happens if your licence has been reported, and what you can do to get it back.

Talk to your rehab team for more information about your driver's licence and how to return to driving.



## **Why is my licence being reported now?**

Your medical condition may make it unsafe for you to drive at this time. By law, doctors have to report anyone who might be unsafe to drive to the Ministry of Transportation. To get your licence back you must show that you have the skills needed to drive safely.

We know how difficult not having a licence may be for you, but your safety and the safety of others is most important. Your rehab team can help you through the process.

## **What will happen next?**

The Ministry of Transportation will review the Medical Condition Report submitted by the doctor.

If the medical standards for driving are not met, you will be sent 2 letters:

- a Notice of Suspension letter
- a letter explaining what type of medical information the Ministry of Transportation needs to consider your case again



**Any forms sent to you need to be completed by a doctor.**

## **Who should I talk to about getting my licence back?**

You can speak with your occupational therapist, doctor and other members of your rehab team.

## **How do I get my licence back?**

The Ministry of Transportation needs updated medical information on your condition to make a decision about your licence.

You may need to:

- complete assessments with your occupational therapist
- get updated medical reports from specialists, such as an ophthalmologist or neurologist
- do an on-road test

## **What assessments will I do at Toronto Rehab?**

With your occupational therapist you will complete assessments that look at your physical, thinking and visual skills. These are the skills you need to drive safely. Your occupational therapist can tell you more about these assessments.

With your doctor you will talk about any medical issues which may affect your ability to drive.

## What skills do I need to drive safely?

- Attention**
  - Concentrate for long periods of time
  - Pay attention to many things at once (such as pedestrians, other cars, traffic lights)
  - Ignore distractions
- Memory**
  - Remember directions, landmarks and routes
- Judgement**
  - Decide when to change lanes or merge into traffic
  - Keep a safe distance from others
- Insight**
  - Know your skills and limits
- Reaction time**
  - Respond quickly to a situation you don't expect
- Good vision**
  - See objects in front of you and to the side (peripheral vision), such as cyclists
- Range of motion**
  - Move head, arms and legs enough to drive safely and check blind spots
- Strength**
  - Strong enough to drive and get in and out of the car
- Coordination**
  - Steer, accelerate and brake smoothly
- Hearing**
  - Hear sirens, car horns and car alerts
- Control of emotions**
  - Control feelings in stressful situations (such as a traffic jam, or when you are cut off)

## **What happens with the results of the assessments?**

Your occupational therapist will write a report and send it to your doctor at Toronto Rehab, medical specialist or family doctor.

Your doctor will use these results to complete your medical review form. Your doctor may also do more assessments.

## **Who decides if I get my licence back?**

The medical review panel at the Ministry of Transportation decides who does or does not get their licence back. Their decision depends on whether you meet the medical standards for driving.

## **How long will it take?**

Getting better takes time. Getting your licence back can take a long time as well.

Be prepared to be without your licence for several months. We know how important it is to have transportation. Your rehab team can help you find other options.

## **What will the Ministry decide?**

The Ministry of Transportation will consider the information in the medical report sent to them by your doctor. They try to respond within 30 business days of receiving your medical report. They will send you a letter with a decision about your driver's licence.

They may:

- ask you to take an on-road test at a driver assessment centre
- reinstate your licence
- ask for more medical reports

If you do not agree with the final decision of the Ministry of Transportation, you can appeal the decision. More information about how to appeal will be included in their letter.

## **Will I have to do an on-road test?**

The on-road test gives you the chance to prove that you are a safe driver and is considered the best assessment for driving. Your rehab team or doctor may recommend that you do an on-road test if there are concerns about your ability to drive safely.

The Ministry of Transportation may ask you to do an on-road test at a Ministry approved assessment centre. The Ministry of Transportation decides if you need an on-road test based on the information provided in the medical report.

## **Why do I have to pay for an on-road test?**

The on-road test can cost between \$700 – \$800 and is not covered by OHIP. The on-road test includes cognitive assessment with an occupational therapist and on-road assessment with a driving instructor.

We know this is a lot of money but unfortunately you are responsible for this cost.

## **How can I find out about the status of my licence and file?**

Call the Medical Review Section of the Ministry of Transportation:  
416 235 1773 or toll-free 1 800 268 1481.

You can also read more about the medical review process online at:  
[www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/medical-review-drivers.shtml](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/medical-review-drivers.shtml)

## What is driving retirement?

Unfortunately, after certain health conditions some people will not recover enough to drive safely. Some people decide that they are no longer interested or confident when driving.

Speak to your therapists about other ways of getting transportation and community services that can help.

## Internet resources on safe driving:

Candrive website, aiming to improve the health, safety and quality of life of Canada's older drivers

Website: [www.candrive.ca](http://www.candrive.ca)

## To see a full list of Ministry approved assessment centres:

Website: [www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/functional-assessment-centres.shtml](http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/functional-assessment-centres.shtml)



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