

Driving after stroke

A short guide





After a stroke or transient ischaemic attack (TIA or mini-stroke), you must stop driving for a minimum period.

- Car and motorcycle drivers must not drive for a minimum of one calendar month after a stroke or TIA.
- Lorry and bus drivers must stop driving for a minimum of one year.

Some people will be able to drive after the minimum period, but some will have to stop driving for longer. Some people will have to stop driving for good.

How can a stroke affect driving?

Driving is a complex task using many different skills, all of which may be affected by a stroke. All drivers must be able to:

1. Control the vehicle safely.
2. Respond to the road, traffic and other external cues.
3. Remember and follow the rules of the road.

The effects of a stroke may impact your ability to drive safely in various ways. This may include problems with vision, physical effects like arm and leg weakness, or difficulties with memory, concentration and understanding. See 'How a stroke may affect your driving' on **page 4**.

You must stop driving for a minimum period (see **page 2**). When and if you can start driving again depends on several things, including:

- The type of stroke.
- The effects of your stroke.
- Other medical conditions you may have.
- The type of licence you hold.

It is **your** responsibility to ensure you are safe to drive.

Healthcare professionals, such as a doctor or occupational therapist, can help you understand how your stroke might affect your driving.

Driving Mobility has a UK network of driving assessment centres. They can help you find individual advice about driving after a stroke. See **page 10**.



How a **stroke** may affect your **driving**

Communication and language

Ability to read and understand road signs at speed.

Perceptual problems (being aware of things)

Ability to judge distances, space and speed of oncoming traffic.

Ability to scan right and left, and be aware of things around you.

Vision problems

Ability to see clearly in front and to the side (peripheral vision) and read road signs.

Hand and arm weakness

Having physical control of the steering wheel and car controls.

Foot and leg weakness and loss of sensation

Ability to feel pedals with your feet, and control them without seeing them.



Fatigue

Staying alert and awake while driving.

Memory, concentration and understanding

Ability to switch attention between different things. Ability to process information, make quick decisions and react appropriately. Remembering rules of the road and navigating routes.

Behaviour changes

Staying calm and in control while driving.

Balance and coordination

Accurate co-ordination of limbs on vehicle controls and ability to sit up in a stable position.



Do I need to tell my insurer?

You must tell your motor insurance company about your stroke or TIA, or your insurance may be invalid. Driving without valid insurance can lead to a fine or a driving ban.

Do I **need** to **tell** the **DVLA/DVA**?

The DVLA (or DVA in Northern Ireland) is responsible for licensing drivers.

Car drivers and motorcyclists

You must tell the DVLA/DVA if any of these things apply:

- After one month, you have stroke-related problems which may affect your ability to drive safely, such as arm or leg weakness, or problems with vision, balance, memory or understanding.
- You've had a seizure or brain surgery.
- You have other medical conditions which can affect driving.
- A medical or healthcare professional tells you they're concerned about your ability to drive safely.

Speak to your doctor if you're unsure if any of these things apply to you. See [**gov.uk/stroke-and-driving**](https://www.gov.uk/stroke-and-driving) for more information and to report a medical condition.

Lorry and bus drivers

All large vehicle drivers must tell the DVLA/DVA straight away about a stroke or TIA.

To find out more about what you need to do:

- You should get individual advice about your stroke from your doctor or a healthcare professional.
- You can get individual advice about driving from a Driving Mobility centre.

If you do not tell the DVLA/DVA about a medical condition that affects your driving, you could be fined up to £1,000, or prosecuted if you have a crash.

Who **decides** if I can **start driving again?**

The DVLA/DVA makes the final decision about licences. If you notify the DVLA/DVA of a medical condition, they will carry out checks to decide if you can continue to hold a licence.

Even if you did not have to report a medical condition to the DVLA/DVA, you must follow the rules about when you can and cannot drive. Your doctor or healthcare professional can give you advice about your stroke and help you understand what you need to do.

Support with returning to driving

A medical or healthcare professional, such as an occupational therapist (OT), can help you understand how a stroke affects your driving. They can support you with the skills needed to start driving again. Your GP can refer you to an appropriate healthcare professional.

Driving Mobility assessment centres can give individual advice or an assessment of your fitness to drive. They can advise if vehicle adaptations may enable you to drive with a physical disability or help you arrange driving lessons to regain confidence.

What if I have to stop driving?

It can come as a shock if you cannot return to driving. You might worry about losing your independence, and it can be especially hard if you needed to drive for work.

Visit **stroke.org.uk/driving** for detailed information and support, including:

- Alternatives to driving to help you stay independent.
- Work and finances when you have to stop driving.
- The emotional impact of not driving.

You can also call our Stroke Support Helpline on **0303 3033 100** for more information or if you need someone to talk to.



This booklet contains general information about driving after stroke. It is not intended to be comprehensive information about all medical conditions relating to stroke, or the law about driving after stroke. You should get individual medical or legal advice about your own driving.

How can I get information and advice?

Driving Mobility

Website: drivingmobility.org.uk

Tel: **0800 559 3636**

Email: info@drivingmobility.org.uk

National organisation for driving assessment centres and mobility centres. Get in touch to find a local assessment centre and get individual advice.

DVLA: Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Website: gov.uk/dvla

Drivers' medical enquiries: **0300 790 6806**

Driver licensing in England, Scotland and Wales. Tell DVLA about a medical condition online or download forms STR1 or STR1V from the website.

DVA: Driver and Vehicle Agency (Northern Ireland)

Website: nidirect.gov.uk/motoring

Tel: **0300 200 7861**

Email: dva@infrastructure-ni.gov.uk

Driver licensing in Northern Ireland. Tell DVA about a medical condition by telephone, email or post. Details on the website.

About our information

We want to provide the best information for people affected by stroke. That's why we ask stroke survivors and their families, as well as medical experts, to help us put our publications together.



How did we do?

To tell us what you think of this guide, or to request a list of the sources we used to create it, email us at **feedback@stroke.org.uk**



Accessible formats

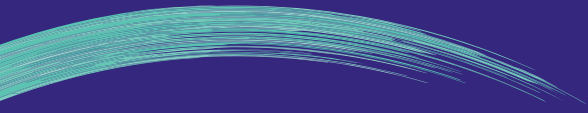
Visit our website if you need this information in audio, large print or to download a printer-friendly version of our more detailed information on driving after stroke.



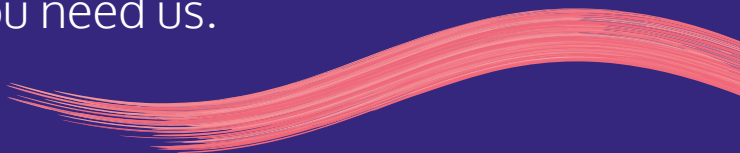
Always get individual advice

This guide contains general information about stroke. But if you have a problem, you should get individual advice from a professional such as a GP or pharmacist. Our Stroke Support Helpline can also help you find support.

We work very hard to give you the latest facts, but some things change. We don't control the information provided by other organisations or websites.



Remember, you are not alone.
We are here to support you
throughout your recovery,
whenever you need us.



Contact us

Stroke Support Helpline: **0303 3033 100**

Textphone: **18001 0303 3033 100**

Email: **helpline@stroke.org.uk**

Website: **stroke.org.uk**



Finding **strength** through **support**

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