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This symbol means further information is available.
For guidance on driving in Northern Ireland visit nidirect.gov.uk

Call us for a large print version

Epilepsy Society is grateful to the DVLA for guidance on this leaflet.

helpline
01494 601 400
Monday and Tuesday 9am to 4pm, Wednesday 9am to 7.30pm. National call rate.
driving regulations and travel costs

For people who drive, one immediate effect of having a seizure is that they have to stop driving. This is true for all types of seizure, and whether the person has a diagnosis of epilepsy or not. For many people this can have a big impact on their life, and be difficult and upsetting. This leaflet explains the driving regulations, and travel alternatives, for people with epilepsy in Great Britain.

The driver and vehicle licensing agency (DVLA) licenses cars and drivers for driving on public roads in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales). If you have a driving licence, by law it is your duty to tell the DVLA about any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive, including epilepsy. This is a condition of holding a driving licence.

If you have a driving licence and have a seizure of any kind, in most cases you must stop driving*. You are responsible for telling the DVLA and returning your licence to them (see page 10).

The driving regulations cover all epileptic seizures: auras and warnings, seizures where you are conscious, myoclonic seizures and seizures where you lose consciousness.

These regulations apply even if you have only one seizure, whether you have a diagnosis of epilepsy or not, and whether you are taking anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs) or not.

*If you already have an established pattern of certain types of seizure you may be able to continue to drive (see page 6).
If you are not sure how these regulations apply to you, please contact the DVLA (see page 23).

**Medical standards of fitness to drive**

Epileptic seizures are specifically included in the Road Traffic Act 1988. This means that if you have one or more seizures, by law you must meet certain medical standards in order to have a driving licence.

The DVLA’s ‘Assessing fitness to drive’ sets out the medical standards for driving, advised by expert medical panels, and based on UK and European legislation. Only medical advisers at the DVLA are able to decide whether or not someone meets the standards to drive. A ‘Customer service guide for drivers with a medical condition’ (INF94) is available from the GOV.UK website.

See page 23 for contact details.

**DVLA terminology**

The DVLA uses some specific terms for epilepsy.

- ‘Awake seizures’ – seizures that start when you are awake.
- ‘Asleep seizures’ – seizures that happen as you are falling asleep, while you are asleep, or as you are waking up.
- ‘Anti-epilepsy drugs’ – medication for epilepsy, which we call ‘AEDs’ (‘anti-epileptic drugs’).
- ‘Permitted seizures’ – types of seizures where you can drive even if you are still having these seizures (see page 7).
‘Isolated seizures’ – first and single unprovoked seizure in people with no history of seizures (see page 16). Also includes more than one seizure if all of the seizures have occurred within a 24 hour period.

**epilepsy driving regulations**

How the driving regulations apply to you depends on the type of seizures you have now, the type of seizures you have had previously, and the type of licence you have.

See our factsheet driving regulations – quick guide.

- **Group 1 licences** (also called ‘ordinary driving licence’) include cars, motorcycles and mopeds. To drive, you must meet all normal driving requirements and must have been completely free of seizures for one year, with or without taking AEDs. Different regulations may apply if you have only asleep seizures or your seizures do not affect your consciousness (see pages 6 – 8).

- **Group 2 licences** (also called ‘vocational licence’) include large goods vehicles (LGV or lorries), passenger carrying vehicles (PCV or buses and minibuses with nine seats or more) and horse boxes. You must meet all normal driving requirements and must have been seizure-free, without AEDs, for the last 10 years. The DVLA will also need to be satisfied that you are not likely to have any more seizures.
The regulations are different for isolated seizures (see page 16).

**Taxi drivers**

Local authorities set their own standards for taxi drivers, and some use the DVLA regulations for Group 2 licences for driving a taxi.

Contact your local council for details.

**asleep seizures**

‘Asleep seizures’ (sometimes called ‘nocturnal seizures’) are seizures that happen as you are falling asleep, while you are asleep, or as you are waking up. The term ‘asleep seizure’ might also apply if you have a seizure in your sleep during the day, if sleeping during the day is part of your normal routine (for example, if you do shift work).

- If you have an asleep seizure you must stop driving and contact the DVLA. If you are then seizure-free for **one year** you can apply for a Group 1 licence, as you can for ‘awake seizures’, (see page 5).

- If you continue to have **only** asleep seizures you may be eligible to apply for a new Group 1 licence depending on the pattern of your seizures, (see page 7).
permitted seizures

‘Permitted seizures’ are types of seizures where you can drive even if you are still having these seizures. The DVLA will send you a form (INS9) with more details about permitted seizures.

Awake seizures that do not affect consciousness, attention and the ability to act in any situation (including controlling a vehicle)

For some types of awake seizure, you may be able to drive under a new Group 1 licence after one year even if you are still having seizures. This is only if all of the following apply to you:

- you stay fully conscious during your seizures;
- your seizures do not stop you doing anything; and
- you have only ever had this type of seizure and have never had a seizure that affects your consciousness, attention and ability to act in any situation.

If you have or have ever had a seizure which affects your ability to act, such as where you are confused or unable to remember what happens, these standards will not apply to you (see page 5 for the regular standards).

Asleep seizures with no history of seizures when awake

If you have only ever had asleep seizures (and have never had an awake seizure), once this pattern of only asleep seizures has been seen for one year, you can apply for a Group 1 licence even if you still have these seizures.
If you then have an awake seizure, you will need to stop driving and tell the DVLA.

**Asleep seizures with a history of awake seizures**

If you have had only asleep seizures over a period of three years since your last awake seizure, you can apply for a Group 1 licence, even if you still have asleep seizures.

It is important that this pattern of only asleep seizures is seen over at least three years, starting from the first asleep seizure you have had since your last awake seizure. You will still need to tell the DVLA and your insurance company about your seizures.

**provoked seizures**

If someone with no history of seizures or previous brain disease has a seizure caused by something that is unlikely to happen again, this may be a ‘provoked seizure’. This might include a seizure immediately at the time of a head injury or a stroke. The DVLA looks at these circumstances on an individual basis.

Seizures caused by medication side effects, sleep deprivation, or alcohol or drug misuse are not usually considered provoked. If your first and only seizure was caused by alcohol or drug misuse, you will also need to meet the driving standards for alcohol or drug misuse.
seizures following a period of being seizure-free

If you have a seizure following a period of being seizure-free, and you have a history of seizures, you will need to stop driving and tell the DVLA. You will need to meet the medical driving standards for the type of licence you hold and the type of seizures you have (see pages 5 – 8).

stopping or changing medication

If you are seizure-free and stop taking your anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs), there is a risk that your seizures will start again. If you, with your doctor, decide to stop taking (withdraw) your AEDs, your doctor is likely to advise you to stop driving *while* you are withdrawing *and* for six months after you have stopped your AEDs. Although this is not ‘the law’ it is recommended by the DVLA.

If you continue to drive and you have a seizure you will need to stop driving and tell the DVLA. If you go back onto the same medication at the same dose as you were on before, and are seizure-free and on this medication for six months, you can apply for a new licence.

If you are changing from one medication to another, and your doctor feels it is likely to be as effective, you do not usually need to stop driving unless advised to do so by your doctor.
However, if you have a seizure you will need to stop driving and tell the DVLA. If you go back onto the same medication at the same dose as you were on before, and are seizure-free and on this medication for six months, you can apply for a new licence.

An exception to the above is if you have ‘permitted seizures’ (see pages 7 – 8). You will still need to tell the DVLA about the seizure but you may be allowed to carry on driving, depending on the type of seizures you have had previously.

**if you have a seizure**

If you have a driving licence, and have a seizure of any kind, **you must stop driving and tell the DVLA**. Unless you and your doctors consider that your seizures are likely to meet the criteria for permitted or provoked seizures (see pages 7 – 8), you should fill in a ‘Declaration of Surrender for Medical Reasons’ form and return your licence to the DVLA.

If you have a Group 2 licence you also need to fill in a VOC99 form. You can get these forms from the DVLA (see page 23) or via the GOV.UK website. It may be useful to keep a copy of what you send to the DVLA for your records.

Visit gov.uk/giving-up-your-driving-licence
What happens if I continue to drive?

- Your licence will not be valid. You will be driving illegally, as driving without a valid licence is a criminal offence.
- Your car insurance will not be valid. Because of this you may have to pay the costs of a claim from another person.

What happens if I don’t tell the DVLA?

If you don’t voluntarily return your licence and are found to be driving, the DVLA may be told and your licence revoked (taken away). You may also be fined. Telling the DVLA and returning your licence can help speed up your application for a new licence (see page 12).

Will my doctor tell the DVLA?

If you have a seizure it is your responsibility to tell the DVLA. Guidelines from the General Medical Council (which registers doctors in the UK) tell doctors to explain that it is your legal duty to tell the DVLA, and they will write this in your medical records.

If you continue to drive, they can break confidentiality and tell the DVLA, due to the continued risk to you and to members of the public. They should tell you if they are going to do this.
What can I do if the DVLA revokes my licence?

If the DVLA revokes your licence or refuses your application for a new licence, you can appeal against this decision. You need to make your appeal in writing. In England and Wales, this needs to be at a magistrates’ court within six months of the DVLA’s decision, and in Scotland, within 21 days at a Sheriff’s Court. You or your doctor may be able to provide further medical evidence for the DVLA to consider.

getting your new licence

Once you meet the DVLA medical standards to drive, you can apply for a new or first licence. For a Group 1 licence you will need to fill in a D1 and FEP1 application form, and for a Group 2 licence you need D2 and FEP1 forms (see the GOV.UK website or contact the DVLA).

If possible, the DVLA will decide whether you can have a driving licence based on the information you provide in these forms. The FEP1 form asks for your permission for the DVLA to contact your doctor if they need any further information before giving you a new licence. For a first Group 2 licence, you will need to pay for the medical form to be completed.

As the process of issuing a licence can take time, you can apply for your licence up to eight weeks before you would normally be eligible to drive.
If you surrendered your licence, you may be able to start driving again as soon as you reach the seizure-free period, as long as your doctor confirms that you meet the medical standards to drive and the DVLA confirms that it has received your application. The DVLA will do this by sending you a ‘Section 88 letter’.

If your licence was revoked, you will not be able to drive until the DVLA sends you a new licence. You will not usually need to take your driving test again.

**What sort of licence will I get?**

When you get your licence it will usually be valid for between one and five years. If you are then seizure-free for five years, you may be given a standard Group 1 licence which is valid until you are 70. This is called a ‘till 70’ licence. Under certain circumstances a ‘till 70’ licence may be issued without first having a one to five year licence. Once the DVLA confirms that you can have a driving licence, you can drive any vehicle that your licence covers.

**Telling your car insurance company**

If you stop driving due to a seizure, you need to tell your insurance company as part of your insurance terms and conditions. If you don’t tell them, and they find out that you stopped driving, this may affect your insurance in the future.
Insurance companies can ask questions or for more information about medical conditions to support your application.

They may ask to see your driving licence or a letter from the DVLA confirming that you are allowed to drive.

Under the Equality Act 2010, insurance companies cannot increase the cost of a policy if a medical condition does not affect the risk of making a claim, and they need to consider your individual circumstances. Insurance companies cannot use the fact that you have a three-year licence as a reason for increasing the premium, or changing or refusing a policy. If the company increases your premium, they must be able to tell you why. This should mean that each application is considered fairly.

Visit equalityhumanrights.com for more about the Equality Act.

It may be worth contacting several companies to get the best quote for you. If you have any problems with insurance, you can contact the Financial Ombudsman Service.

See page 23 for contact details.

If you have not been driving for two years, this may affect any no-claims discount you had before.
driving abroad

If you meet the DVLA medical standards and have a UK driving licence, you can drive under this licence in the UK, countries in the European Economic Area and the European Union (EU) and Switzerland. You may also need an International Driving Permit for some non-EU countries.

To drive abroad, you must also meet the medical standards for driving for the country you visit.

Visit the AA (theaa.com) or RAC (rac.co.uk) for more information.

If you are coming to the UK and need to apply, or reapply, for a UK licence, then the regulations in this leaflet will apply to you.

learning to drive

If you have epilepsy and want to learn to drive, you need to meet the medical standards for the type of seizures you have (see pages 5 – 8). You will need to tell the DVLA about your epilepsy and fill in a regular application form. The DVLA will send you a form (FEP1) for more details about your epilepsy (see page 12).

The regulations are different if you have only:

- awake seizures which do not affect your consciousness or ability to act in any situation (see page 7); or
- asleep seizures (see pages 6 and 8).
isolated seizures

There are specific DVLA medical standards for people after an isolated seizure or first unprovoked seizure (see also page 5).

**Group 1 licence:** you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You may be allowed to start driving again after **six months** if you have had no further seizures and there are no clinical factors (such as a scar on the brain) or results from investigations (such as an EEG) which suggest an increased risk of you having another seizure.

**Group 2 licence:** you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You may be allowed to start driving again after **five years** if you have seen a specialist and there are no clinical factors (such as a scar on the brain) or results from investigations (such as an EEG) which suggest a high risk of you having another seizure. You must not have been prescribed anti-epileptic drugs during the five years before applying for a new licence.

If you feel that these standards apply to you, you can talk to your specialist or call the DVLA drivers’ medical enquiries number on 0300 790 6806.

Note: these medical standards **only** apply to people who have had a first unprovoked and single isolated seizure (or a single set of seizures which all occurred within a 24 hour period). They **do not** apply to people diagnosed with epilepsy who have had a seizure following a period of being seizure-free.
where no licence is needed

Forklift trucks, farm vehicles and sit-on lawn mowers on private land

The DVLA medical standards cover vehicles that are driven on public highways, not vehicles that are used on private land. A driving licence is not needed for the following vehicles as long as they are only being driven on private land and not on public roads: forklift trucks, farm vehicles (such as tractors and quad bikes), and sit-on lawn mowers.

Employers need to consider health and safety regulations if someone drives these vehicles on private land as part of their job. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advises driving standards for these vehicles that are similar to Group 1 and 2 standards, depending on their size and weight.

If these vehicles are driven on public highways a driving licence would be needed.

Visit hse.gov.uk for more about health and safety regulations.

Electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters

There are two ‘classes’ of electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters (or ‘invalid carriages’). Class 2 can’t be used on the road, and Class 3 can be used on the road. You don’t need to have a licence for either class, but you need to register and tax Class 3 as it can be used on the road (although you won’t have to pay for this). Your doctor may be able to advise whether these wheelchairs or scooters are suitable and safe for you to use.
non-epileptic seizures

If you have a non-epileptic seizure (also called dissociative seizures) you will need to stop driving, tell the DVLA and return your licence to them. If your seizures then become controlled, and your doctors and the DVLA are satisfied that you are unlikely to have another seizure, you may be able to apply for a new Group 1 licence.

Contact the DVLA (see page 23) or see our leaflet non-epileptic seizures.

help with travel costs

If you have epilepsy and are still having seizures you may be entitled to free or discounted travel. This is usually because you would be refused a driving licence if you applied.

You will usually need some proof that you are eligible for the discount. This proof may vary depending on where you live and the type of transport. It might include a letter from the DVLA confirming that you are not able to drive, a copy of your prescription for anti-epileptic drugs, or proof that you are receiving certain welfare benefits. You can contact each travel company to find out more about your eligibility.

Free bus travel throughout England

If you have had a seizure in the last year, and so wouldn’t be allowed to drive, you should be eligible for a free National Bus Pass.
This can be used ‘off peak’ from 9.30am to 11pm Monday to Friday, and all day at weekends and Bank Holidays, on local buses anywhere in England. Some local councils have additional travel discounts.

**Contact your local council or visit gov.uk/apply-for-disabled-bus-pass**

**Travel in London**

People with epilepsy who live in London may be entitled to a Freedom Pass, getting free bus, train, tram and tube travel throughout London.

**Call 0300 330 1433 or visit londoncouncils.gov.uk**

Some London boroughs have a ‘London Taxicard Scheme’ for reduced cost taxi travel. You may be eligible if your epilepsy affects your ability to walk or makes it hard to use public transport.

**Call 0207 934 9791 or visit londoncouncils.gov.uk**

**Travel in Scotland**

People with epilepsy in Scotland who would be refused a driving licence are eligible for a Scotland-wide free bus travel pass. This allows free travel on local and long-distance bus services throughout Scotland at any time of the day. If you are on certain benefits, you may also be eligible for a companion to travel with you for free.

**Contact your local authority (or Travel Card Unit for Strathclyde) or call Epilepsy Scotland on 0808 800 2200.**
Travel in Northern Ireland

People with epilepsy in Northern Ireland who would be refused a driving licence are eligible for a Half Fare SmartPass, which gives them a half fare discount on bus travel at any time of the day. You would need to show proof that you have been refused a driving licence.

Visit nidirect.gov.uk for details.

Travel in Wales

People with epilepsy in Wales are entitled to a bus pass that allows free local bus travel throughout Wales at any time of the day.

Contact your local authority.

Travelling by coach

National Express gives discount fares for people with disabilities, including epilepsy, and other coach companies may offer similar discounts.

Contact companies directly for more details.

Travelling by train

People who are unable to drive due to their epilepsy can apply for a Disabled Person’s Railcard. This gives them, and a companion, a third off most train fares in England, Wales and Scotland. You need a copy of your Exemption Certificate (free prescriptions) for anti-epileptic drugs, and a photocopy of your prescription or a letter from the DVLA saying that you are not allowed to drive. There is a charge for this railcard.
Contact the Disabled Person’s Railcard Office on 0345 605 0525 or visit disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Community transport services

Community transport services include schemes such as Dial-a-Ride, for people who have difficulty using public transport or who need wheelchair-accessible transport. Services vary from area to area.

Look up ‘community transport’ in your local phone book, or visit gov.uk

The Access to Work scheme

If you are unable to use public transport due to your epilepsy, you may be able to get help towards the cost of getting to work through the Access to Work scheme.

Contact your local Jobcentre Plus or visit gov.uk/access-to-work for more details.

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme

The Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme provides financial help towards transport costs for people on certain benefits or a low income. The scheme covers travel to hospital for NHS medical treatment but does not include routine GP or dentist appointments.

Visit nhs.uk and search for ‘travel costs’ or call the NHS Low income scheme helpline on 0300 330 1343.
other travel benefits

If you qualify for certain benefits based on your mobility, you may be entitled to:

• a Blue Badge parking permit (that can be used by another driver when you are a passenger), which also entitles you to register for a full discount on the London congestion charge; and

• free road tax for a car registered in your name, or for a car which someone drives for you specifically as a passenger.

Visit gov.uk

further information

Epilepsy Society information

Driving regulations – quick guide (or ‘driving and epilepsy – interactive guide’ online)
Non-epileptic seizures
other organisations

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
General enquiries 0300 790 6801
Drivers’ medical enquiries 0300 790 6806
gov.uk/epilepsy-and-driving
Information on driving standards.

Equality and Human Rights Commission
Equality Advisory and Support Service
advice line: 0808 800 0082
equalityhumanrights.com
Information on disability discrimination.

Financial Ombudsman Service
Consumer helpline: 0800 023 4567
financial-ombudsman.org.uk
Guidance about problems with insurance.

Every effort is made to ensure that all information is correct.
Please note that information is intended for a UK audience
and may change after printing. This information is not a
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A full life for everyone affected by epilepsy.

research
Pioneering medical research.

treatment and care
Individualised medical and care services.

information
Website, apps, leaflets, DVDs.
Call 01494 601 392.

education
Awareness, training for professionals.

connect with us
Volunteer, become a member, fundraise.

helpline 01494 601 400
Monday and Tuesday 9am to 4pm,
Wednesday 9am to 7.30pm.
Confidential, national call rate.
Information and emotional support.

Epilepsy Society
Chesham Lane, Chalfont St Peter, Bucks SL9 0RJ
01494 601 300

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