

Guy's, King's and St Thomas' Cancer Centre

DVLA driving regulations: brain tumours

This factsheet explains the rules on driving for people diagnosed with a brain tumour. **These regulations only apply to Group 1 driving entitlements (car and motorcycle licences). It does not apply to Group 2 entitlements (PCV or LGV licences). For information on this group, please contact the DVLA for more details.**

The driving regulations are issued by the **Driving and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA)** in Swansea. If for medical reasons you are not fit to drive, the DVLA will be required to withdraw your licence. They will issue you with a new one once your doctor says you are fit to drive again. You do not have to re-take your driving test. The DVLA will contact your specialist and will take each decision on an individual basis depending on what your doctor says about your level of fitness and risk of further symptoms.

Informing the DVLA about a medical condition

You will need to inform the DVLA if you have a medical condition or disability that may affect your driving. This may include:

- problems with your nervous system
- any treatment, weakness or visual problem that prevents normal daily activities
- any medication that causes side effects likely to affect safe driving.

In other words, as soon as you are diagnosed with a brain tumour you need to inform the DVLA. This is important – failure to notify the DVLA is a criminal offence and may result in a fine of up to £1000.

You will also need to provide details if you have a condition or disability that has become worse since your licence was issued.

Quick step-by-step guide:

- Once you have been diagnosed with a brain tumour you are required by law to inform the DVLA.
- When you inform the DVLA of your diagnosis, it is a good idea to surrender (give up) your licence and send it to them at the same time. If you do not do this, the DVLA may revoke (take back) your licence and this can make the process of getting it back far more complicated. Gaining the DVLA's permission to drive again takes longer and is more difficult if your licence has been revoked than if you surrendered it voluntarily.
- Your letter to the DVLA should include:

- your full name
- date of birth
- driver's number
- the name and type of tumour you have, including the date of diagnosis (the more information about this you are able to provide, the better. For example, you could include information on how it was diagnosed/what happened to you)
- any treatment/surgery you have had, plus relevant dates. Remember to tell the DVLA about all further treatments or medical decisions such as the possibility of needing chemotherapy or radiotherapy. If you are not sure whether this applies to you, please ask your allocated key worker, nurse or doctor.
- the name and contact details of your GP and oncologist.

If you supply the DVLA with enough information (as detailed above) they will let you know how long it will be before you can apply to drive again. If they require more information, they will ask your permission to contact your doctor.

- If you surrendered your licence, you can apply to get it back two months before the end of the period for which you have been disqualified from driving, as long as your doctor has told you that you are fit to drive. You can start driving as soon as you have made this application.
- If your licence was revoked by the DVLA the same application process applies. However, you cannot start driving until the DVLA decides whether or not you are medically fit to drive – this can be a long and drawn out process.

For further information please contact:

For medical enquiries and appeals:

The DVLA Drivers Medical Group

DVLA, Longview Road, Morrision, Swansea SA99 1TU

t: 0300 790 6806 Monday to Friday 8am–5pm and Saturday 8am–1pm

f: 0845 850 0095

e: eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

For enquiries about driving licenses:

The DVLA helpline

t: 0300 790 6801 / **Text phone and Minicom:** 0300 123 1278

Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm and 9:30am–5pm on the second Wednesday of each month.

For general information:

Visit

www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/medical.aspx

or

www.braintumouruk.org.uk

DVLA guidelines

You need to inform the DVLA of your condition. Below are some of the guidelines that the DVLA issues. To view or download the full **medical rules document**, please go to their website (details listed above).

If I have had a fit, does it mean that I have epilepsy?

Many people have a one-off seizure (also referred to as a fit) at some point in their life. This can be due to a number of reasons, including certain medical conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease. You may also have had a fit if you have had neurosurgery, as this can cause temporary irritation to the lining of the brain. This is very different to someone who suffers from epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a neurological condition where people get recurrent seizures/fits that arise from the brain itself due to abnormal electrical activity within the brain. People with epilepsy have to take medication to control the symptoms. It is the most common serious neurological condition in the UK.

Epilepsy regulations

- Any person who has had an epileptic attack/fit whilst awake must not drive for at least one year from the date of the attack.
- If you have a fit while asleep and haven't previously had a sleeping fit then you will have to stop driving for one year.
- If you only suffer night time attacks and have had no daytime seizures over the last three years then you may be able to keep your license providing no daytime attacks happen. This will be dealt with on an individual basis and is referred to as 'asleep concessions'.
- An exception may be made if your fit was brought on by surgery and you fulfil all other criteria that mean you are safe to drive. In these circumstances, the DVLA would look at your individual case and medical circumstances before making a decision.

Driving and brain tumour types

You **may not** be allowed to drive for a while after you have had a brain tumour. This will depend on the type of brain tumour you had and where it was in the brain.

If you have had a **benign** (non-cancerous) **infratentorial** brain tumour you can drive again as soon as your treatment and any recovery period advised by your doctor is finished. You can keep your 'Till 70 licence'.

If you have had an **acoustic neuroma** (also referred to as a **schwannoma**), you do not have to inform the DVLA at all unless it has caused any dizziness.

If you have had a **benign meningioma**, restrictions apply **only** if you have had surgery. In this case, you are generally advised not to drive for one year. However, if it was a **WHO grade 1 meningioma** with no relevant history of seizure(s), you may be considered six months after surgery, as long as you are medically fit.

If you have not had any surgery and the meningioma is an incidental (chance) finding with no associated fits, you can retain your licence and drive as normal.

If you have had **any other type of benign brain tumour** anywhere else in your brain, you will not be allowed to drive for at least one year. After this, you will be given a short term licence

(ranging between one and three years). Then, you will be assessed again, and may have your 'Till 70 licence' returned.

Pituitary tumours

If your pituitary tumour has been surgically treated with a **craniotomy** (through the skull), you will not be allowed to drive for six months. If it has been dealt with using a **transphenoidal** (nasal) approach or treated with radiotherapy for instance, you are allowed to drive a) once your doctor says you are medically fit to do so, and b) providing there are no lasting problems (such as visual field disturbances).

Gliomas

If you diagnosed with a **WHO grade 1 or 2 glioma** (known as 'low grade' gliomas), you cannot drive until one year after the first treatment has been completed. After this period, your situation will be reviewed by the DVLA.

Examples of low grade gliomas are **oligodendrogliomas** and **ependymomas**. If you have had an incidental finding of a low grade glioma, have no symptoms and have not had any treatment for it, the case can be considered on an individual basis and you may be allowed to drive sooner.

If you were diagnosed with a **WHO grade 3 or 4 glioma** (known as 'high grade' gliomas), you cannot drive for **two years after your treatment is complete**. Treatment includes not only surgery, but also chemotherapy and/or radiotherapy. After this period, your situation will be reviewed.

Examples of high grade gliomas are **anaplastic astrocytomas** and **glioblastoma** (often abbreviated to GBM). In some circumstances, the DVLA may decide that you should refrain from driving for more than two years. This decision will be based on medical reasons and will be made after consulting your specialist.

Medulloblastoma or low grade ependymomas

If either of these tumours have been completely removed with surgery, you will be considered for licensing one year after primary treatment, as long as there is no recurrence.

High grade ependymomas, other primary malignant brain tumours and secondary deposits

If you have any brain tumour other than those listed above, you will normally be restricted from driving for a period of two years.

If you are in doubt about any of the above, especially regarding the type and grading of your tumour, please ask your key worker or nurse for advice.

Acknowledgement:

We would like to thank Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for allowing us to adapt their leaflet **DVLA driving regulations: brain tumours**, 2010.



Dimbleby Cancer Care is the cancer support service for Guy's and St Thomas'. They have drop-in information centres, and also offer complementary therapies, psychological support and benefits advice.

The drop-in information centre is located in Guy's in Oncology Outpatients (Ground floor, Tabard Annexe).

t: 020 7188 5918 **e:** RichardDimblebyCentre@gstt.nhs.uk

Guy's and St Thomas' hospitals offer a range of cancer-related information leaflets for patients and carers, available at www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/patientleaflets/cancer

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

PALS

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). Ask a member of staff to direct you to PALS or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

If you need an interpreter or information about the care you are receiving in the language or format of your choice, please get in touch using the following contact details:

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

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