

Trauma & Orthopaedics

Driving after limb injury

Did you know?

Driving whilst in a splint or after an injury can affect your ability to drive. Studies have demonstrated that it increases your braking time, thinking time, and the difficulty of driving.

Important information

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit to drive.

The police can ask you to prove this if you are stopped or involved in an accident. (Rule 90 of the Highway Code)

An injury, especially one treated with a splint or plaster can reduce your range of motion.

You should assess your own ability to move before driving a vehicle.

Having a limb injury and/or a splint or plaster may invalidate your motor insurance.

It is advised that you should discuss your injury with your provider.

Painkillers and medications can impair your ability to drive.

As with any drug, these can prevent you thinking clearly and affect your reaction time. (Rule 96 of the Highway Code).



Patient Information

Limb injuries and medicines for pain can affect your sleep.

If you are tired, your risk of collision increases. (Rule 91 of the Highway Code).

By law, you must tell the DVLA if your injury is expected to last more than 3 months. Not doing so can result in a fine of up to £1000. If you are involved in an accident, you could be prosecuted.

We are here to help you

Doctors and other healthcare professionals should:

- Treat, manage and monitor your condition with ongoing consideration of your fitness to drive
- Advise you on the legal requirement to notify the DVLA of any relevant injury or condition
- Notify the DVLA when required but individual cannot or will not do so themselves.

Test your ability to drive

This tool helps you to assess your ability to drive*

1. Leg strength, endurance, range of motion & balance

Walk 3m (10ft) as quickly as you can

More than 9 seconds may mean you are not strong enough to drive

2. Ability to use vehicle for manoeuvres

- Neck- can you look over both shoulders?
- Hands- can you make a strong fist?
- Shoulder/elbow- can you pretend to turn a steering wheel all the way round to the left and then to the right?
- Ankle- can you pretend to push down on the accelerator hard and then bring your toes back up towards you?

If you are unable to do any of these, hesitate to do so, or if it hurts to do them, you may be unsafe to drive.

Patient Information

*adapted from Carter T., Fitness to drive: A guide for health professionals, The Royal Society of Medicine, 2006 pg. 158

If you would like more information, please ask your healthcare professional.

Further reading:

DVLA: <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>

Highway Code: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-highway-code-/rules-for-drivers-and-motorcycles-89-102>

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this Information in another language or format, please contact the Trauma & Orthopaedic Department team on 02476 966262 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

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