

Driving and Parkinson's

Parkinson's is a progressive neurological condition, characterised by both motor (movement) and non-motor symptoms.

Most people wish to continue driving for as long as possible after diagnosis. Driving can be important for maintaining social interactions and independence, as well as providing a sense of freedom and enjoyment.

Part of your responsibility as a driver is ensuring you remain *capable* of driving safely. Your safety when driving may be impacted by illness, disability, certain medical conditions or medications.

Living with Parkinson's can affect many drivers, but it doesn't necessarily mean you will be stopped from driving.

The complexity of driving

Driving is a complex task that requires visual perception, good judgement and reasonable physical capability.

Cognitive abilities such as attention, scanning, memory, concentration, spatial awareness, coordination, anticipation and responsiveness are used in combination with one's physical ability to safely enter and exit the vehicle, fasten a seatbelt, steer, perform head checks and manage foot and hand controls.

Symptoms and driving

Some symptoms of Parkinson's that may influence driving ability or make driving more challenging might include:

- Slowed movements
- Muscle rigidity
- Involuntary movements
- Changes in hand dexterity
- Motor fluctuations
- Fatigue
- Anxiety
- Concentration difficulties
- Difficulty with multitasking.

Your legal responsibilities

Reporting your condition to your licensing authority

You are legally required to report any permanent or long-term illness that is likely to affect your ability to drive safely to VicRoads (or local licensing authority). A Parkinson's diagnosis falls into this category.

Failure to report your diagnosis may result in a traffic fine, jeopardise your insurance cover and potentially put lives at risk.

Reporting a condition does not necessarily mean your licence will be taken away.

Process for reporting

To report your condition, your doctor needs to complete a medical report on a VicRoads, or state-based licensing authority report form.

Your General Practitioner (GP) will complete the form indicating whether you meet the medical standards to drive a vehicle, as specified in a national publication; 'Assessing fitness to drive' ([Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive](#)).

The GP confirms:

- your medical condition/s
- if you meet the medical standards to drive
- if they recommend you undergo an on-road driving assessment.

It's a good idea to book a longer GP consultation for this discussion.

Can someone report concerns about your ability to drive safely?

If a family member or someone in your community has concerns about your ability to drive safely, they can report their concerns to VicRoads. This can be done anonymously and will likely result in a request for you to submit a medical report.

Motor vehicle insurance

As well as notifying VicRoads (or licensing authority in your state), it is recommended that you check the "duty of disclosure" clause of your motor vehicle insurance policy.

It is difficult to say how disclosing your diagnosis will impact your insurance premium, as all insurers are different, but check the fine print of your policy.

The licensing authority will determine next steps

VicRoads assesses each medical report on a case-by-case basis and will inform you of any further steps required. Recommendations may include:

- Continue driving, with need to submit periodic medical reports
- Undergo a specialised occupational therapy driving assessment
- Suspension or cancellation of license.

What happens if I need an on-road driving assessment?

You may be required to have an **occupational therapy driving assessment**. This is with a specialised occupational therapist (OT) who has an extra qualification as a driving assessor.

There are two parts to this assessment:

- **off-road** (medical history, driving history, vision and hearing checks, road law knowledge)
- **on-road** (dual-control car, with an instructor in the front passenger seat and OT Driving Assessor in the rear passenger seat).

The OT Driving Assessor's role is to evaluate your ability to continue to drive safely, legally, and independently. They provide advice about how your Parkinson's may impact on your driving and make recommendations for how to manage and monitor any issues identified.

Recommendations may include periodic reviews, driving at certain times (daylight hours only, off-peak times), driving locally (within certain radius of home) or modifications to the vehicle (alternative controls). In more rare instances, if there are significant safety concerns, they can recommend a licence suspension or cancellation.

Can I appeal a decision?

Contact VicRoads or your state licensing authority for information on appealing licence decisions.

Accessible Parking Permits

Accessible Parking Permits enable people with certain conditions, disabilities or impairments to park in accessible parking bays or to park in standard parking bays for double the time displayed on the parking sign.

In Victoria, there are three permit categories with varying parking concessions. Permits are issued in consideration of the applicant's needs and in accordance with the state-wide Accessible Parking Permit Scheme. You can apply as a driver, a passenger or as both.

The application process can be completed online and requires an assessment by a medical practitioner. For those without internet or mobile phone access, a paper-based version of the application can be obtained from your local council. To learn more about your eligibility and to start the application process, visit the Accessible Parking website: [Accessible Parking Permits Victoria](#).

Further information

Fight Parkinson's

[Parkinson's and driving](#)

Health Information Line, 1800 644 189

VicRoads:

[Notifying VicRoads](#)

Note: If you live in another state or your licence is provided by another jurisdiction, you will need to contact the relevant licensing authority.

Accessible Parking Permits:

[Accessible Parking Permits Victoria](#)

Assessing Fitness to Drive for commercial and private vehicle drivers (2017)

[Austroads Assessing Fitness to Drive](#)