

# Seizures and driving

## Road safety and Medical Review

**Victoria's vision is to create a safe system of roads, laws, vehicles, drivers and behaviour that supports and improves the safe movement of our community. This includes supporting drivers to drive at any age so long as they are medically fit to do so.**

We encourage people with medical conditions to speak with their doctor to understand their health conditions and the potential impact on their driving.

Drivers are legally required to notify Medical Review of any serious, permanent or long term illness, disability, medical condition or injury (or the effects of treatment for any of those things) that may affect their fitness to drive.

Each driver is reviewed individually to determine the outcome that is best for the safety of the individual and the community.

If you can show that you can drive safely, but only under certain conditions, a conditional licence may be considered. A wide range of conditions are possible to maximise your safety and that of other road users.

Common licence conditions include wearing corrective eye glasses, driving automatic vehicles, driving in daylight hours or only in certain areas.

The purpose of this information update is to explain how seizures can affect your driving and your responsibilities as a driver.

### What are seizures?

A seizure occurs when there is a disruption to normal brain activity. This can involve loss of awareness or ability to control movements and behaviour changes that may impact on safe driving. Epilepsy is a condition where recurrent seizures are experienced. Not all people who have a seizure have epilepsy. Referral to a neurologist is important for correct diagnosis and advice about driving.

### Driving and seizures

Some circumstances or substances may increase the risk of having seizures. For example:

- stress
- excessive alcohol
- irregular use of anti-epileptic medication.

Having a seizure while driving is unsafe because the driver can lose control of the vehicle.

### What do you need to do?

If you have epilepsy or seizures you may be eligible to hold a learner permit or driver licence for private vehicles as long as your seizures are well-controlled. You should discuss this with your doctor.

If you have a seizure or epilepsy you are required by law to notify Medical Review. Failure to notify could also affect your insurance cover.

### How will Medical Review assess my fitness to drive?

The Medical Review team determines your fitness to drive on a case by case basis in accordance with national medical standards (*Assessing Fitness to Drive*). Medical advice and assessment outcomes are considered. Medical Review may also request a report from a specialist in epilepsy. The report must be no more than six months old. In every case, individual circumstances apply, and you may wish to discuss these with your doctor.

### Seizure-free periods for drivers of private vehicles

If you have had a seizure, the period that you must be free from seizures before driving depends on the type of seizure, the circumstances surrounding it, and whether you hold a private or commercial licence.

The frequency of periodic reviews required by Medical Review may vary depending on your medical report and the opinion of Medical Review's medical advisors.

## Driving commercial vehicles

Medical standards for commercial truck, taxi and bus licences are stricter than those for private licences. In many cases, if you have had a seizure, you may not be permitted to drive these vehicles. If you wish to drive a commercial vehicle, you will need to consult a specialist in epilepsy who can provide Medical Review with a medical report to assist in determining your fitness to drive.

A conditional licence may be considered taking into account this medical opinion, and whether you meet the national medical standards for licensing.

Please note: commercial drivers are required to be seizure free for 10 years.

## If your licence is varied, suspended or cancelled

You can write to the Department and ask for an Internal Review of any decision. An independent person will review the decision and reply to you within 28 days.

You may also have the right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court if the department has made a discretionary decision to cancel, suspend or vary your driver licence or learner permit.

It is important for you to know that there is no right to appeal to the Magistrates Court if our decision to cancel, suspend or vary your driver licence or learner permit is a mandatory decision, made under section 24(1) of the *Road Safety Act 1986*.

Keep in mind that if you lose an appeal at the Magistrates' Court, you may have to pay costs.

## Where can I get further information?

Further information is available on the **Transport Victoria website**.

### Medical Review

**Email** [medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au)

**Call** (03) 8391 3226

**Fax** (03) 9854 2307

**Mail** Medical Review  
GPO Box 2392, Melbourne  
Victoria 3001

### Epilepsy Foundation

**Call** (03) 8809 0600

**Information Line** 1300 761 487

**Web** [epilepsyfoundation.org.au](http://epilepsyfoundation.org.au)

This information was prepared in consultation with the Epilepsy Foundation of Victoria Inc.

## Find out more



If you have any questions please email us at [medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au](mailto:medicalreview@roads.vic.gov.au) or visit our website and search 'Medical conditions and review'.

**Call:** (03) 8391 3226

**Web:** [transport.vic.gov.au/medical-review](http://transport.vic.gov.au/medical-review)



Language Loop (formerly Victorian Interpreting & Translating Services - VITS) call (03) 9280 0783, then ask for 13 11 71.