

# Your Health and Driving Safely



## Could Your Medical Condition Cause a Collision?

Did you know that Massachusetts is a self reporting state? That means it is your responsibility to report to the Registry of Motor Vehicles any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive. The purpose of this brochure is to help drivers identify some medical conditions that can lead to impaired driving. The RMV consulted with medical experts before developing regulations about minimum physical abilities necessary for driving, and these regulations apply to all licensed drivers and new applicants. Other standards may apply to commercial drivers.

### Arthritis

Arthritis can make it difficult to perform physical activities. Even the simple ones required for driving such as turning your head and neck to check for traffic, reaching the brake pedal quickly in an emergency, and adjusting rear and side mirrors. If you're not sure about whether you can move fast enough in an emergency, see your doctor and consider having a driving evaluation at an outpatient rehabilitation center.

### Vision



One of the most important requirements for safe driving is good vision. For an unrestricted license, you must have at least 20/40 vision in one eye (even with glasses) and 120 degrees peripheral vision. If you have 20/50, 20/60, or 20/70 vision and 120 degrees peripheral vision, you can still obtain a driver's license that allows you to drive during the day. If you wear a telescopic lens, special rules may apply.

### Hearing



Hearing loss, by itself, does not impair a person's ability to drive. If your family members or doctor tell you that they've noticed a change in your hearing it's important to take note of these warnings. Check with your doctor about any concerns you might have.

### Loss of Consciousness

Many medical conditions can cause a person to lose consciousness or "pass out" without warning. Heart conditions, breathing problems, diabetes, seizure disorders and sleep disturbances can affect mental alertness. If you've suffered a loss of consciousness or an episode of altered consciousness (such as low blood sugar, lightheadedness, or disorientation) you **MUST** turn in your driver's license for at least six (6) months. The RMV will provide you with a free Mass I.D. to use during that time. If, after six (6) months, your doctor

certifies that you have been episode free, you can regain your driving privileges. The RMV will provide you with a new license free of charge.

### Mental Abilities



Several medical conditions can affect mental alertness and clear thinking without causing the driver to "pass out." Trouble remembering things, confusion, stress, depression and anxiety are all conditions that can affect your ability to drive. Many conditions are temporary and you may only have to refrain from driving during a brief adjustment period.

### Drugs and Alcohol



Some prescription medications can cause serious side effects (for example, drowsiness). Massachusetts's law forbids driving while under the influence of narcotic drugs, even with a valid prescription. Always check with your doctor before driving. Prescription medicine may also worsen the effects of alcohol. Also, elderly drivers may find that alcohol affects them more now than it did in their youth. Never drink and drive.

# More Information

## **RMV Medical Affairs Bureau**

P.O. Box 55889

Boston, MA 02205-5889.

Website: [www.massrmv.com](http://www.massrmv.com)

Phone: 857-368-8020

## **Driving Evaluation Programs**

\* Adaptive Driving Program, Inc.

250 Milton Street, Suite LL002

Dedham, MA 02026-2904

508-626-6568

Berkshire Medical Center

725 North Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

413-447-2200

Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

DriveWise Program

300 Brookline Avenue

Boston, MA 02215

617-667-4074

Beverly Hospital Hunt Center

75 Lindall Street

Danvers, MA 01923

978-774-4400 x4050

Braintree Rehabilitation Hospital

250 Pond Street

Braintree, MA 02184

781-348-4017

Driving Solutions

N. Reading, MA 01864

508-878-9583

[drivingsolutionsjudy@gmail.com](mailto:drivingsolutionsjudy@gmail.com)

[www.drivingsolutionsforyou.com](http://www.drivingsolutionsforyou.com)

Emerson Hospital Center for Rehabilitative  
and Sports Therapies

Keys to Independence Program

310 Baker Avenue

Concord, MA 01742

978-287-8244

Fairlawn Rehabilitation Hospital

189 May Street

Worcester, MA 01602

508-791-6351

New England Rehabilitation Hospital

2 Rehabilitation Way

Woburn, MA 01801

781-935-5050

Newton-Wellesley Hospital

159 Wells Avenue

Newton, MA 02459

617-243-6172

Northeast Rehabilitation Hospital

70 Butler Street

Salem, NH 03079

603-893-2900

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital

300 First Avenue

Charlestown, MA 02129

617-952-6200

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital

Cape Cod, 311 Service Road

East Sandwich, MA 02537

508-833-4141 Sandwich

508-240-7203 Orleans

Sturdy Memorial Hospital

211 Park Street

Attleboro, MA 02703

508-236-7380

VA New England Healthcare System

940 Belmont Avenue

Brockton, MA 02310

508-583-4500

\*Weldon Center for Rehabilitation

175 Carew Street

Springfield, MA 01104

413-748-6800

Whittier Rehabilitation Hospital

145 Ward Hill Avenue

Bradford, MA 01835

978-372-8000

## **Driver Training Programs**

AAA Senior Driving

<http://seniordriving.aaa.com/> or call your local  
AAA office

AARP Smart Driver Course

888-687-2277

\*Central Massachusetts Safety Council

West Boylston, MA

508-835-2333 x23

Safety Council of Western N,E,

1000 Wilbraham Road

Springfield, MA 01109

413-783-1632

In Control Advanced Driver Training

188 Main Street, Suite 202

Wilmington, MA 01887

978-658-4144

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\* Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist

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