

RSA

NDLS

National Driver Licence Service

An tSeirbhís Náisiúnta um Cheadúnais Tiomána

Vision and Driving

This is an overview of the driving advice for drivers with vision disorders. The complete standards are published in *Sláinte agus Tiomáint: Medical Fitness to Drive (MFTD) Guidelines*.



Vision and Driving

This leaflet covers medical fitness to drive relating to vision. These terms are explained below.

It is very important that you have good vision so you can drive safely. Getting treatment for conditions such as cataracts can help you to drive more comfortably and safely. Wearing glasses or contact lenses, if you need them, will also help your vision when driving.

Vision tests for drivers check the **sharpness** of your vision (i.e. reading letters or shapes of different sizes on a special chart). The tests also check for any weakness in one or both eyes which reduces the **range** of your vision. These tests can be carried out by a doctor or an optometrist (once known as an optician).

If there is any reason to think that your vision might not be adequate for driving, then you should be examined by an eye specialist or an optometrist.

For a certain number of conditions outlined in table 1, the NDLS needs to be informed about the visual condition.

Table 1: Conditions which should be reported to the NDLS

a	Any conditions likely to cause progressive loss of vision. This includes, but is not limited to, macular degeneration, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, and diabetic retinopathy.
b	Vision limited to one eye (monocular vision).*
c	Double vision – when resolved, either spontaneously or with the use of special prism glasses, NDLS must be informed for resuming driving.

*Drivers with vision limited to one eye are not permitted to hold a Group 2 licence (buses and trucks).

In some cases, this will also be included by the doctor or optometrist in the form filled out at initial licence application (D401) or where a medical certificate is required at licence renewal (D501).

The rules for sharpness and range of vision are stricter for Group 2 drivers (buses and trucks) than for Group 1 drivers (cars, motorcycles, tractors).

If you are a driver with a condition that affects your vision, it is important that you follow the advice of your doctor, optometrist and/or orthoptist. They will recommend treatments such as using the glasses, contact lenses and/or other aids to improve your vision. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses when driving, this may be noted on your driving licence. This means you will only be allowed to drive when wearing them. The same rule applies if you are allowed to only drive during the daytime.

If you have a visual condition listed in Table 1, you must tell us.

You should include this information on your driving licence application form (D401). Your doctor or optometrist will include it on the medical report that you need to renew your licence (D501).

FAQs: Frequently asked questions

What should I do if I feel my vision is getting worse for driving?

You should visit your optometrist. They will tell you if you:

- Need a new prescription for glasses or contact lenses.
- Need to be referred to an ophthalmologist (eye doctor).
- Have a condition you should report to us.

What should I do if eye drops have been used to dilate my pupils as part of retinal screening or an assessment by an ophthalmologist or optometrist?

Eye drops are used to dilate (widen) your pupils when you go for retinopathy screening under the National Diabetes Screening Programme. They may also be used by your ophthalmologist or optometrist during an assessment. These eye drops can change your vision for a while. You should not drive for at least four hours after receiving them or until you feel safe enough to drive again. You should ask someone else to drive your car, arrange a lift, use public transport or, at the very least, leave your car parked until after the four hours and you feel safe to drive.

Does colour vision affect fitness to drive?

Colour blindness does not affect fitness to drive.

If I get corrective surgery for my vision, do I need to tell the NDLS?

If you used to wear glasses or contact lenses for driving but you no longer need them, you must send us an eyesight report form (D502) signed by a doctor or optometrist.

Will wearing glasses to drive make my eyes worse?

No, this is a myth! Wearing glasses to drive does not make your eyes lazy or dependent on glasses. It makes it easier for you to see road signs. More importantly it makes it easier for you to see and react to traffic and hazards as you drive. You should never drive using reading glasses or ready-readers bought off the shelf.

Does age make a difference to vision for driving?

Yes! The vision standards stay the same, but as you age you may need more help to meet these standards. This help can include glasses and contact lenses or treatment for cataract, macular degeneration or other eye conditions. Just because you need reading glasses this does not mean you will need glasses for driving. But as you get older you may need some help for driving, even though you might not need to wear glasses for normal vision.

Why is it important that I'm fully fit to drive?

It is important that you are fully fit to drive because:

- if you continue to drive against medical advice, and evidence shows this, the NDLS and the An Garda Síochána will take action to cancel your driving licence. It will also affect your motor insurance.
- if you are involved in a crash or stopped by An Garda Síochána, you might have to prove you are in full control of your vehicle. If you are not in full control, you may be charged even if you don't have an incident or a crash. If you cause harm to a person or property, the charge will be more serious.

Our aim is to help drivers to be as mobile as possible. We also encourage drivers with medical conditions to get a diagnosis and treatment so that they will have less chance of crashing. However, it is important to strike the right balance between mobility and safety for drivers and other road users.

Be a responsible driver

It is your responsibility as a driver to:

- follow the advice of your doctor and optometrist/orthoptist
- take your prescribed medication
- wear suitable glasses or contact lenses
- check and manage your medical condition(s)
- tell us and your insurance provider if you have a long-term or permanent injury or illness that may affect your ability to drive safely. This can include certain eye conditions and vision problems
- complete the questions about glasses, contact lenses, vision and eyesight on your driving licence application form (D401)
- meet the requirements of your driving licence, including going for regular medical check-ups
- get professional advice on your medical fitness to drive if you develop a medical or vision condition during the term of your driving licence
- get professional advice on your medical fitness to drive if your medical or vision condition changes during the term of your driving licence.

How to inform the NDLS

If, after visiting your doctor or optometrist, you need to make a change to your driving licence because of your vision, then you must tell us.

You must bring the following documents in person to any NDLS centre or you may be able to apply on-line from June 2020 if you have a MyGov ID:

- 1) a completed driving licence application form (D401)
- 2) a medical report form (D501) completed by your doctor or an eyesight report form (D502) completed by an optometrist (a letter from your doctor or optometrist is not accepted)
- 3) proof of your PPSN (if not provided previously)
- 4) your current driving licence

We will send you a new, updated driving licence in the post. Please see www.ndls.ie for locations, bookings and forms.

If you have more questions, please email medicalfitness@rsa.ie or telephone **1890 40 60 40**.

National Driver Licence Service
PO Box 858
Southside Delivery Office
Co Cork

You should inform your insurance company of your eye condition. If you do not, they may not honour a claim that you might make in the future.



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