

Epilepsy and driving

If you have had one suspected seizure of any kind including an aura sensation, you must stop driving immediately and notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). If you do not notify the DVLA, you can be fined up to £1,000, and may also be prosecuted if you are involved in an accident caused by a potential seizure. If you continue to drive or fail to notify the DVLA, your insurance is also likely to be invalid.

We understand that giving up your licence can have a big impact on work, your social and family life but these rules are designed to keep you and other road users safe. In many cases, people with epilepsy can resume driving again if they have remained seizure free for a required period. Find more details below.

Giving up your licence

You can voluntarily surrender your licence by phoning the DVLA on 0300 790 6806, or contacting them by webchat, email or by post. For contact details, go to <https://www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla/y/driving-and-medical-issues>.

Voluntary surrender

When you contact the DVLA, advise them that you want to **voluntarily surrender your licence**. You can also download their form 'Declaration of voluntary surrender' here <https://www.gov.uk/giving-up-your-driving-licence>, and send this, together with your driving licence to the DVLA.

A voluntary surrender potentially allows you to drive under [Section 88](#) of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as soon as your qualifying period of being seizure free is up, while your application to have your driving licence reinstated is

still with the DVLA. This means, you may not have to wait until your licence has been returned to you. Your doctor will also need to be satisfied that you are safe to drive before you resume driving under Section 88.

Having your licence revoked

If you do not voluntarily surrender your licence, the DVLA may formally revoke your licence depending on how long ago the seizure was. You will have to complete a questionnaire and give details of the date of your last seizure. If you have not been seizure free for the required period, the DVLA will then send a letter confirming that your licence has been revoked and asking you to return your licence.

Once you have been seizure free for the required period, you will need to wait until the DVLA have processed your application and returned your licence to you before you are allowed to resume driving. This can often add several weeks or months before you are allowed to drive again.

Appeals against a DVLA decision

If you disagree with a decision made by the DVLA to revoke your licence you can appeal against that decision. The DVLA will send you a note explaining your rights to appeal and how to go about it. Here in Scotland, the appeal needs to be made within 21 days through a summary application and lodged with the Sheriff Court. A summary application is a legal document, and we recommend that you seek legal advice from either a solicitor or your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

How to reapply for your licence

Before you can apply to have your licence reinstated, you will need to meet the legal requirements outlined below. In addition, your doctor will also have to agree that you are safe to drive again.

You can apply to the DVLA up to eight weeks before you are due to get your licence back.

You can order the application form (D1, for a car or motorcycle licence, or D2 for a bus, coach or lorry licence) online from the DVLA's ordering service <https://www.gov.uk/dvlaforms>. You also need to download and complete a

confidential questionnaire (FEP1 for car or motorcycle licences, or FEP1V for coach or lorry licences) which assesses your medical fitness to drive and return this with your D1 or D2. You can find these forms at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fep1-confidential-medical-information>. Your local post office may also stock these forms.

You do not need to take another driving test, but some people may find it helpful to have a few refresher lessons to increase their confidence.

Ordinary driving licence

You can ask for your ordinary driving licence to be reinstated if:

- you have not had a seizure (with or without taking medication) for at least 12 months, **or**
- you have established a pattern for one year or more of only having seizures when you are asleep, but you must never have had any kind of seizure while awake. If this pattern is broken by any kind of awake seizure, you must stop driving immediately and tell the DVLA. You do not need to tell the DVLA if your seizures still only happen when you are asleep; **or**
- you have previously had awake seizures, but for at least three years have only had seizures while asleep. This means, if you continue to have sleep seizures after this period of time, you may start driving again. However, as soon as you have any kind of seizure while awake, you must stop driving immediately and notify the DVLA; **or**
- you have seizures which do not affect your level of consciousness, awareness, or ability to act. The DVLA may consider reinstating your licence under those circumstances even if you continue to have this type of seizure, provided you have never had a different type of seizure. As soon as you experience any other type of seizure, you must stop driving immediately and tell the DVLA.

Short term licence

The licence you will initially be given will be a short term licence lasting between one and five years. It will then need to be renewed again. You can renew a short term licence online at <https://www.gov.uk/renew-medical-driving-licence>.

One-off (isolated) seizures

The rules are less strict if you have had a one-off single seizure. If

- you have only ever had one seizure, **and**
- your EEG and brain scan were clear, **and**
- you do not need to take anti-epileptic drugs, **and**
- your neurologist thinks you will be safe to drive,

you may get your ordinary driving licence back after six months instead of having to wait the full 12 months. In some cases, you may, however, still need to wait for 12 months to have your licence reinstated.

Provoked seizures

A provoked seizure is caused by an unusual event which normally will not happen again. In this situation, the DVLA may allow you to drive sooner than the 12 months if the cause of the seizure can be found and either removed or treated.

For example, you may have a seizure immediately after a head injury. If the head injury can be treated and you make a full recovery, this could be classed as a provoked seizure.

Moped and motorcycle licences

The medical requirements are the same as for a car licence above.

LGV and PCV licences

Rules are much stricter for LGV/PCV licences. If you have a diagnosis of epilepsy, you need to meet the following criteria before you can apply for an LGV/PCV licence:

- you must have been seizure free for ten years; **and**
- you must have had no treatment (this includes not taking any anti-epileptic drugs) for epilepsy for at least ten years; **and**
- DVLA doctors must be satisfied that you are not likely to have another seizure.

Isolated one-off seizure

If you have had one single isolated seizure, you may get your LGV/PCV licence back after **five years** if the following applies to you:

- you have only had one seizure, **and**
- your EEG and brain scan were clear, **and**
- you do not need to take anti-epileptic drugs, **and**
- your risk of further seizures is considered by your neurologist to be two percent or less per annum, **and**
- you are not otherwise considered to be a source of danger while driving.

Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle licences

In order to drive a taxi or private hire vehicle you need a taxi licence from your local authority.

Each local authority sets their own medical standards for issuing such licences. For example, some authorities may issue a taxi licence after the standard 12 months being seizure free required for an ordinary licence. Other authorities may apply the much stricter rules for LGV/PCV licences, requiring anyone with a history of seizures to be seizure and medication free for ten years.

To find out more, contact your local authority.

Forklift trucks and farm machinery

Driving a forklift truck or farm machinery on a public road requires a full licence. The type of licence required will depend on the size of vehicle.

Depending on the licence, a diagnosis of epilepsy will usually mean you will not be able to drive or operate this type of farm machinery for a required period on public roads.

If you are driving on private land, you do not need a driving licence, but it is important to check with your insurance company that you remain fully insured after a diagnosis of epilepsy. If your seizures are not well controlled, you could be putting yourself or others at risk. Restrictions under the Health and Safety at Work Act might also apply.

Applying for a provisional licence

If you have epilepsy and are applying for a provisional driving licence, you must fill in application form D1. You can get this from [DVLA's ordering service](#) or from most post offices. You will need to declare your epilepsy on the application form and will need to answer questions to assess your medical fitness to drive.

Changing or stopping your medication

If you are changing or stopping your medication, you will need to stop driving until your doctor says it is safe to start again.

If you are coming off your anti-epileptic drugs under medical supervision, the DVLA recommend that you stop driving during the time your medication is being withdrawn and for six months after.

You do not need to inform the DVLA of a medication change or medication withdrawal, but you will need to follow medical advice.

If you have a seizure due to a prescribed change or withdrawal of your medication, you must inform the DVLA. You can reapply for your licence when

- you have returned to your previous medication for six months; **and**
- you have been seizure free for six months.

Car insurance

If you have had a seizure or diagnosis of epilepsy, you must contact your insurance company to let them know. If you don't do this, your insurance may be invalidated, and you may also find it difficult to get future car insurance.

Once you are allowed to drive again, you may have to do some shopping around or use comparison websites to find affordable car insurance with a diagnosis of epilepsy. Generally, insurers should not turn you down or charge you more just because you have epilepsy, but they can charge you more if they consider you to be a higher risk than someone without epilepsy.

Taking extra care when driving

Once you are seizure free and have your licence back, be mindful of potential seizure triggers and avoid driving when a seizure is more likely:

- avoid driving when you are tired or for long stretches without a break
- eat regular snacks and keep yourself well hydrated while driving
- do not drive if you have missed a dose of your epilepsy medication
- do not drive if you feel unwell
- do not drive if you experience side effects of your epilepsy medication, which may affect your concentration
- Avoid alcohol. Small amounts of alcohol mixed with your epilepsy medication can seriously affect your ability to drive safely even if this is well below the legal drink-drive limit.

Driving abroad

The driving regulations in this factsheet apply to the UK. If you want to drive abroad, check out that country's driving regulations for people with epilepsy to make sure you can legally drive there. Some countries have stricter driving regulations for people with epilepsy.

Discounted travel

If you are unable to drive because of your epilepsy, you usually can take advantage of the following discounted travel schemes to help you get out and about or to and from your work:

Scotland wide free bus pass

If you meet the minimum age requirement for a UK driving licence (aged 16 and over) and have had a seizure within the last 12 months, you are entitled to a free National Entitlement Card (bus pass). You may also be entitled to a companion card if you are in receipt of certain benefits, allowing someone else to travel with you free of charge.

This card gives you free bus travel across Scotland and concessionary fares on some local trains. Our helpline 0808 800 2200 can give you more information on eligibility criteria and how to apply.

Disabled Person's Railcard

You may be entitled to a Disabled Person's Railcard if you continue to have seizures despite taking epilepsy medication. You need to purchase this card at an annual fee, and it will give you, and an adult travelling with you, up to one third off UK train fares. Check out the [Disabled Person's Railcard](#) website for more information.

Access to Work Scheme

If you need your car for work, the Access to Work Scheme may be able to offer you help with extra travel costs getting you to and from work, or to appointments. Find out more at <https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work>.

Contact us

If you need more information or want to talk about anything mentioned in this factsheet, please contact our freephone helpline on 0808 800 2200. All calls are confidential.

Our resources are always free. If you would like to support our work please text FACTS to 70085 to donate £3. Texts cost £3 plus one standard rate message.



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