Driving after a stroke/transient ischaemic attack (TIA)

If you have had a stroke or TIA, it may be difficult or dangerous for you to return to driving. You may experience one or more of the following problems, which will all affect your ability to drive.

- Weakness of your arm or leg.
- Damage to your vision.
- Problems with memory or concentration.
- Difficulties attending to lots of things at once.
- Slowed reactions.
- Speech or reading difficulties.
- Fits or convulsions.

Regulations
Because of these risks, the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency) has strict guidelines on who may or may not drive. It is your legal responsibility to adhere to them.

1. **You must not drive for at least 1 month.** If after that time your GP agrees that you are fit to resume driving, you may do so. If you still have any of the problems listed above, and your GP has advised you not to drive you **must** tell the DVLA and your insurance company. **You must not drive until your GP says you are safe to do so.**

2. **Multiple TIAs** over a short period of time **may require 3 months free** of attacks before resuming driving and you should notify the DVLA.

3. If an epileptic attack occurred at the time of the stroke or TIA or you have subsequently developed epilepsy, the DVLA must be notified and you should not drive until you have been cleared to do so.

4. **LGV/PSV Licences** - you must contact the DVLA if you hold a current LGV and/or PSV license.

5. Group 2 license regulations are much stricter and are likely to be applied for 12 months, although this is decided by the DVLA.
Informing the DVLA
To notify the DVLA it is best to contact them by letter giving as much detail as possible and including the following:

- Full name and address.
- Date of birth.
- Driving Licence Number and as much information about your condition as possible.

You will then be sent a questionnaire and they will ask for permission to contact your doctor. They may ask for an independent medical opinion or for you to attend for a driving assessment.

There are several possibilities:

- Your current licence may continue.
- You will be issued with a licence for 1, 2 or 3 years.
- Your licence will be revoked.
- Your licence could indicate that special controls need to be fitted to the vehicles you drive.

If your licence is revoked but your condition subsequently improves, you can reapply for a licence, but you must not drive again until you have been issued with a licence.

You have an on-going responsibility to keep the DVLA informed of any changes to your health.

Insurance
It is recommended you keep your insurance company informed at all times of any health issues and any changes to your condition, as well as any vehicle modifications. Failure to disclose information may result in your policy being invalidated.

If you have problems with your insurance, the British Insurance Brokers Association can advise you on the most appropriate insurance policy for you and your vehicle.

Other Advice

- You must be able to read a number plate at a specified distance: this is 20 metres for new style plates and 20.5 metres for older style ones.
- You may be able to drive a car with automatic transmission if the only limitation you have is to your left leg.
- If you also have upper limb problems it is likely that adaptations will be required to ensure you have full control of the car at all times, especially with regard to control of the steering and indicators.

If you are stopped by the police for any reason, you can be asked to prove your ability to drive safely and failure to do so can result in prosecution.

Ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure that you can drive safely at all times. This advice is intended to help you ensure that you are driving legally and that you will not be a danger to yourself, your passengers, other road users and pedestrians.
Useful Contacts

Derby Driveability
Kingsway Hospital
Kingsway
Derby
DE22 3LZ

Telephone: 01332 371929
Website: www.drmc.uk.com

For advice and assessment on a range of mobility issues, including driving ability, passenger needs, stowage and transportation of wheelchairs, vehicle adaptation specialists.

DVLA Drivers’ Medical Unit
Longview Road
Swansea
SA99 1TU

Telephone: 0870 600 0301
Website: www.open.gov.uk/dvla.htm

British Insurance Brokers Association
BIBA House
14 Bevis Marks
London
EC3A 7NT

Telephone: 020 7623 9043

The Stroke Association
Whitecross Street
London
EC1Y 8JJ

Telephone: 020 7566 0300
Website: www.stroke.org.uk

The Stroke Association also publishes a leaflet covering aspects of returning to driving following a stroke.

References
Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Website: www.dvla.gov.uk
Driving after Stroke; The Stroke Association 2006. Website: www.stroke.org.uk/information

NHS Direct is a 24 hour nurse led, confidential service providing general health care advice and information.
Telephone 0845 4647 or visit the website at www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Any external organisations and websites included here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, nor does their inclusion constitute a recommendation.

Reference Code: G10403/0871/07.2007/VERSION5
© Copyright 2007 All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission in writing from the Patient Information Service, Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. (G7254/02.2004/V4)