



Driving and Dizziness

There are legal obligations which apply to those who suffer from, or develop, sudden attacks of unprovoked or unprecipitated disabling giddiness, (e.g. Ménière's disease) and wish to continue driving. You are required by law to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), as well as the company which insures any vehicle you drive of your condition. Please visit the GOV.UK website for information on Vertigo and Driving (external website).

What are my responsibilities if I have dizziness and I have a driving licence?

There are legal obligations which apply to those who suffer from or develop sudden attacks of unprovoked or unprecipitated disabling giddiness, (e.g. Meniere's disease), and wish to continue driving. You are required by law to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency in Swansea, as well as the company which insures any vehicle you drive of your condition. Providing your condition does not give rise to 'sudden and disabling attacks of vertigo' and you comply with the law by notifying the DVLA and your insurer, then only limited changes are likely to occur to affect your driving.

Informing DVLA

If you already hold a driving licence you should complete the DVLA form "Medical Fitness to Drive". You will be required to give the DVLA permission for their medical advisor to obtain reports on your condition from your doctor/specialist. The form is available online at: www.gov.uk/dizziness-and-driving.

Completed forms should be sent to Drivers Medical Group, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1DF. Forms can also be faxed: 0845 850 0095 or emailed: eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk.

If you are applying for a licence for the first time, leaflet D100 What you need to know about Driving Licences is available from most Post Offices. It includes Form D1. You should complete the medical section of this form.

Can drugs and medication cause problems with driving?

Section 5 of the Road Traffic Act states it is an offence to drive whilst under the influence of drugs. This may apply to some of the drugs prescribed in the treatment of vertigo and dizziness, with the notable exception of Serc (Betahistine). Check with your own doctor whether any medication you are taking falls into the prohibited category.

Will my driving licence be affected?

Once the DVLA receives your completed form they will assess your situation. You may be able to retain your existing licence, or it may be replaced with a new one. They may decide to replace your licence with one valid for a restricted period of between one and three years. After this time your medical ability to continue driving will be subject to further review. A restricted period licence entitles you to drive the same vehicles as your previous 'lifetime' licence. The only difference between the two licences is the renewal date, although drivers with entitlement to drive Large Goods Vehicles and Passenger Carrying Vehicles are subject to stricter rules. Licences may be revoked or refused by the DVLA if you are not able to meet the medical standards of fitness to drive. The Ménière's Society has received assurance from the Department of Transport that all cases will be treated individually.

Insurance

Your insurance company should be made aware of your condition as this may affect your premium. Since December 1996, under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, insurance companies are no longer allowed to refuse cover or impose exceptional premiums unless they can produce actuarial evidence that the condition in question carries a demonstrably greater risk. If your insurance company wishes to increase your premium because of your vertigo it is worth obtaining alternative quotes. Ensure they are aware of your condition and that the DVLA have agreed you can continue to hold your licence.

In an accident

If you do not inform the DVLA and your insurance company of your condition and you are subsequently involved in an accident you risk facing two charges; You are obliged by law to inform them of your condition. It is an offence not to do so. If you have not informed them of your medical condition and you are involved in an accident, there is likely to be a presumption of fault on your part. You will then face the difficulty of proving that you didn't have a vertigo attack or were not under the influence of drugs prior to the accident. It is also likely in these circumstances that your insurance company would declare your insurance invalid on the grounds that they were unaware of your illness. Virtually all policies contain a clause requiring you to inform your insurers of any relevant medical conditions or impairments which might affect their risk. You would then be held personally responsible for all claims arising from the accident, including third parties' as well as your own costs.

In summary:

- If your dizziness is predictable and controllable, you do not have to inform the DVLA.
- You are required by law to inform the DVLA and the company which insures any vehicle you drive of your condition if your dizziness is sudden (unpredictable) and uncontrollable. It is an offence not to do so in either case.
- Medical conditions are considered before the granting of a restricted period license and all cases will be assessed individually by the DVLA.
- It is an offence to drive whilst under the influence of drugs.
- Visit the GOV.UK website for further information: gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions (external link)

Useful info?

For further information contact the DVLA:

Post: Drivers Medical Enquiries, DVLA, Swansea SA99 1TU Telephone: 0300 790 6806 (car or motorcycle), 0300 790 6807 (bus, coach or lorry)

Fax: 0845 850 0095

Email: via the website

Web: <https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact The Balance Team
Secretary: 0121 424 3154

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