

Cardiomyopathy and driving (group 1)

Driving standards for ordinary driving licences (cars, motorcycles and mopeds)

- The DVLA sets the medical standards that drivers need to meet in order to hold a driving licence.
- There are specific medical standards for people with cardiomyopathy, those with particular symptoms, and those with particular medical devices.
- This factsheet covers the standards for group 1 licences (ordinary driving licence).

The DVLA and driving standards

The DVLA (driver and vehicle licensing agency) is the body that licenses cars and drivers in Great Britain, and sets the medical standards for drivers. If you are a driver the law says that you must tell the DVLA about any medical condition that may affect your ability to drive. This is a requirement of holding a driving licence.

The DVLA has specific standards for people with heart conditions which depend on what driving licence you hold, your condition, the symptoms you have and whether you have certain treatment.

Visit www.gov.uk and search for 'Car or motorcycle drivers with heart conditions'.

Some cardiomyopathies have their own specific driving standards. There are additional standards to meet if you experience particular symptoms (such as those related to arrhythmia or heart failure, for example palpitations, dizziness, loss of consciousness or other symptoms which affect safe driving) or if you have devices (such as a pacemaker or ICD).

With all of the standards below, where you can carry on driving, this is as long as there is no other reason why you cannot drive (such as any other medical conditions that have their own driving standards to meet and where you may have to tell the DVLA).

The following is a summary of the driving standards, from the GOV website and the DVLA guidelines for medical professionals ('Assessing fitness to drive – a guide for medical professionals').

Visit www.gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions for more information.

The standards will either mean:

- you do not need to stop driving or tell the DVLA;
- you need to stop driving and tell the DVLA; or
- you do not need to notify the DVLA although you need to stop driving for a specified length of time.

In some cases, you will not be able to hold a vocational driving licence (where a condition is a bar to having a vocational licence).

If you are unsure about what standards apply to you, you can talk to your GP or cardiologist.

Types of licence

Group 1 licence: also known as an 'ordinary driving licence', this is for cars, motorcycles and mopeds.

Group 2 licence: also known as a 'vocational licence', this is for large goods vehicles (lorries), passenger carrying vehicles (buses) and horse boxes.

This factsheet covers the driving standards for group 1 licences. See page two for the standards.

For group 2, see our factsheet *Cardiomyopathy and driving (group 2)*.

Forms

- Form H1 – this is the form to tell the DVLA about any heart condition that has to be reported. It is used to notify them if you have arrhythmias or palpitations, or a pacemaker. It also covers uncontrolled/poorly controlled angina, and aortic aneurysms.

For a full list of conditions that you need to tell the DVLA about and, to see the form, see www.gov.uk and search 'drivers medical H1'.

- Form DEFIB1 – this is the form to tell the DVLA if you have an ICD or CRT-D.

For more information and to see the form see www.gov.uk and search 'drivers medical DEFIB1'.

Further information or queries

If you have any queries about the driving standards and how they apply to you, you might like to talk to your GP or cardiologist about whether your condition affects your ability to drive.

For more information, copies of documents, and driving guidelines for all conditions and symptoms visit www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

Important note: where you can continue to drive but must tell the DVLA, you should only drive if your doctor (GP or cardiologist) advises that you can, while the DVLA assess your case. The DVLA will make the final licensing decision based on this assessment.

Cardiomyopathy UK is grateful to Dr A S Kumar, Cardiovascular Panel secretary, Medical Adviser, DVLA for helping to checking the accuracy of this factsheet.



Group 1 licence standards

Standards depending on type of cardiomyopathy

- Arrhythmogenic right ventricular cardiomyopathy – if you don't have symptoms you don't need to stop driving or tell the DVLA. If you have symptoms that do or could incapacitate you, you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You may be able to start driving again once the symptoms are controlled.
- Dilated cardiomyopathy – if you don't have symptoms you don't need to stop driving or tell the DVLA. If you have any symptoms, you must meet the standards for these symptoms (see below).

♥ www.gov.uk/dilated-cardiomyopathy-and-driving

- Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy – if you don't have symptoms you don't need to stop driving or tell the DVLA. If you have any symptoms, you must meet the standards for these symptoms (see below).

♥ www.gov.uk/hypertrophic-cardiomyopathy-and-driving

Standards depending on other conditions or symptoms

- Arrhythmia – if your arrhythmia affects your ability to drive (for example, if you have symptoms, or it has caused, or might cause, incapacity) you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. Usually you will be able to start driving again once the arrhythmia has been controlled for four weeks. You can report this online or by completing form H1.

♥ www.gov.uk/arrhythmia-and-driving

- Heart failure – if you don't have symptoms you can continue to drive and don't need to tell the DVLA. If you have symptoms you can continue to drive as long as they don't distract you from driving. If your symptoms distract you from driving, you must stop driving. You don't need to tell the DVLA but you must ask your doctor's advice before driving again.

♥ www.gov.uk/heart-failure-and-driving

- Left bundle branch block – you don't need to stop driving or tell the DVLA unless you have specific symptoms.

♥ www.gov.uk/left-bundle-branch-block-and-driving

Standards depending on devices

- Atrial defibrillator – you must tell the DVLA but you may be able to continue to drive.

♥ www.gov.uk/defibrillators-and-driving

- Cardiac resynchronisation therapy (CRT) with pacemaker – you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You may start driving again one week after implantation if you have no symptoms that are likely to affect your driving. The DVLA will send you a questionnaire and pacemaker declaration form to sign.

Cardiomyopathy UK

the heart muscle charity

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• Cardiac resynchronisation therapy with defibrillator (CRT-D) – you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You must not drive for one or six months (from the date of implantation) depending on why your device was implanted. Your doctor should tell you for how long you need to stop driving (one or six months). You may be able to drive again as long as you meet the criteria for ICDs.

- ICDs (for ventricular arrhythmia) – you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. The standards for driving depend on whether you are incapacitated by your condition/symptoms or not.

You may be able to start driving again six months after implantation if you have: no further symptoms, no shock from your device and no anti-tachycardia pacing because of symptoms in the last six months, as long as your condition and device are regularly reviewed.

If you get a shock from your device, you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You may be able to start driving six months after the date of shock as long as it didn't happen due to an incapacitating episode and you haven't had any further symptoms.

If you had an inappropriate shock, you may be able to start driving one month after the date of the shock if your doctor confirms that it was inappropriate, and as long as the cause of the shock is treated or removed.

If you need to tell the DVLA, can do this online or by filling in form DEFIB1. You will have to sign the form to show you agree to comply with the terms of the defibrillator declaration (on the form).

If your ICD battery is changed you will need to stop driving for one week after surgery. You don't need to tell the DVLA.

♥ www.gov.uk/defibrillators-and-driving

- Left ventricular assist device (LVAD) – if you have an LVAD you must stop driving and tell the DVLA. You may be able to start driving again after three months from implantation depending on an assessment by your healthcare professional.

- Pacemaker – you need to tell the DVLA if you have a pacemaker. When it is first implanted (or the battery is replaced) you will need to stop driving. You should be able to drive again after one week (as long as you have no other condition that would prevent you driving). You can tell the DVLA either online or by downloading form H1. You will have to sign the form to show you agree to comply with the terms of the pacemaker declaration.

♥ www.gov.uk/pacemakers-and-driving

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