Driving regulations - quick guide

epilepsy society

What is epilepsy?

The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) driving regulations define epilepsy as having two or more unprovoked seizures more than 24 hours apart in a five year period.
Visit gov.uk/guidance/neurological-disorders-assessing-fitness-to-drive#epilepsy-and-seizures

What does this factsheet cover?

This factsheet only covers the driving regulations for epilepsy for Group 1 licences. It does not cover other types of licence, isolated or provoked seizures, or seizures caused by changing or coming off medication.

Other types of licence
The medical standards for driving under a Group 2 licence are different from that for Group 1.

Provoked seizures
'Provoked seizures' are seizures caused by a specific event or situation that is not likely to happen again. Seizures due to lack of sleep are **not** usually considered 'provoked'.

Isolated seizures
An 'isolated seizure' is a single, unprovoked seizure in a person who has not had any other unprovoked seizures. This also includes more than one seizure if all of the seizures happened within a 24 hour period.

Seizures when stopping or changing medication
These are seizures that happen when someone's seizures have previously been fully controlled, and they stop or change their epilepsy medication and have a seizure.
Visit epilepsysociety.org.uk/driving for full details of the driving regulations for epilepsy.

Terms and what they mean

Group 1 licence: for cars, mopeds, and motorbikes.

Group 2 licence: for large lorries and buses.

Asleep seizures: seizures that happen when you are asleep, while you are falling asleep, or as you are waking up from sleep. They are sometimes called 'nocturnal seizures' as they usually happen at night, but the term 'asleep seizures' may apply if you sleep in the daytime as part of your normal routine (for example if you do shift work).

Awake seizures: seizures that happen when you are awake. This includes seizures that affect your consciousness if they start when you are awake.

How does this affect me?

The flow chart over the page only applies to you if you meet the DVLA's definition of epilepsy (see above) and it only covers Group 1 regulations.

If your situation changes (for example if you have been seizure-free and you have a seizure, or you have a different seizure to your normal seizures) you may need to start at the top of the flow chart again.

If you are not sure if or how these regulations apply to you, you can call our helpline to talk through your situation (see contact details below). Alternatively, you can contact the DVLA directly.
In Great Britain, call the DVLA medical enquiries on 0300 790 6806 or visit gov.uk/driving-medical-conditions
In Northern Ireland, call the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA) on 0300 200 7861 or visit nidirect.gov.uk/motoring

Epilepsy Society is grateful to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) who have reviewed this information.

This factsheet summarises the driving regulations for Group 1 driving licences (cars, motorcycles, and mopeds) and includes a flow chart to help you see how the regulations apply to you.

Helpline 01494 601400
Confidential, national call rate.
Information and emotional support.
Visit epilepsysociety.org.uk/helpline for opening hours.

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How do the driving regulations affect me?

The chart below is designed to show you how the Group 1 driving regulations for epilepsy apply to you. Start at the top and answer each question in turn to find which regulation applies to you. In all cases, you must tell the driving agency about your situation, as they may need to confirm that you can drive, or if you need to reapply for your licence before you can drive again.

When did you have your last seizure?

- 1 year ago or longer.
  - **Regulation:** you can apply for a new licence.
- Within the last year.
  - **What type of seizures do you have?**
    - I have asleep seizures only.
      - **Have you ever had awake seizures?**
        - **No** – I have never had an awake seizure before.
          - **Regulation:** you can drive after having asleep seizures for **1 year**, even if you are still having asleep seizures (as long as you do not have any awake seizures). This is with or without medication.

            If you have an awake seizure you must stop driving and tell the driving agency.
        - **Yes** – I have had awake seizures before.
          - **Regulation:** you can drive after having asleep seizures for **3 years,** even if you are still having asleep seizures (as long as you do not have any awake seizures, and have not had any in the last 3 years). This is with or without medication.

            If you have an awake seizure you must stop driving and tell the driving agency.
    - I have awake seizures or I have awake and asleep seizures.
      - **Do your seizures affect your consciousness or ability to act (including controlling a vehicle)?**
        - **No** – none of my seizures affect my consciousness or ability to act. (I am fully aware and able to act during all of my seizures).
          - **Have you ever had seizures that have affected your consciousness or ability to act (either now or in the past)?**
            - **No** – I have never had seizures that have affected my consciousness or ability to act.
              - **Regulation:** the driving agency may permit you to drive after having these seizures for 1 year, even if you are still having them (as long as you do not have any other seizure types). This is with or without medication.

                If you have any other type of seizure you must stop driving and tell the driving agency.
            - **Yes** – I have had seizures that have affected my consciousness or ability to act.
              - **Regulation:** you must be free of all types of seizures for 1 year before you can drive (with or without medication).

                If you have a seizure you must stop driving and tell the driving agency.
        - **Yes** – some or all of my seizures affect my consciousness or ability to act.
          - **Regulation:** you must be free of seizures for 1 year before you can drive (with or without medication).

            If you have a seizure you must stop driving and tell the driving agency.

Important note

To be able to drive you must also meet all normal driving requirements.

Visit gov.uk/government/organisations/driver-and-vehicle-licensing-agency

Every effort is made to ensure that all information is correct at the time of printing. Please note that information is intended for a UK audience. This information is not a substitute for advice from your own doctors. Epilepsy Society is not responsible for any actions taken as a result of using this information.

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