

## Where will you be asked to drive?

This assessment includes a range of driving situations such as high and low speed zones, controlled and uncontrolled intersections, parking and manoeuvring. The on-road assessment may involve approximately 40–60 minutes of driving.

The drive will include situations that you would normally face when driving in your local area, such as the local shopping area and suburban back streets, and may include the motorway or highway if appropriate.

## After the assessment

After the assessment the occupational therapist will discuss your assessment performance with you and write a report outlining his/her observations and provide a professional recommendation.

This report is sent to your doctor (and/or the person who asked for you to be assessed). Your doctor reviews the report, and then decides whether or not he/she considers you medically fit to drive, and if any conditions should be placed on your driving. If conditions need to be placed on your licence the report may be sent to the licensing authority. The occupational therapist can assist with any vehicle modifications you may require.

If your doctor signs the medical certificate confirming you are fit to drive, then you can continue with your driver licensing application.

**Note:** Occupational therapists and doctors have no power to take your driver licence from you. Only the Director of Land Transport Safety can revoke someone's driver licence.

## Older drivers please note...

A medical driving assessment by an occupational therapist is a **medical check requested by your doctor**. If your assessment confirms you are medically fit to drive (and your age is 80, 82, 84, etc) you must still sit and pass the older driver test to renew your licence.

## For more information...

For more information on the medical driving assessment process please speak to your doctor or contact the New Zealand Association of Occupational Therapists, phone 04 473 6510 or visit the web site [www.nzaot.com](http://www.nzaot.com)

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# So your doctor has referred you for a medical driving assessment

## What does this mean for you?

A change of medical condition can affect your ability to drive safely. This may follow a head injury, stroke, spinal injury, or amputation, or may be due to Parkinson's disease or the ageing process.

If your doctor has any concerns about your skills for driving they may refer you to an occupational therapist for a driving assessment.

Sometimes you are required to provide a medical certificate as part of your driver licence application - again your GP may request a medical driving assessment before they are able to sign the medical certificate.

The purpose of the assessment is to make recommendations about if or when you can resume driving, or whether any conditions should be placed on your driving.

**Note:** The medical driving assessment is not a driver licence test.

## Who pays for the driving assessment?

Funding arrangements for driving assessments vary. ACC may fund assessments for ACC claimants. In some cases Ministry of Health disability funding may be available to pay for the driving assessment. In other cases you will be required to pay the cost of a driving assessment.

## What does the driving assessment involve?

Assessments are conducted by occupational therapists who specialise in driving assessments. These usually begin with an off-road assessment in the therapist's office. This part of the assessment may take up to two hours.

After that, the occupational therapist will take you for an on-road driving assessment.

When you come for your assessment you must bring your driver licence and any relevant letters from your doctor or the licensing authority.

If you normally wear glasses to drive and/or read you will need them for this assessment.

## The off-road assessment

Occupational therapists use the off-road assessment to check that a person's physical, thinking and decision making abilities are up to the standard required for safe driving.

It's a comprehensive assessment of:

- vision (basic screening)
- physical function such as range of movement, strength, sensation and co-ordination
- judgement
- memory
- movement and decision making times
- how your mind understands what you see
- knowledge of road rules and signs.

## Questions you can expect

During the off-road assessment the therapist is likely to ask you:

- where you normally drive
- what type of car you drive
- whether your driver licence is current
- if you have any physical problems that may affect your driving, such as limited movement, strength and co-ordination
- whether there are any problems with your vision
- about road rules and intersection rules.

The therapist may use a computer-based tool to look at your reaction times, movement and decision speeds.

You don't need to know how to use a computer. All you need to do is react to what you see on the screen, using pedals and a steering wheel.

The results of this off-road assessment give a good indication of your ability to drive safely.

## The on-road assessment

An on-road driving assessment assesses the impact of disability, illness or ageing on your medical fitness to drive.

## What happens during the drive?

The on-road assessment is usually undertaken in your own car.

(An assessment vehicle may be used if modifications are required).

During the on-road assessment, you will be accompanied by a trained driving instructor and the occupational therapist (some occupational therapists can do both).

The driving instructor will sit beside you and give you directions about where to drive and when to turn.

The occupational therapist will be assessing your medical fitness to drive.