

Driving with a Chronic Health Condition

Staying safe behind the wheel

It takes more than just time behind the wheel to be a safe driver. You need to be focused and alert at all times to avoid an accident. Most people with chronic conditions are able to drive without any problems at all as long as they keep their symptoms under control. However, some people with chronic (long-term) health conditions have a higher risk of having an accident while driving.

Some chronic conditions that are known to cause problems while driving include:

- Epilepsy or seizures
- Mental illness
- Memory and learning disorders
- Diabetes
- Sleep disorders
- Heart or lung problems
- Vision problems
- Muscle, joint, or neurologic disease

Starting a new medicine, taking too much medicine, or having a reaction to a medicine can also cause problems when driving.

Check before you drive

To stay safe when driving, follow these basic rules:

- ☐ **Don't drive if you are having symptoms.** Even mild symptoms can make it hard to react quickly in a dangerous situation. Severe symptoms might make you pass out. If this happens when you are driving, you, your passengers, or anyone else on the road could be injured or killed.
- ☐ **Work with your healthcare provider to keep your symptoms under control.** Following your treatment plan will help you lower your risk of having an accident as well as improve your overall health.
- ☐ **Only take your medicines as prescribed.** Some medicines can make you drowsy or woozy. Others may cause a reaction when you first start taking them or when mixed with other medicines. **If your medicine makes you feel funny or you think you are having a reaction, don't drive!**
- ☐ **Wear a medical ID that is easily seen.** If you are in a crash, your wallet or smartphone might get tossed, broken, or lost. Having a medical ID could save your life.
- ☐ **Always wear a seat belt,** and make sure your passengers buckle up, too.

When should I call my doctor?

Call 911 if you feel you are experiencing a medical emergency.

If you don't think it's safe for you to drive and you have an urgent health issue, either:

- Call your healthcare provider
- Go to [intermountainconnectcare.org](https://www.intermountainconnectcare.org) on your computer, smartphone, or tablet for a video visit with an Intermountain provider about your urgent care needs. (Each visit costs \$49.)

Know the law

In Utah, when you renew your current driver's license or apply for a new one, you will be asked about any chronic conditions. If you check the "yes" box, you will get a form in the mail that you need to take to your doctor to be filled out (see the image at right).

This form helps the state Driver License Division decide if your health condition is well-controlled. If not, you might have your driver's license suspended for a time.

If you live outside of Utah, you can learn what the rules are in your state by going to this website: diabetes.org/living-with-diabetes/know-your-rights/discrimination/drivers-licenses/drivers-license-laws-bystate.html.

If you lose your license to drive

If you have to stop driving for a short time or retire from driving, you can still keep your independence. There are many ways to get to the places you want to be including:

- Riding with family and friends
- Taking a taxi
- Using a driving service like Uber or Lyft
- Taking a bus or train
- Using a shuttle bus or van

Some senior centers, religious organizations, and local support groups also offer driving services.

Call 211 to find out about driving services in your area.

If you are missing an arm or leg or have another disability, you may need to see a driving specialist before you can get your license back.

FUNCTIONAL ABILITY EVALUATION MEDICAL REPORT
UTAH DRIVER LICENSE DIVISION
P.O. BOX 14861
SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84114-4801
Phone Number: (801) 957-4600
Fax Number: (801) 957-4099

TOP PORTION MUST BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY APPLICANT

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle or Maiden Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Driver License or IDP #: _____

By signing this form, I authorize my health care professional(s) to disclose specific health information regarding my physical, mental and emotional condition relevant to my ability to safely operate a motor vehicle to the Utah Driver License Division.
I understand that if I fail to sign this authorization my driving privilege may be affected. I understand that this information will be checked as a private record in accordance with GDSMA (Utah Code 63-2-202). Information that is required to have a "Private" record disclosed to them are limited to the subject of the record, a parent or legal guardian of an emancipated minor or a legally incapacitated individual, an individual with power of attorney or a person whose name is on a person's record, or an individual with a criminal or juvenile record.

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE: _____ **Date:** _____

BOTTOM PORTION TO BE COMPLETED AND SIGNED BY HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL
The following safety assessment level is for use in determining driving privileges. It is consistent with the current edition of Functional Ability in Driving: Guidelines and Standards for Health Care Professionals. Please indicate level below with a check mark and your initials.

Safety Assessment Level	A. Diabetes Mellitus, Complicated or Uncontrolled	B. Cardiovascular Disease, Heart Failure, or Stroke	C. Pulmonary Disease, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or Oxygen Dependency	D. Neurological Disease, Seizures, or Loss of Consciousness	E. Hearing Impairment	F. Peripheral Vascular Disease, Amputation, or Limb Loss	G. Psychiatric or Emotional Condition	H. Alcohol or Drug Abuse	I. Musculoskeletal Condition, Fracture, or Deformity	J. Abnormal or Impaired Vision	K. Abnormal or Impaired Balance	L. Other Condition
1												
2												
3												
4												
5												
6												
7												
8												

Please indicate if any of the following apply to this medical review:
☐ Non-standard review time frame
☐ Safety Assessment categories not marked on relevant to this assessment
☐ I recommend this driver's license be suspended (this form is submitted to the Driver License Division)

Street Address: _____
Driver's Comments: _____
Health Care Professional's Comments: _____

The Functional Ability Evaluation Form and Certificate of Vision will help the Utah Driver License Division decide if you can drive safely. Utah law says that drivers should stop driving and tell the Driver License Division if they have or develop a physical, mental, or emotional problem that could affect their driving.

Assessing your driving skills

Certain Intermountain hospitals and rehabilitation centers have occupational therapists who can help with your driving skills assessment. These driving assessment specialists will:

- Check your medical and driving history
- Test your driving skills
- Evaluate your ability to move, think, and see
- Give you an assessment of your skills
- Help you create an alternative transportation plan if you need one

The Association of Driver Rehabilitation Specialists can also help find a certified driving specialist near you. They can be reached at 1-800-290-2344. Or, visit their website at aded.net.

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