

Driver Fitness and Monitoring Branch

Keeping drivers safe and mobile

Alberta has in excess of 2.2 million licensed drivers, representing over 66 per cent of our population. Virtually every family could be impacted by decisions made by the Driver Fitness and Monitoring Branch.

The issues faced may relate to a driver licence suspension, an elderly parent with cognitive problems, a spouse with a medical condition or perhaps in the future, a teen in the Graduated Driver Licensing Program. We all value the privilege to drive and recognize the independence it provides.

As our population ages, we are seeing a dramatic increase in the number of medically at risk drivers who are coming to our attention. Aging drivers experience changes in their physical, sensory and cognitive abilities.

Driver Fitness and Monitoring is responsible for reviewing driving privileges of individuals and assessing their ability to safely operate motor vehicles. The branch team consists of a Director, Manager, five Reviewing Officers and 10 administrative support persons.

The branch is responsible for: the consistent application of national medical standards, traffic safety legislation with respect to the suspension of driving privileges and reinstatement conditions, managing inter-provincial exchange of driver records and driver abstracts. The final decision with whether a person loses the privilege to drive is up to the branch.

Driver Fitness and Monitoring works with other jurisdictions and stakeholders to keep drivers safe and mobile.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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Visit the Alberta Transportation and Saferoads web sites at www.trans.gov.ab.ca and www.saferoads.com



Medical Standards for Drivers

Medical advisors and administrators from all Canadian provincial driver licensing bodies developed the medical standards used in Alberta. Alberta Transportation is responsible for determining driver fitness and making decisions regarding a person's privilege to drive.

A person who holds or applies for a driver's licence must immediately disclose to the Registrar a disease or disability that may be expected to interfere with the safe operation of a motor vehicle.

Commercial drivers require a higher level of fitness because of the nature of their cargo, types of vehicles being driven, nature of physical work, exposure due to significant number of kilometres driven and the consequence of a collision involving a large vehicle.

Some of the diseases or disabilities that may interfere with the safe operation of vehicles can be found in these categories:

- **Vision** (e.g. minimum correct vision, double vision, telescopic lenses)
- **Hearing** (e.g. vertigo, and issues particular to commercial drivers)
- **Cardiovascular Diseases** (e.g. heart)
- **Cerebrovascular Diseases** (e.g. stroke)
- **Peripheral Vascular Diseases** (e.g. aneurysm and veins)
- **Diseases of the Nervous System** (e.g. seizures, sleep disorders, dementia)
- **Respiratory Diseases** (e.g. lungs)
- **Metabolic Diseases** (e.g. diabetes, parathyroid, pituitary, adrenal)
- **Renal Disease** (e.g. kidney)
- **Musculoskeletal Disabilities** (e.g. arms, legs, spine, paraplegia and quadraplegia)
- **Psychiatric Disorders** (e.g. mental, emotional, personality, psychotic)
- **The Effects of Drugs** (e.g. sedatives, tranquillisers, antidepressants, narcotics)
- **The Effects of Alcohol** (e.g. alcohol dependency)
- **Aging Issues** (e.g. lack of attention, poor judgement, confusion, loss of strength, slow reaction time, progressive dementia)

The presence of a related medical condition does not necessarily mean that a person's ability to drive will be restricted. However, in order to determine the effect of the condition on driver fitness Alberta Transportation must review related factors such as term of illness, treatment, medications and other factors.