

# Driving after Injury Advice

If you are a vehicle driver, or a motorcyclist, you need to be aware of the possible consequences of your injury. Some of this guidance may also apply to those who ride bicycles, tricycles, or use mobility vehicles.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit to drive/ride, and you are accountable for your actions and decisions when driving/riding.**

| Things you should do   | Why?  |
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| Be in full control of your car/motorbike.  | If you are involved in an accident or stopped by the police, you may be asked to prove you are in full control.   |
| Be fit enough to drive/ride safely<br><br>Rule 90<br>Make sure that you are fit to drive. You <b>MUST</b> report to the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) any health condition likely to affect your driving. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced use of an arm or leg or hand or pain as a result of an injury may invalidate your motor insurance. It is illegal to drive without valid insurance, so you should discuss your injury with your insurance company.</li> <li>Pain relief or other medication you are taking for the injury may affect your ability to think clearly or your reaction time. If so, you should not drive/ride your vehicle. Rule 96: You <b>MUST NOT</b> drive under the influence of drugs or medicine. For medicines, check with your doctor or pharmacist and do not drive if you are advised that you may be impaired.</li> <li>Being unable to sleep at night due to your injury can affect your co-ordination</li> </ul> |
| Wait until your fracture clinic or ED follow up appointment if you have (or suspected) a fracture  | A plaster cast or splint will reduce your range of movement. Pain may also reduce your grip etc. You will need to assess your movement prior to driving/riding but you are advised to wait until your follow up before driving/riding   |
| If you drive an HGV or a PSV e.g. a bus or train.  | The rules may be stricter for you. Inform your employer of your injury and ask for advice from the DVLA   |
| Make sure you aren't tired. Section 91 of the Highway Code states: 'Driving when you are tired greatly increases   | If you feel tired and sleepy (some pain killers may make you drowsy), you should not drive/ride until you are rested.<br>When assessing your fitness to drive, please consider any medication you are taking. Is it   |

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| your risk of collision.'  | affecting your ability to think clearly or your reaction time should an emergency arise? If either is reduced, you should not drive or ride your vehicle.  |
| Check your eyesight – You must also meet the minimum eyesight standard for driving – This is with glasses or contact lenses, if necessary, using both eyes together or, if you have sight in one eye only, in that eye. | People driving with poor or impaired vision may pose a danger to other road users and themselves. For drivers and motorcyclist, you <b>must</b> be able to read a standard size number plate from a distance of 20 metres. If you need to wear glasses or contact lenses to do this you <b>must</b> wear them at all times while driving. You must also be having a visual acuity of at least decimal <u>0.5 (6/12)</u> measured on the <u>Snellen scale</u> . If you don't meet this standard you can't drive/ride on a public road. There are stricter rules for lorry and bus drivers. <b>You should not drive/ride at all if you are wearing an eye pad.</b> |
| Do I need to tell the DVLA?   | <b>You don't need to tell Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) if you have broken limbs unless your injury is expected to last more than 3 months</b>  |

Vehicles, injuries, and patients vary. You will need to assess your injury in your own vehicle. Which hand you use most, whether or not your vehicle has power steering, and whether it has manual or automatic transmission will all affect your assessment.

You can use the assessments below to see if you are able to drive/ride safely. Adapted from Carter T (2006) Fitness to drive: A guide for Health Professionals page 157. The Royal Society of Medicine.

| <b>To assess lower leg strength, endurance, range of motion and balance:</b>  |   |
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| Walk three metres, turn round and walk back to the start:   | If it takes you more than nine seconds to do this, your legs may be too weak for you to drive/ride safely.                            |
| <b>To assess ability to control and manoeuvre your vehicle:</b>   |   |
| <b>Neck rotation.</b>   | Can you look over either shoulder to be able to look behind you/reverse?  |
| <b>Finger curl.</b>   | Can you make fists with both hands strong enough to allow you to hold a steering wheel /handle grips safely?                          |
| <b>Shoulder and elbow flexion.</b>  | Pretend you are holding a steering wheel. Can you turn the imaginary wheel all the way to the right and then all the way to the left? |
| <b>Ankle flexion.</b>   | Pretend you are pressing a car accelerator or brake pedal quickly and hard. Now bring your toes back towards you.                     |
| If your movement is hesitant, causes pain, or is limited, your ability to drive safely will be affected. If you can perform these movements easily, check your strength with the following: |   |
| <b>To assess your strength, ask someone to firmly push against you when</b>   |   |

| you do the movements below. <b>You may be unable to drive safely if you can't do them</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lift each arm in turn in the air, as if you are putting your hand up at school. Then bring each slowly back to your side.</li> <li>• Move each hand up and down to test your wrists.</li> <li>• Move your legs forward and back from the hip</li> <li>• Move each foot up and down to test your ankles.</li> <li>• Clench your hands.</li> </ul> | <p>Each movement can be scored using this scale</p> <p>0= no movement</p> <p>1= muscle contracts but no movement</p> <p>2= Some movement but not against gravity</p> <p>3= Movement against gravity</p> <p>4= Movement against light resistance</p> <p>5= Movement against strong resistance</p> <p>If 5 not scored on any test, driving/riding should not be attempted</p> |

**If you are unsure whether you can drive safely - contact DVLA**

**If you are concerned about your progress, or if you have not improved within 10 days, we advise you to contact your GP or return to the Emergency Department/MIU where you were seen.**

**References:** Highway Code advice on fitness to drive is  
The Highway Code - Rules for drivers and motorcyclists (89 to 102) - Guidance - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))  
<https://www.gov.uk/driving-eyesight-rules>  
<https://www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving>

**If you are at all concerned about your injury, please contact the relevant Emergency Department - Grange University Hospital: 01633 493287 or Minor Injury Unit (MIU):**  
**Royal Gwent Hospital (RGH) MIU: 01633 234056**  
**Nevill Hall Hospital (NHH) MIU: 01873 732073**  
**Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr (YYF) MIU 01443 802353**  
**Ysbyty Aneurin Bevan (YAB) MIU: 01495 363318**