

# Drivers with Diabetes and Hypoglycemia Class 5-8 Licences

## Fact Sheet

Under the Motor Vehicle Act, the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles has the responsibility for determining the fitness to drive of people who hold or are applying for a British Columbia driver's licence. Drivers who have a medical condition that has the potential to affect their fitness to drive may be required to have their doctor complete a Driver's Medical Examination Report (DMER). This report will provide the Superintendent with the information needed to decide whether someone is fit and able to drive safely. The form is mailed to the driver from RoadSafetyBC.

This fact sheet outlines the procedures RoadSafetyBC follows to collect information about the severity, progression, treatment or effects of diabetes with respect to a person's fitness to drive. In many cases, diabetes does not have an impact on an individual's ability to drive. Because diabetes affects people differently, the information RoadSafetyBC requests allows an assessment to be carried out on an individual basis.

### How Diabetes can Affect Driver Fitness

Diabetes is a progressive condition that can affect a person's fitness to drive. Insulin and oral medications used to treat diabetes can cause low blood sugar, which may result in a sudden loss of consciousness or alteration of consciousness. As well, the long term complications of diabetes may result in vision changes, heart disease, nervous system disease, and others – all of which can affect driving fitness.

### Requirements, Depending on Type of Diabetes

The type and frequency of assessment and follow up by RoadSafetyBC varies depending on the class of driver's licence held or applied for, as well as the type and control of diabetes.

#### Type 2 Diabetes – not treated with insulin or insulin secretagogues

(i.e. treated with diet/exercise or in combination with

diabetes medication)

Under the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles' policy, you are required to have a DMER completed by your doctor and submitted to RoadSafetyBC when you have Type 2 Diabetes that is not treated with insulin or insulin secretagogues.

You will be found fit to drive at the class of driver's licence you hold or have applied for if your doctor indicates that you maintain good control of your diabetes.

To ensure that you remain fit to drive you must:

- report to RoadSafetyBC if you begin insulin therapy
- remain under regular medical supervision to ensure that any progression in your condition or development of chronic complications does not go unattended.

Because diabetes is a progressive condition, RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness every five years, or in accordance with the schedule for routine age-related reassessment. RoadSafetyBC will also reassess your fitness to drive if you have insulin or insulin secretagogue therapy initiated.

#### Type 2 Diabetes – treated with insulin secretagogues

Under the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles' policy, you are required to have a DMER completed by your doctor and submitted to RoadSafetyBC when you have diabetes treated with insulin secretagogues.

You will be found fit to drive at the class of driver's licence you hold or have applied for if your doctor indicates that:

- you have a good understanding of your diabetic condition
- you routinely follow your physician's instructions about diet, medication, glucose monitoring and the prevention of hypoglycemia.

To ensure that you remain fit to drive you must:

- report to RoadSafetyBC if you begin insulin therapy
- report to RoadSafetyBC and your physician if you have an episode of severe hypoglycemia
- remain under regular medical supervision to ensure that any progression in your condition or development of chronic complications does not go unattended
- stop driving and treat yourself immediately if hypoglycemia is identified or suspected
- not drive until at least 45 minutes after effective treatment if your blood glucose is between 2.5 and 4.0 mmol/L.

If your blood glucose levels and treatment are not stable, RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness to drive annually until levels and treatment are stable. If your blood glucose levels and treatment are stable, RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness to drive every five years or in accordance with the schedule for routine age-related reassessment. RoadSafetyBC will also reassess if insulin therapy is initiated.

### **Diabetes – treated with insulin (Type 1 or 2)**

Under the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles' policy, you are required to have a DMER completed by your doctor and submitted to RoadSafetyBC when you have Type 1 or Type 2 diabetes treated with insulin.

You will be found fit to drive for the class of licence that you hold or have applied for if your doctor indicates that:

- you understand your diabetic condition and the close interrelationship between insulin, diet and exercise
- you routinely follow your physician's advice regarding prevention and management of hypoglycemia.

To ensure that you remain fit to drive you must:

- remain under regular medical supervision to ensure that any progression in your condition or development of chronic complications does not go unattended
- report to RoadSafetyBC and your physician if you have an episode of severe hypoglycemia or hypoglycemia unawareness
- when on long drives, test your blood glucose concentration immediately before driving and approximately every four hours while driving, and

have a source of readily available, rapidly absorbable glucose

- not drive when your glucose level is below 4.0 mmol/L
- not begin to drive when your glucose level is between 4.0 and 5.0 mmol/L unless you first take prophylactic carbohydrate treatment
- stop driving and treat yourself immediately if hypoglycemia is identified or suspected
- not drive until at least 45 minutes after effective treatment if your blood glucose is between 2.5 and 4.0 mmol/L.

If your blood glucose levels and treatment are not stable, RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness to drive annually until levels and treatment are stable. If your blood glucose levels and treatment are stable, RoadSafetyBC will reassess every five years, or in accordance with the schedule for routine age-related reassessment.

### **Drivers who have an episode of severe hypoglycemia**

These guidelines apply to a driver who has had an episode of severe hypoglycemia within the previous year.

Under the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles' policy, you are required to have a DMER completed by your doctor and submitted to RoadSafetyBC when you have had an episode of severe hypoglycemia.

You will be found fit to drive for the class of licence that you hold or have applied for if your doctor indicates that you have re-established stable glycemic control.

To ensure you to remain fit to drive you must:

- report to RoadSafetyBC and your physician if you have an episode of severe hypoglycemia
- for the next six months, test your blood glucose concentration immediately before driving and approximately every hour while driving
- for the next six months, not drive or you must stop driving when your blood glucose falls below 6.0 mmol/L and not resume driving until your blood glucose level has risen above 6.0 mmol/L after food ingestion.

RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness to drive as recommended by your doctor. At that time, if your doctor indicates that there have been no episodes of severe



hypoglycemia within the past six months, the applicable guidelines for drivers with diabetes will apply.

## Drivers who have an episode of hypoglycemia unawareness

Under the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles' policy, you are required to have a DMER completed by your doctor and submitted to RoadSafetyBC when you have had an episode of hypoglycemia unawareness within the last year.

You will be found fit to drive at the class of driver's licence you hold or have applied for if your doctor indicates that:

- it has been at least three months since the episode of hypoglycemia unawareness
- you have regained glycemic awareness and have stable glycemic control

To ensure that you remain fit to drive you must:

- report to RoadSafetyBC and your physician if you have an episode of severe hypoglycemia or hypoglycemia unawareness
- test your blood glucose concentration immediately before driving and approximately every hour while driving
- not drive, or you must stop driving, when your blood glucose level falls below 6.0 mmol/L and you must not resume driving until your blood glucose level has risen above 6.0 mmol/L after food ingestion.

RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness to drive in one year. At that time, if the treating physician indicates that there have been no further episodes of hypoglycemia unawareness within the past year, the conditions listed above will be removed and the applicable guidelines for drivers with diabetes will apply.

Drivers who have persistent hypoglycemia unawareness

Under the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles' policy, you are required to have a DMER completed by your doctor and submitted to RoadSafetyBC when you have persistent hypoglycemia unawareness.

You will be found fit to drive at the class of driver's licence you hold or have applied for if our doctor indicates that:

- it has been at least three months since the last episode of hypoglycemia unawareness

- you have stable glycemic control and are willing and able to take steps to ensure you do not become hypoglycemic while driving.

To ensure that you remain fit to drive you must:

- report to RoadSafetyBC and your physician if you have an episode of severe hypoglycemia or hypoglycemia unawareness
- retain a blood glucose log and review it with your treating physician at intervals your physician feels necessary to monitor continued glycemic control
- test your blood glucose concentration immediately before driving and approximately every hour while driving
- not drive, or you must stop driving, when your blood glucose level falls below 6.0 mmol/L and you must not resume driving until your blood glucose level has risen above 6.0 mmol/L after food ingestion

RoadSafetyBC will reassess your fitness to drive annually. If the treating physician indicates on two consecutive annual reassessments that awareness has been regained and there have been no further episodes of hypoglycemia unawareness within the past year, the conditions listed above will be removed and the applicable guidelines for drivers with diabetes will apply.

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## For more information:

Visit ICBC website at: [www.icbc.com](http://www.icbc.com)

Visit RoadSafetyBC website at [www.gov.bc.ca/roadsafetybc](http://www.gov.bc.ca/roadsafetybc)

Phone RoadSafetyBC in Victoria at 250 387-7747