

# DriveABLE Assessment Information Guide

## Driving, Medical Conditions, and Public Road Safety

In order to drive safely -- no matter what our age -- we often need to be able to think and react quickly. If our cognitive processes become impaired, perhaps as a result of a medical condition or medications we're taking, our ability to drive safely can be significantly affected, and that can have devastating consequences. In an effort to make our roads safer, RoadSafetyBC uses DriveABLE assessments to help determine if drivers with a suspected cognitive impairment are safe to continue driving.

## Who Needs a DriveABLE Assessment?

The requirement to undertake a DriveABLE assessment is not related to the age of a driver. Not all seniors need to take a DriveABLE assessment. Only drivers with reported cognitive function concerns are referred by RoadSafetyBC to have a DriveABLE assessment. The vast majority of these referrals (98%) are made after a medical practitioner conducts an in-office screening and reports that they have concerns about a patient's cognitive functioning and ability to continue to drive safely.

The DriveABLE assessment should not be confused with the requirement for drivers at 80 years of age (and every two years after age 80) to complete a Driver Medical Examination Report (DMER) with their physician. The DMER is a regular review to identify any possible driver fitness issues that may require further follow-up or specialist assessment.

RoadSafetyBC evaluated the fitness to drive of over 170,000 drivers in 2016, and less than 1% (1,100) were referred for a DriveABLE cognitive assessment.

## What is DriveABLE?

DriveABLE is a research-based, scientific assessment tool that detects and measures driving errors related to cognitive impairment. It is used in many jurisdictions across North America to help licensing authorities determine if a person has the required cognitive abilities to drive. The DriveABLE assessment was developed through extensive research comparing the abilities and driving of hundreds of medically safe and unsafe drivers.

The DriveABLE in-office assessment is similar to an eye or hearing assessment; you cannot study to pass it. The assessment measures the specific cognitive functions needed for safe driving, such as memory, attention span, reaction time, spatial judgement and decision-making. It does not measure your overall cognitive functioning or intelligence. Results are judged against the results of someone of the same age who does not have any cognitive impairment.

Through the use of the DriveABLE assessment tool, individuals who may have a cognitive impairment are individually assessed, and if a cognitive condition does not affect their ability to drive safely, they are allowed to continue to drive.

## What happens at the in-office assessment?

The DriveABLE in-office assessment is presented on a touch-sensitive screen and takes about an hour to complete. We recognize that the prospect of taking an assessment can be stressful, especially for people who do not use a computer; however, no familiarity with computers or their applications is needed. To complete the tasks, you only need to touch the screen or press a button. A mouse and a keyboard are not used. A trained healthcare professional (typically, a kinesiologist or occupational therapist) administers the DriveABLE in-office assessment and guides you the whole time.

Practice sessions are encouraged. During the practice session, if the healthcare professional senses that you are highly nervous or overly stressed, they will suggest that you book a new appointment on another day. During the assessment, the healthcare professional will not let you proceed to the

next task until they are sure you fully understand what is expected of you. You are welcome to have a companion accompany you to meet the assessor and ask questions before your assessment begins.

## What is an on-road evaluation?

The DriveABLE on-road evaluation provides those drivers who do not pass the in-office assessment with a secondary opportunity to demonstrate their continued medical fitness to drive. The on-road evaluation is conducted in a dual-brake vehicle, on special road courses designed to test and reveal driving errors associated with cognitive decline. A dual-brake vehicle is used because it is the safest environment for both the driver and the driving examiner, in the event of unsafe driving due to cognitive impairment. You are welcome to have a companion accompany you to meet the assessor and ask questions before your assessment begins.

On-road evaluations assess memory, attention span, spatial judgement, decision-making, and other factors that can be used to assess the ability of a driver with a cognitive impairment to drive safely. Professional driving assessors trained and certified by DriveABLE administer the on-road evaluation to detect and measure driving errors associated with cognitive decline. Minor handling errors or bad driving habits are not part of the scoring. Only errors related to cognitive abilities are scored.

## The DriveABLE process

1. RoadSafetyBC receives a report (98% of the time from a physician; other times from a police officer or family member) that an individual is thought to have a medical condition that makes them unsafe to drive.
2. RoadSafetyBC will then: (a) make a licensing decision based on the information received, (b) request additional medical information, or (c) refer an individual for specific medical tests or assessments.
3. In the case of a suspected cognitive impairment, the individual is referred for a DriveABLE assessment. RoadSafetyBC covers the cost, and the individual is directed to book an appointment by calling the DriveABLE Access Line, toll-free at 1-888-475-4666.
4. The individual has an in-office DriveABLE assessment. If they pass, the

results are submitted to RoadSafetyBC. If the individual does not pass the in-office assessment, they are offered an opportunity to take a secondary DriveABLE on-road evaluation.

5. DriveABLE assessment results are submitted to RoadSafetyBC and, subject to the person's consent, also to their physician.
6. A RoadSafetyBC adjudicator reviews the medical information on file, the results of any in-office medical assessment by a physician, and the DriveABLE assessment results, and then makes a licensing decision. A letter is then mailed to the individual notifying them of the decision.

## Appeal process

The decision to remove a person's driving privileges is not taken lightly. As in all driver medical fitness decisions, RoadSafetyBC strives to be fair and to respect an individual's mobility, while also ensuring public safety for all road users. If your condition has improved since your licence was cancelled, you can ask your doctor to send details of your improvement to RoadSafetyBC, so your driving status can be re-assessed. If you disagree with a licensing decision, you can write to the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles, requesting a review of that decision.

## Have questions?

For more information about driver fitness and DriveABLE, call RoadSafetyBC toll-free at **1-855-387-7747**, or visit our website at **[www.gov.bc.ca/roadsafetybc](http://www.gov.bc.ca/roadsafetybc)**

