



Driving and Epilepsy

What Driving Regulations Apply to Epilepsy ?

When you develop epilepsy your doctor will advise you about the driving regulations. The Irish driving standards are contained in Slainte agus Tiomaint, Medical Fitness to Drive Guidelines (see www.rsa.ie).

What do these regulations say?

For most people with epilepsy they have to be free of seizures for one year before they are eligible to drive a car, light van, or motorcycle/moped, tractor or other work vehicle. These are **Group 1 licences categories (A, A1, B, EB, M and W)**. When the seizure freedom period has been reached a completed D501 form from a doctor confirming this will be needed. A person with epilepsy will be kept under annual review by their doctor until they are five years seizure free.

Group 2 licences (Categories C and D) are for large vans, and heavy goods vehicles such as lorries and buses. Different rules apply to these licence categories because of the responsibility of driving passengers, load and the size and weight of the vehicle. See Page 6 details of Group 2 regulations.

It's my first seizure, do epilepsy rules apply?

Not everyone is diagnosed with epilepsy on their first seizure. Many people have one seizure and never have another. The law takes account of this by reducing the period off the road.

First unprovoked seizures: if you have a first unprovoked seizure you may drive once your consultant is satisfied you are medically fit. This is individually assessed and is for a minimum of 6 months for Group 1 drivers (cars, light van, work vehicles) and 5 years for group 2 (lorries, buses, HGV's).

Are there any exceptions to the one year rule for Group 1 drivers?

Yes. There are some exceptions for certain Group 1 drivers and a consultant opinion may be required..

Sleep seizures: May drive if this pattern is established for at least 12 months

Seizures with consciousness: May drive if pattern is established for at least 12 months.

Provoked seizures: You must stop driving until your doctor is satisfied that you are medically fit to drive again.

Withdrawal of medication: For seizures that occur as a result of a doctor having directed the withdrawal of your medication, you are advised not to drive from start of withdrawal of treatment and for 6 months after treatment has stopped, or as directed by your consultant or doctor.

What if I have a breakthrough seizure?

Breakthrough seizures in controlled epilepsy need a specialist report on the period of time off the road.

I don't know which regulation applies to me

If you are unsure what regulation applies to you your doctor can explain this to you. You must comply with your doctor's guidance on driving. See www.rsa.ie for the full text of the regulations.

What is a provoked seizure?

A provoked seizure has a known cause and is unlikely to be repeated. Seizures in this category can occur where there is no history of epilepsy in certain situations:

- During pregnancy
- Due to lack of oxygen
- During a stroke or in the 24 hours following it
- During brain surgery or in the 24 hours following it
- In the first week after a head injury

Seizures due to alcohol, lack of sleep, drug misuse, or structural brain problems are not considered provoked.

Do I need to declare epilepsy for licensing?

Yes. Any new diagnosis of epilepsy, or breakthrough of seizures in existing epilepsy, should be declared to the National Driver Licence Service (NDLS). If, following an assessment, your doctor gives you a Patient Advisory Form stating that you need to advise the driving authority of your condition then under the guidelines you have a responsibility to do this.

Applying for a licence

You need to submit 2 forms in person to any NDLS centre. These are a) the Driving Licence Application and b) a Medical Report Form (D501). The D501 must have been completed by your doctor **within the previous month**. You also need to take proof of your PPS number and your current licence, if any.

Informing the NDLS

You must notify the NDLS when:

1. Your epilepsy needs to be noted on your driver record (without changing your licensing entitlement).
2. Your licence needs to be changed (for example for a shorter period)

Am I legally obliged to stop driving if my doctor tells me to?

Yes. You need to be guided by your doctor on this. To continue driving if advised not to is dangerous and against the law.

Can the doctor report me if I keep driving?

The medical guidelines give doctors responsibility to report people who continue driving against medical advice.

Does my licence need to get re-issued?

Under the medical guidelines there are recommendations for re-issuing of licences. In most cases of people with epilepsy who are eligible to drive it will normally be a 1-3 year licence that is re-issued up to 5 years seizure freedom.

Can I get a ten year licence again?

The medical guidelines state that when five years seizure freedom has been reached then a ten year licence may be issued.

Will I have to do my driving test again?

Provided your driving licence hasn't lapsed for more than 10 years you should not have to re-take your driving test.

Do I need to tell the car insurance company?

Yes. You must declare epilepsy to your car insurance company. There are more risks to not disclosing than to disclosing. Your policy could be cancelled if you withhold the information and it could be harder to get cover after that.

Is there a particular company to contact?

There is no one particular company we can suggest. Often it's best to remain with your previous insurer but it is often worthwhile to shop around for a more competitive quote.

Will my insurance be high when I drive again?

People often expect that insurance cover will be difficult to obtain or very high. In practice this is not necessarily the case. Insurance Ireland can advise you, contact 01-6761914 or see www.insuranceireland.eu

Can I drive a heavy goods vehicle or bus?

Someone with a history of epilepsy may be licensed in these Group 2 categories if they are 10 years seizure free without use of medication. In first unprovoked seizures this may be reduced to 5 years seizure free without use of medication. Provoked seizures will be subject to neurological opinion. Medical checks for group 2 licenses are very strict.

Driving Group 1

Car, light van, motorcycle, tractor (Class A, B, EB, M, W)

Seizure type	Requirement*	Licence period/ conditions
Seizures affecting awareness in waking	1 year seizure free	1-3 year licence 10 year licence at 5 years seizure free
First unprovoked	Stop driving until 6 months seizure free (1)	1-3 year licence 10 year licence at 5 years seizure free
Provoked	Stop driving. Individual medical assessment.	Doctor advice on period. May be below 12 months
Sleep seizures only	No driving until at least 12 months of sleep seizures only is established	1-3 year licence may be reviewed annually
Seizure without impaired consciousness/ability	No driving until at least 12 months of aware only seizures is established	1 year licence/annual review
Withdrawal from AED's	Stop driving from date of reducing AED's and for at least 6 months after stopping all AEDs	Medical certification of fitness to drive
Breakthrough seizures	Advised not to drive (unless sleep seizures applies).	Exceptional cases may be allowed to drive after short period.

(1)Unless clinical factors or tests show risk of seizures is too high (20% or more per annum)

*All must notify NDLS

Driving Group 2

HGV, Lorry, Bus (Class C and D)

Seizure type	Requirement* and Conditions
Loss of awareness in waking	10 years seizure free without use of AED's Appropriate medical follow-up Extensive neurological Investigation No relevant cerebral pathology established No epileptiform activity on EEG
First unprovoked	5 years seizure free without use of AED's Recent neurological assessment No clinical factors or investigation results (EEG/ brain scan) that indicate risk of more seizures is greater than 2% per annum
Provoked	10 years seizure free without the use of AED's
Withdrawal from AED's	10 years seizure free without the use of AED's

Further Information

Epilepsy Seizures and Driving Leaflet National Driver Licencing Service

www.ndls.ie

Slainte agus Tiomaint, Medical Fitness to Drive Guidelines Road Safety Authority

Email: medicalfitness@rsa.ie

Tel: 1890 40 60 40

www.rsa.ie



Web: www.epilepsy.ie

Facebook: facebook.com/epilepsy.ie

Twitter: [@epilepsyireland](https://twitter.com/epilepsyireland)

YouTube: youtube.com/BrainwaveEpilepsy

Head Office

249 Crumlin Road, Dublin 12

Tel.: 01 455 7500

Email: info@epilepsy.ie

Specialist Nurse Helpline Tel.: 01 455 4133

Monday 9.30am – 1pm

Transitional Care Advice Line Tel.: 01 455 4133

Monday 2pm – 5pm

North West

Covering: Donegal, Leitrim & Sligo

Community Resource Officer: Agnes Mooney
Letterkenny Office, Grand Central Complex, Floor 2B,
Canal Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal

Tel.: 074 9168725

Email: amooney@epilepsy.ie

Tel.: 071 9141858

West

Covering: Galway, Roscommon & Mayo

Community Resource Officer: Edel Killarney
Westside Resource Centre, Seamus Quirke Road,
Westside, Galway

Tel.: 091 587640

Email: ekillarney@epilepsy.ie

Mid-West

Covering: Limerick, Clare & Tipperary North

Community Resource Officer: Veronica Bon
Social Service Centre, Henry St. Limerick

Tel.: 061 313773

Email: vbon@epilepsy.ie

Kerry

Covering: Kerry

Community Resource Officer: Kathryn Foley
9/10 The Paddocks, Ballydowney, Killarney, Co. Kerry

Tel.: 064 6630301

Email: kfoley@epilepsy.ie

Cork

Community Resource Officers:

South Lee & West Cork: Niamh Jones

North Lee & North Cork: Loretta Kennedy
35 Washington Street, Cork

Tel.: 021 4274774

Email: Niamh:njones@epilepsy.ie /

Loretta:lkennedy@epilepsy.ie

South East

Covering: Kilkenny, Wexford, Carlow, Waterford &
Tipperary South

Community Resource Officer: Miriam Gray
C/o HSE, St. Joseph's, Waterford Rd, Kilkenny

Tel.: 056 7789904

Email: mgray@epilepsy.ie

Midlands

Covering: Offaly, Longford, Laois & Westmeath

Community Resource Officer: Cliona Molloy
The Charleville Centre, Church Avenue, Co. Offaly

Tel.: 057 9346790

Email: cmolloy@epilepsy.ie

East

Covering: Dublin, Kildare & Wicklow

Community Resource Officer:
Dublin North, West & Kildare: Edel Curran
Dublin South & Wicklow: Carina Fitzgerald
National Information Officer: Geraldine Dunne, 249
Crumlin Road, Dublin 12

Tel.: 01 4557500

Email: Geraldine:gduenne@epilepsy.ie /

Edel:ecurran@epilepsy.ie

Carina:cfitzgerald@epilepsy.ie

North East

Covering: Louth, Meath, Monaghan & Cavan

Community Resource Officer: Mary Baker
Unit 1a, Partnership Court, Park St. Dundalk, Co.
Louth

Tel.: 042 9337585

Email: mbaker@epilepsy.ie

Training for Success

Manager: Honor Broderick

Institute of Technology Sligo, Ballinode, Sligo

Tel.: 071 915 5303

Email: Broderick.honor@itsligo.ie

Epilepsy Specialist Nurse HELPLINE

Monday 9.30am – 1.00pm

Tel.: (01) 4554133

Transitional Care Information Advice Line

Monday 2pm - 5pm

Tel.: (01) 4554133