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Driving and the Older Adult: The Virginia DMV Process

There are a rapidly growing number of senior drivers on our Virginia roads. In Virginia, motorists are required to renew their driver's licenses every eight years. At every in-person renewal, motorists must pass a vision test. Up to age 80, a person may renew electronically or by mail. However, people age 80 and older must apply in person for every renewal.

There are other considerations as well when it comes to older adults and driving. Whether it is subtle chronic disease changes over a period of time, or a recent illness, surgery, or event, questions do arise as to a person's ability to continue to drive. What considerations should you or others do to ensure the safety of yourself and others? The following information is provided from the DMV.

Medical and Mental Requirements

If you have a mental or physical condition that may impair your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle, even temporarily, you must provide DMV with a medical statement from your physician/physician's assistant/nurse practitioner. Some of these conditions include:

- Level of consciousness
- Seizures
- Vision changes
- Impairment of judgment
- Loss of motor functions

DMV's Seizure/Blackout Policy, established by our Medical Advisory Board, states that a person must be seizure-free or blackout-free for at least six months to establish medication and regain proper medical control before driving. If a person is currently licensed and DMV is notified that the person has experienced a seizure, loss of consciousness or blackout, DMV will suspend the person's driving privilege for

a period of six months from the date of the last episode.

DMV will evaluate the medical information to determine if a driver's license may be issued or restricted.

Reporting an Impaired Driver

The Virginia DMV has a process for reporting a potentially unsafe driver to its licensing office or department of motor vehicles. The DMV promptly reviews all reports of hazardous or impaired drivers. Reports must be submitted in writing or using the Medical Review Request (MED-3) form to:

DMV Medical Review Services, P.O. Box 27412, Richmond, VA 23269-0001

All reports of impaired drivers must include:

- Information that will help the DMV identify the impaired driver (such as name, address, date of birth, etc.)
- Specific information about the concern and why the person should be reviewed by DMV, and
- The name, address, and telephone number of the person reporting the impaired driver, so that DMV may follow up.

Law enforcement officers and physicians represent the majority of individuals submitting reports, although concerned citizens also can do so. If a state agency finds a complaint reasonable and credible, it may ask the reported driver to submit additional information, which could be used to help determine if a screening or assessment is justified.

Review Process

As part of the medical review process, DMV may require you to:

- Submit a medical statement from your physician/physician's assistant/nurse practitioner.
- Submit a vision statement from your ophthalmologist/optometrist
- Undergo an evaluation by a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist in a driver evaluation program
- Pass the two-part driver's license knowledge exam
- Pass the road skills test

Based on DMV's evaluation of the medical information and/or test results, DMV will determine whether to:

- suspend your driving privilege;
- restrict your driving privilege;
- require you to complete a driver evaluation; or
- require you to submit periodic medical and/or vision reports

For persons required to submit a periodic medical and/or vision report, DMV will send you a reminder letter approximately 60 days prior to the due date.

For More Information

Visit the [Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles website](https://www.dmv.virginia.gov) or call (804) 367-6203 to learn more about the process and possible outcomes. You will be required to provide your name and contact information.

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