

Advice for Amputees on Returning to Driving

What do I need to do if I want to drive again?

You are required by law to inform the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (D.V.L.A.) of the extent of your disability.

You can contact them in the following ways:

By post:

Drivers Medical Enquiries
DVLA
Swansea
SA99 1TU

By telephone: **0300 790 6806**

Online: **www.gov.uk/report-driving-medical-condition**

You need to complete a form telling them what has happened and when. You may also need to advise them of what changes to the car you require.

You can be fined up to £1,000 if you do not tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving.

What modifications to the car do I need to do?

It can be useful to contact organisations of disability motorists and mobility centers. Mobility centers may give advice over the telephone or suggest an appointment for a practical assessment. They will assess if you can drive and what controls or equipment may suit your needs. Contact addresses are included at the end.

If you have any questions or would like further information please ask a member of staff.

What modifications may be needed if I have had a lower limb amputation?

Driving an automatic car:

If your right leg has been amputated some garages suggest changing the accelerator to the left of the brake. We advise caution with this as some of our clients who have adapted their car in this way have had an accident. It may be safer to move both pedals across to be operated by the left foot, but keep the brake on the left of the accelerator. A simple and inexpensive alternative is to adapt your car to hand controls.

Driving a manual car:

You will need one or two pedals adapted to hand controls. These are relatively cheap and easy for an expert to fit (see attached list for approved specialists).

Other adaptations that you may consider are: steering knobs, switches to levers.

What should I do before considering buying a car?

Check the following:

- Whether you can get in and out of the car – try this several times
- Consider if you will be wearing a prosthetic leg or not. Check that there is space for your prosthetic leg in the foot well
- Check the width of opening doors
- Check the height of seats
- Check if the steering wheel can be adjusted easily
- Ensure there plenty of leg and foot room
- If you use a wheelchair check that it fits into the boot - look for a boot with a low sill.

What modifications may be needed if I have had an upper limb amputation?

In order to control a car as an upper limb amputee you are likely to need a steering ball or spinner fitted to the steering wheel. Some spinners can be used with a prosthesis to steady the steering wheel. Whether you can use a spinner with a prosthesis will depend on your level of amputation and the type of prosthesis that you have. If you have an automatic car and are able to use a spinner with a prosthesis you may not need any further adaptations to drive; however, you will probably want power steering to avoid putting too much strain on your remaining limb. If you are not able to use a prosthesis when driving you would likely require further adaptations to enable you to control the car; for example switch controls on a spinner to enable you to control the car while indicating.

Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RIDC) provide a number of useful mobility guides including which are available to download or to order free of charge– see contact information below.

- Driving after an amputation
- Car controls
- Choosing a car
- Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV)

What is the Motability Scheme?

The Motability Scheme is an independent charity which enables disabled people to get mobile by exchanging their mobility allowance to lease a new vehicle which can include cars, scooters powered wheelchairs or wheelchair accessible vehicles.

To be eligible to join the Motability Scheme, you need to receive one of the following mobility allowances

- Higher rate component of the Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Enhanced rate mobility component of the personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- War Pensioners Mobility Supplement
- Armed Forces Independence Payment

Contact information is available at the end of this leaflet, in the benefits leaflet, or for further details ask a member of staff.

Am I VAT Exempt?

You do not pay VAT on adaptations, their installation, repairs or maintenance on goods designed solely for use by disabled people.

Do I still need to pay road tax?

You are exempt if you are awarded the higher rate mobility component of DLA or the enhanced rate of PIP or war pensioner's mobility supplement.

You receive a 50% reduction if you get the PIP standard rate of mobility.

Will my car insurer charge me more now I am an amputee?

Under the Equality Act 2010 and the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, insurers are not allowed to refuse disabled drivers insurance or increase the premiums unless there is a proven increased risk. However you must let them know about your change of circumstance and inform them if you adapt your vehicle in any way.

What is the Blue Badge Scheme?

The Blue Badge scheme applies throughout Britain and allows disabled people to park nearer to their destinations.

These badges are only issued to people who are in real need of them and sometimes you need to be assessed to qualify.

You have to apply to your local council or online at: www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge

Further information can be obtained from:

Telephone (England): **0844 463 0213**

Email: bluebadge@northgate-is.com

Useful Addresses and Contact information

Government Contact:

PIP enquiry line

Telephone: **0800 121 4433** Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm Website: www.gov.uk/pip

For Motability enquires:

www.motability.co.uk

Tel: **0300 456 4566**

Nearest Mobility Centers:

Wessex DriveAbility

Leornain House
Kent Road
Portswood
Southampton SO17 2LJ

Tel **02380 554100** Website: www.wessexdriveability.org.uk/our-centres/

Email: enquiries@wessexdriveability.org.uk

Mobility Service Living (dlc)

The Vassall Centre
Gill Avenue
Fishponds
Bristol
BS16 2QQ

Telephone: **011796 59353** Fax: **011796 53652**

Email: mobserv@thisisliving.org.uk Website: www.thisisliving.org.uk

Very useful websites:

www.ridc.org.uk/content/mobility-guides - Research Institute for Disabled Consumers (RIDC)

www.disabledmotoring.org - also produce informative magazine

Telephone: **01508 489449** Email: info@disabledmotoring.org

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