

Occupational therapist assessments and driving

Sometimes you need to provide a medical certificate from your health practitioner as part of your driver licence application.

Your health practitioner could be your usual doctor (GP), a registered nurse or nurse practitioner, or a specialist.

If your health practitioner isn't satisfied with your fitness to drive for the classes or endorsements you're applying for, they may refer you to an occupational therapist for a driving assessment.

What the driving assessment involves

Driving assessments are done by registered occupational therapists.

First, you'll have an assessment in the therapist's office – an **off-road assessment**. Then they'll take you out for a practical driving assessment – an **on-road assessment**.

The off-road assessment

This part of the assessment will take up to 2 hours. The occupational therapist will carry out a thorough check of:

- your vision (basic screening)
- your physical functions (such as range of movement, strength, sensation and coordination)
- your judgement
- your memory
- your directional orientation
- your movement and decision-making times
- how your mind understands what you see
- your knowledge of road rules and signs.

The therapist may use a computer-based tool for part of this assessment.

The on-road assessment

Occasionally, a driver's off-road assessment suggests they shouldn't be driving. If this happens, the occupational therapist may still want you to do the on-road assessment, to confirm the off-road assessment results.

The on-road assessment assesses the impact that any disability or illness, or aging, might be having on your ability to drive safely.

During the assessment, you'll be accompanied by the occupational therapist. Sometimes a specially trained driving instructor will be there as well.

You'll drive in a range of situations – for example:

- driving on both the open road and urban roads
- driving through controlled and uncontrolled intersections
- parking.

The on-road assessment may be about 40–60 minutes of driving.

If you don't have a current driver licence, make your assessor aware of this at least one week before the assessment, so they can get one on your behalf. Without a temporary licence, you can't sit the on-road assessment.

What happens after the driving assessment

When you've finished both parts of the driving assessment, the occupational therapist will write a report outlining their observations and providing a professional recommendation.

They'll send the report to you, NZTA, and the health practitioner who asked for you to be assessed.

If you've already submitted your medical certificate at an agent, NZTA will review the certificate and the report when we process your application.

Your health practitioner may wait to review the report before they give you a medical certificate. If they issue a certificate confirming you're fit to drive, you can continue with your driver licensing application.

To find out more about licence renewal for older drivers, read *Older drivers: licence renewal* (Factsheet 57).

Where you can find out more

If you want more information, speak to your health practitioner or contact an occupational therapist.

You can find a list of occupational therapists on the Occupational Therapy New Zealand Whakaora Ngangahau Aotearoa website. Use the filters to look for a therapist in your region with a driver assessment focus.

otnzwna.co.nz/find-a-therapist



This factsheet is a general guide only. It doesn't replace legal advice, and your exact requirements will depend on current legislation.

Make sure you have the most up-to-date version of this factsheet by checking www.nzta.govt.nz/factsheets



www.nzta.govt.nz

0800 822 422

info@nzta.govt.nz

NZ Transport Agency Waka Kotahi,
Private Bag 11777, Palmerston North 4442



To Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Government