

YOUR HEALTH AND DRIVING SAFELY IN MASSACHUSETTS

REGISTRY OF MOTOR VEHICLES

Revised October 2026

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INTRODUCTION

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) created this pamphlet to familiarize you with the minimum physical and cognitive medical standards for safe driving. It also highlights proactive steps you can take to prevent impaired driving and to keep you driving safely for as long as possible. It introduces you to warning signs of medically impaired driving and how to report an individual to the RMV whose medical condition may adversely affect their ability to operate a motor vehicle.

In addition, there are listings of driver rehabilitation programs that offer evaluations and training, as well as descriptions of alternative forms of transportation available to get you where you need to go.

Note: All websites in this pamphlet are presented as simple text links. See the endnote section on page 20 for the complete URLs.



KEY FINDINGS AND STATISTICS



Medical conditions can affect drivers of all ages. Though generally considered safe drivers, motor vehicle operators who are 65 years old and older are more likely to have a medical condition and/or use prescription medications that can affect their driving. In 2021–2022, an estimated 89% of adults age 65 and older took prescription medication*. If you are currently taking prescription or over-the-counter medication and are unsure about how your medicine may impact your ability to drive, please talk with a doctor or medical professional to evaluate whether you are safe to operate a motor vehicle.

The need to ensure that drivers age 65 and older are safe to operate a motor vehicle is becoming more important as this age demographic increases disproportionately to the number of total drivers in the Commonwealth. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), older drivers made up 22 percent of all licensed drivers in 2023, compared to 18 percent in 2014. This statistic is notable because older drivers have a higher crash rate per mile driven than all age groups except for the youngest drivers**, which is likely due to medical conditions.

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* **Cohen, R. A., & Mykyta, L. (2024, September 5). Prescription medication use, coverage, and nonadherence among adults age 65 and older: United States, 2021–2022 (National Health Statistics Report No. 209). National Center for Health Statistics.**

** **Li, G. "Longitudinal Research on Aging Drivers (Longroad): Study Design and Methods." Innovation in Aging, 2017, pp. 1262–1263.**

EVALUATING YOUR DRIVING SKILLS



Driving is a complex task that requires using diverse cognitive thinking skills as well as specific levels of physical strength, flexibility, and coordination. It is important to take the responsibility of driving seriously and recognize how changes in both mental and physical abilities can affect driving.

You may be an excellent driver for many years, until a new medical condition arises or an age-related chronic illness develops, such as cardiovascular disease, arthritis, cataract, osteoporosis, diabetes, dementia, or Alzheimer's disease, that can impact the ability to operate a motor vehicle safely.

Driving is a privilege, not a right. As a driver, you play an important role in maintaining driver fitness and assessing your ability to drive.

WARNING SIGNS

Signs of unsafe driving can appear gradually or quickly as a result of changes in medical status. Here are some warning signs to help you identify if you have a condition that might impair your driving.

- Drifting into other lanes
- Straddling lanes
- Making sudden lane changes
- Ignoring or missing stop signs and traffic signals
- Increased confusion while driving in traffic
- Braking or stopping abruptly without cause
- Accelerating suddenly without reason
- Coasting to a near stop amid moving traffic
- Pressing simultaneously on the brake and accelerator pedals while driving
- Difficulty seeing pedestrians, objects, and other vehicles
- Increasing levels of anxiety while driving
- Driving significantly slower than the posted speed limit or general speed of other vehicles
- Difficulty seeing clearly at night, dusk, or dark
- Difficulty reading road signs
- Getting lost on familiar roads
- Difficulty concentrating or staying alert behind the wheel
- Difficulty with driving basics like seat belts or head lights
- Difficulty with parking
- Decreased reaction time

Source: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

MEDICAL CONDITIONS



To keep you safe, the Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) consulted with medical experts on the Medical Advisory Board to establish a set of minimum physical and cognitive standards for operating a motor vehicle. These standards apply to all licensed drivers and new applicants, while other standards may apply to commercial drivers.

The established minimum standards apply to the following six (6) categories:

1. Vision
2. Seizure/Loss of Consciousness
3. Cardiovascular Condition
4. Pulmonary/Respiratory Condition
5. Musculoskeletal Impairment
6. Cognitive Impairment

Each category has more detailed and technical specifications that every driver must meet to operate a motor vehicle.

To learn more about these specifications, please visit the Medical standards for passenger and motorcycle driver's licenses[1] webpage or call 857-368-8020.

HAVING CONVERSATIONS WITH A FAMILY MEMBER OR CLOSE FRIEND ABOUT DRIVING



Some drivers are not the most objective evaluators of their ability to drive. Talking to a family member or friend about their driving may seem difficult or uncomfortable, however there are resources available to assist with having this conversation.

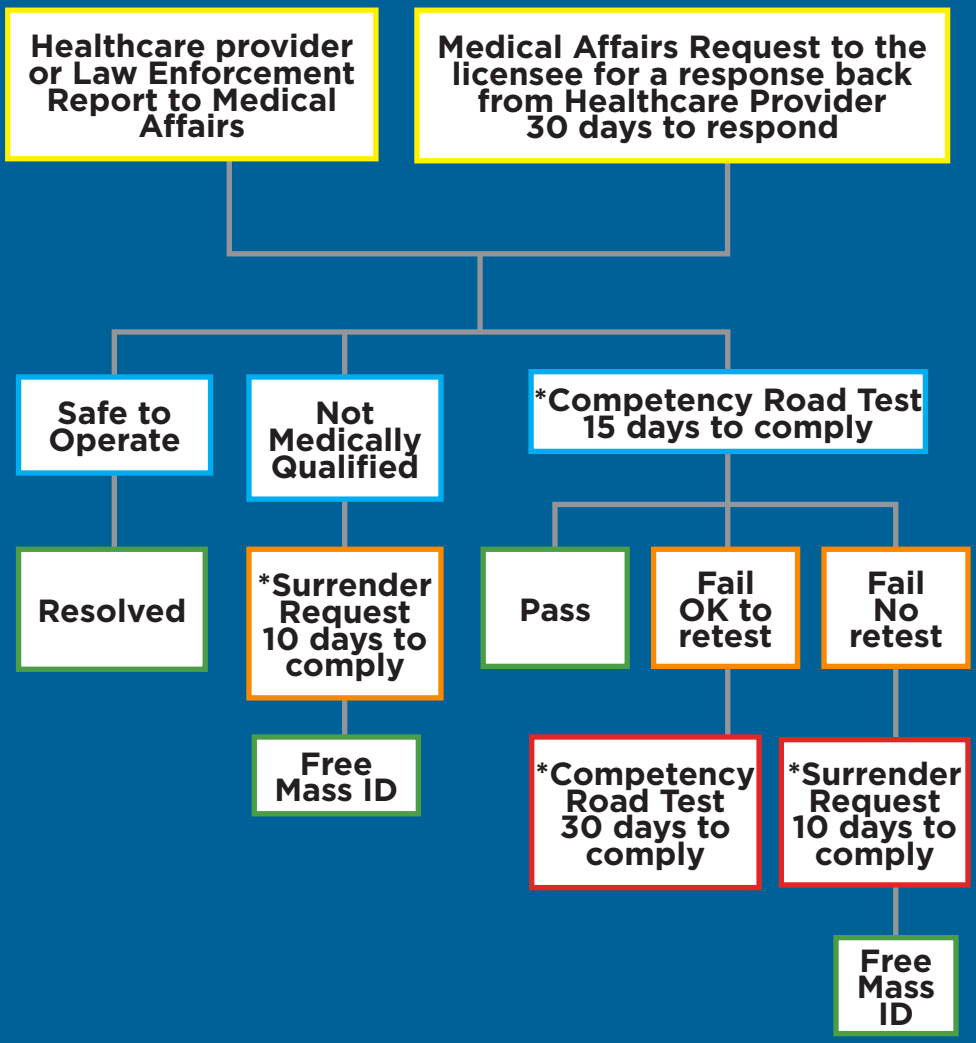
A law enforcement official or healthcare provider, may send a report in good faith, with underlying information based in their own personal evidence or observations to the RMV. The RMV's Medical Affairs may seek further information from a healthcare provider regarding the reported individual's ability to continue driving safely or need for further evaluation.

Based on the information received, Medical Affairs may or may not take a licensing action. The RMV cannot guarantee anonymity. Massachusetts has a public records law and a copy of this form will be released if a written request as to what initiated the RMV action is received from the licensee.

To learn more about reporting a medically impaired driver, please visit the Report a medically impaired driver [2] webpage.

**'Healthcare provider' is defined as a 'registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, physician, physician's assistant, psychologist, occupational therapist, optometrist, ophthalmologist, osteopath, podiatrist, or physical therapist who is a licensed healthcare provider under the provisions of M.G.L., Chapter 112.'

Reporting Process Diagram



*If non-compliant with Medical Affairs request, case is forwarded to Driver Control Unit. In addition, Medical Affairs and DCU decisions can be subject to the Board of Appeals process.

MASSACHUSETTS POLICY



Massachusetts is a self-reporting state. If an individual has a medical condition that affects their driving, they must self-report to the RMV (see reporting instructions below) at the time the condition appears/occurs, regardless of license renewal period. However, medical providers and law enforcement officers are encouraged to report unfit drivers as well.

REPORTING A MEDICALLY IMPAIRED DRIVER

Massachusetts uses a system of self-reporting where citizens can report themselves to the RMV if they feel they have a medical condition that is poorly affecting their ability to operate a vehicle safely. Understand that a medical diagnosis alone will not result in a licensing action being taken, but rather how your medical condition affects your functional ability to operate a motor vehicle safely will be determined. In addition, law enforcement and healthcare providers can report individuals that they believe to be unfit to operate a motor vehicle. To improve the safety of all road users, medical reporting assists the RMV in determining whether those individuals who are applying for a driver's license or those individuals already possessing a driver's license are medically qualified to safely operate a motor vehicle. The public has a right to protection from property loss, injury and even death caused by drivers with medical conditions that limit their ability to drive safely. The RMV's medical

reporting process plays a vital role in providing this safeguard.

All reports must be in writing, must be a signed statement describing the medical condition, and must be mailed to the address below. Medical Affairs will determine the next steps depending on what is reported.

Registry of Motor Vehicles
Attention: Medical Affairs
P.O. Box 55889
Boston, MA 02205

DRIVER REHABILITATION EVALUATION AND DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAMS



There are many driver rehabilitation programs within the Commonwealth area that offer driver evaluations and training.

These facilities include:

DRIVING EVALUATION PROGRAMS

Bay State Physical Therapy [3]
145 Rosemary Street, Suite K3
Needham, MA, 02494
Phone: 339-201-3009
Fax: 781-795-9952

CMSC Adaptive Driving Program [4]
186 West Boylston Street
West Boylston, MA
Phone: 508-835-2333
Email: asmith@cmscautoschool.com

***DriveRX** [5]
100 Cummings Center, Suite 307K
Beverly, MA 01915
Phone: 781-205-0870
Email: info@drive-rx.com

Driving Solutions - We Come to You [6]
Phone: 781-486-4645
Phone: 508-878-9583
Email: drivingsolutionsjudy@gmail.com

***Embrace Mobility Services, PLLC** [7]
Phone: 774-302-9383
Fax: 855-564-1801
Email: embracemobilityservices@gmail.com

***Emerson Hospital Center for Rehabilitative and Sports Therapies**
Keys to Independence Program
310 Baker Avenue
Concord, MA 01742
Phone: 978-287-8244
Email: drivingprogram@Emersonhosp.org

***Mercy Medical Center** [8]
271 Carew Street
Springfield, MA 01104
Phone: 413-748-6880

Newton-Wellesley Hospital
159 Wells Avenue
Newton, MA 02459
Phone: 617-243-6172

***Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital**
300 First Avenue
Charlestown, MA 02129
Phone: 617-952-6200

VA New England Healthcare System
940 Belmont Avenue
Brockton, MA 02301
Phone: 508-583-4500

Whittier Rehabilitation Hospital
145 Ward Hill Avenue
Bradford, MA 01835
Phone: 978-372-8000

DRIVER TRAINING PROGRAMS

AAA Senior Driving [9]
Call your local AAA office

AARP Smart Driver Course
Phone: 888-687-2277

***Central Massachusetts Safety Council West Boylston, MA**
Phone: 508-835-2333 x23

Safety Council of Western NE
1000 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA 01109
Phone: 413-783-1632

In Control Advanced Driver Training
188 Main Street, Suite 202
Wilmington, MA 01887
Phone: 978-658-4144

*Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist

ADAPTIVE EQUIPMENT AND VEHICLE MODIFICATIONS

The ability to operate a motor vehicle safely plays an important part in a person's overall independence. Adaptive equipment makes it possible for individuals with mobility impairments to drive vehicles easily and safely with the use of assistive technologies. These vehicle technologies can include, but are not limited to, adaptive hand controls, touch ignition pads and gear shifts, pedal extensions, driver seat modifications, lowered floors, accessibility ramps, and lifts.

The first step in acquiring adaptive equipment or beginning vehicle modifications is an evaluation from a qualified driver evaluator/trainer. This will determine your basic driving set up, specific modifications, and driving equipment to match your needs. The evaluation may also assess your visual perception, muscle strength, flexibility and range of motion, hand-eye coordination and reaction time, judgement and decision making, and your ability to handle adaptive equipment. The driver evaluator/trainer may also take into the account any prescription medications used by a potential driver.

While purchasing an accessible vehicle can open doors when it comes to freedom and mobility, many drivers may need additional assistance in affording such a vehicle. See the MassAbility Transportation Resources [10] website for more information.

To find a qualified adaptive driving evaluator/trainer or modifier/equipment installer, please contact MRC or contact the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED) or the National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA). NMEDA offers information on vehicle manufacturer rebate programs toward installation of adaptive equipment and special financing programs for mobility vehicles. Many dealerships offer competitive rates and custom-structured programs specially configured for those trying to purchase an accessible vehicle or mobility equipment. While purchasing an accessible vehicle can open doors when it comes to freedom and mobility, many of us may need additional assistance in affording such a vehicle.

Additionally, Easterseals of Massachusetts administers an Assistive Technology Loan Program (ATLP) that can be used to finance both the vehicle and adaptive modifications. The low-interest loan program helps people with disabilities purchase and borrow technology and other devices to help them live more independently.



RESOURCES:

MassAbility [11]
600 Washington Street
Boston, MA 02111
617-204-3600
800-245-6543
MRC.generalinformation@Massmail.State.MA.US

The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED) [12]
P.O. Box 49
Edgerton, WI 53534
608-884-8833

National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA) [13]
909 E. Skagway Avenue
Tampa, FL 33604
800-833-0427

Easterseals of Massachusetts [14]
484 Main Street,
Worcester, MA 01608
800-244-2756

CARFIT

CarFit is an educational program developed by AAA, AARP, and American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) that offers older adults the opportunity to check how well their personal vehicles "fit" them. The program also provides information and materials on community-specific resources that could enhance their safety as drivers, and/or increase their mobility in the community. At a CarFit event, a team of trained technicians and/or health professionals work with each participant to ensure they "fit" their vehicle properly for maximum comfort and safety. A CarFit check takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. To locate an event near you, see the CarFit [15] website.

EXPLORE YOUR OPTIONS

If you find that you should no longer be driving, there are plenty of ways to stay mobile without a driver's license.



MBTA – offers a variety of subway, commuter rail, ferry, and bus routes throughout the Greater Boston area. Additionally, the MBTA offers free travel training to help seniors and people with disabilities travel independently. These trainings help travelers learn more about planning trips, reading transportation schedules, boarding and exiting trains and buses, purchasing CharlieCards, general safety and more. For more information on travel training, please visit the MBTA Travel Instruction Services and Tools [16] website or call 617-337-2756.



The RIDE – is the MBTA's door-to-door, shared-ride paratransit service. The RIDE is operated by the MBTA in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you have a disability that prevents you from using the MBTA bus, subway, or trolley all or some of the time, The RIDE may be able to assist with your public transportation needs. The RIDE is available in 58 cities and towns in Greater Boston area, with similar operating hours to the MBTA – generally from 5:00AM to 1:00AM daily. To access The RIDE, you have to apply and be approved by The RIDE Eligibility Center (TREC). Once you're approved, you can schedule trips from 1 to 7 days in advance. For more information please visit the MBTA The Ride [17] website or call 617-337-2727.



Taxi Service – when traveling a short distance or looking for an easy transportation option, taxis can be a great option. To find a service near your community, search online including "taxi services" and the name of your community in the search bar.



Private Rideshare Companies – an easy, way to obtain on-demand transportation. These organizations have free mobile applications available to schedule your trip, track the motor vehicle's route and receive an estimated time of arrival. Additionally, the trip cost is calculated beforehand and the passenger's account is automatically charged, so cash is never physically exchanged.



MassHealth Transportation – provides eligible MassHealth members with emergency and non-emergency transportation options to medical appointments. To qualify, you must be approved for transportation benefits (PT-1). For more information, contact MassHealth at 1-800-841-2900.



Councils on Aging (COAs) – often provide transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities. Contact the Massachusetts Councils On Aging at https://mcoaonline.com or your local COA to learn what options may be available in your municipality or area.

MassOptions – can connect you to local community-based agencies across the state that serve older adults and people with disabilities. MassOptions can also help coordinate all of your healthcare needs with your transportation. To learn more, visit the MassOptions [18] website and/or call 1-844-422-6277.

Ride Match - an online, searchable database of public and private transportation options across Massachusetts.

Visit the Ride Match [19] website to download a list of services operating in your city or town, or use the trip planner to find options that meet your needs.

Regional Transportation Authorities - There are 15 Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) that provide fixed route and paratransit service in communities across the Commonwealth. Visit the MBTA Regional Transportation Authorities [20] website to learn which municipalities are members of each transit authority. Then visit your transit authority's website - or contact them directly - to learn what specific services they may offer to your city or town.

ENDNOTES

[1] Medical standards for passenger and motorcycle driver's licenses: www.mass.gov/info-details/medical-standards-for-passenger-class-d-and-motorcycle-class-m-drivers-licenses

[2] Report a medically impaired driver: www.mass.gov/how-to/report-a-medically-impaired-driver

[3] Bay State Physical Therapy: https://baystatept.com/

[4] CMSC Adaptive Driving Program: https://centralmasafety.com/drivers-ed/adaptive-driving/

[5] DriveRX: https://www.drive-rx.com/

[6] Driving Solutions - We Come to You: https://drivingsolutionsforyou.com/

[7] Embrace Mobility Services, PLLC: https://embracemobilityservices.com/

[8] Mercy Medical Center: https://www.trinityhealthofne.org/location/mercy-medical-center

[9] AAA Senior Driving: https://exchange.aaa.com/safety/senior-driver-safety-mobility/

[10] MassAbility Transportation Resources: https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massability-transportation-resources

[11] MassAbility: https://www.mass.gov/orgs/massability

[12] The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED): https://www.aded.net/

[13] National Mobility Equipment Dealer's Association (NMEDA): https://nmeda.org/

[14] Easterseals of Massachusetts: https://massachusetts.easterseals.com/

[15] CarFit: https://car-fit.org/

[16] MBTA Travel Instruction Services and Tools: https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/travel-instruction-services-and-tools

[17] MBTA The Ride: https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/the-ride

[18] MassOptions: https://massoptions.org/en/

[19] Ride Match: https://massridematch.org/

[20] MBTA Regional Transportation Authorities: https://www.mbta.com/accessibility/regional-transportation-authorities

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