Assessing Fitness to Drive
Information Sheet for the Treating Doctor

This information sheet guides you, the treating doctor when a fitness to drive assessment has been requested by a patient or is required in your opinion (the treating doctor is the health professional who is managing the patient’s overall mental and physical well-being and will generally be the patient’s first point of contact).

It is important that you establish the type of vehicle the patient is authorised or intending to drive and whether they intend to carry public passengers or bulk dangerous goods.

1. Private and Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver’s Health Assessment

This form assists you to assess whether the patient has a medical condition that is likely to adversely affect their ability to drive safely.

• The patient should complete the Health Questionnaire section and give the form to you at the assessment.
• You should then complete the Clinical Examination section and retain the form for your records.

2. Assessing Fitness to Drive for Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers 2012 (AFTD) publication

This publication provides consolidated standards that are supported by all Australian driver licensing authorities. The AFTD assists you (and other health professionals) to assess patients’ fitness to drive in a consistent and appropriate manner.

Note: Two sets of medical standards are outlined in the AFTD – private and commercial vehicle driver standards.

The patient must be assessed against the commercial standards if they hold or are applying for a licence to drive the following categories of vehicles:

• vehicles with a gross vehicle mass (GVM) of more than 8 tonne (driver licence class MR, HR, HC and MC)
• public passenger vehicles such as buses, taxis or limousines (driver authorisation)
• vehicles carrying dangerous goods (industry licence).

3. Specialist referral

If you have concerns about the patient’s medical condition and its effect on their ability to drive safely, or their condition is not precisely covered in the AFTD, you may seek an opinion from a specialist doctor, physiotherapist, occupational therapist, optometrist or ophthalmologist experienced in managing that particular condition.

Additionally, if the patient has a medical condition and drives or is intending to drive a commercial vehicle, the opinion of a specialist doctor is generally required.

What if there is a delay to see a specialist?

Commercial vehicle drivers, or applicants for a commercial vehicle licence, who do not meet the criteria for an unconditional licence but who may meet the criteria for a conditional licence will require a specialist assessment. However, the Department of Transport and Main Roads will permit the person to drive pending the specialist assessment if:

• the person has an appointment to see the relevant specialist(s) at the earliest practicable opportunity
• in your opinion the condition is not, or the conditions are not, likely to lead to acute incapacity or loss of concentration before the assessment(s).

Examples of conditions that could lead to acute incapacity or loss of concentration include ischaemic heart disease, sleep apnoea, or blackouts other than vasovagal.

In circumstances where a patient would generally be required to see a specialist, but there are delays in doing so, it is recommended that you issue a medical certificate confirming the patient’s fitness to drive for a period up until the date of the appointment with the specialist, provided you are satisfied that:

• the patient does not have a medical condition that could lead to acute incapacity or loss of concentration
• the patient is otherwise fit for a conditional licence under the AFTD.

In issuing the medical certificate, you should also consider whether the licence should be subject to any conditions in order to minimise the road safety risk of allowing the patient to drive, prior to obtaining the opinion of a relevant specialist.

What if there are difficulties in seeing a specialist?

If access to a specialist is difficult, the department is agreeable to a process in which:

• initial assessment and advice for the conditional licence is provided by a specialist
• ongoing periodic review for the conditional licence is provided by you, with the cooperation of the specialist

Where appropriate and available, the use of telemedicine technologies such as videoconferencing is encouraged as a means of facilitating access to a specialist’s opinion.
4. Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver

This form assists you to provide an opinion on whether or not a patient meets the medical and/or visual standard for a driver licence.

- **Part 1** is to be completed by the driver/patient.
- **Part 2** is to be completed by you.
- **Part 3** is to be completed by the patient’s optometrist or ophthalmologist (if applicable).

You should not complete Part 2 of the Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver until the results from all assessments requested from specialist doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, optometrists or ophthalmologists have been received (if applicable).

If you recommend a driver licence be granted or renewed subject to conditions, details of the conditions must be provided on the Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver, otherwise a conditional driver licence will not be considered by the department.

If you believe that vehicle modifications are necessary for your patient to drive safely, you should provide details of these recommendations on the Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver. For example, ‘the vehicle must be fitted with hand controls or a left foot accelerator’.

For more information about the conditions that can be placed on the Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver, please refer to the AFTD or the Driving Condition/Restriction Options Information Sheet.

From 1 January 2014, drivers 75 and over are required to have an annual medical assessment. Medical certificates issued on or after 1 January 2014 should only be issued for a maximum period of 12 months.

You should provide the completed Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver to your patient for lodgement with the department.

5. Encourage patients to notify the department

All Queensland driver licence holders and persons applying for a Queensland driver licence have a legal obligation to notify the department if they have a permanent or long term medical condition, or a change to an existing medical condition that is likely to adversely affect their ability to drive safely.

6. Notifying the department about a patient

If you think your patient will not notify the department, will not comply with recommended treatments, and/or will continue to drive despite advice not to, you are strongly encouraged to voluntarily notify the department. You can do this by completing the Health Professional Medical Condition Notification eForm.

Additionally, you can print and complete the Health Professional Medical Condition Notification or write to the department. These notifications should be posted, emailed or faxed to:

Post: Department of Transport and Main Roads
Locked Bag 2000
Red Hill Rockhampton Qld 4701

Email: mcr@tmr.qld.gov.au

Fax: (07) 4931 1624

For written notifications, sufficient information must be provided to effectively identify the person, their medical condition, and how it is likely to adversely affect their ability to drive safely. You should also provide sufficient information that effectively identifies you as a health professional.

7. Indemnity against liability

Section 142 of the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 provides indemnity against liability, both civilly and under an administrative process, for health professionals who give information in good faith to the department about a person’s medical fitness to drive.

8. Links

Austroads
www.austroads.com.au

Assessing Fitness to Drive for Commercial and Private Vehicle Drivers 2012 (AFTD) publication

Department of Transport and Main Roads
www.tmr.qld.gov.au

Medical Certificate for Motor Vehicle Driver (form F3712)

Private and Commercial Motor Vehicle Driver’s Health Assessment (form F3195)

Health Professional Medical Condition Notification (eForm)

Health Professional Medical Condition Notification (form F4842)

Driving Condition/Restrictions Information Sheet (form S5040)