

Purpose

Driving a motor vehicle is a complex task involving perception, appropriate judgement, adequate response time and appropriate physical capability.

A range of medical conditions, disabilities and treatments may influence these driving prerequisites. Such impairment may adversely affect driving ability, possibly resulting in a crash causing death or injury.

The primary purpose of this publication is to increase road safety in Australia by assisting health professionals to:

- assess the fitness to drive of their patients in a consistent and appropriate manner based on current medical evidence
- promote the responsible behaviour of their patients, having regard to their medical fitness conduct medical examinations for the licensing of drivers as required by state and territory driver licensing authorities
- provide information to inform decisions on conditional licences
- recognise the extent and limits of their professional and legal obligations with respect to reporting fitness to drive.

The publication also aims to provide guidance to driver licensing authorities in making licensing decisions. With these aims in mind the publication:

- outlines clear medical requirements for driver capability based on available evidence and expert medical opinion
- clearly differentiates between national minimum standards (approved by the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers' Meeting) for drivers of commercial and private vehicles
- provides general guidelines for managing patients with respect to their fitness to drive outlines the legal obligations for health professionals, driver licensing authorities and drivers
- provides a reporting template to guide reporting to the driver licensing authority if required provides links to supporting and substantiating information.

Routine use of these standards will ensure the fitness to drive of each patient is assessed in a consistent manner. In doing so, the health professional will not only be contributing to road safety but may minimise medico-legal exposure in the event that a patient is involved in a crash or disputes a licensing decision.