

A guide to standards of vision for driving cars and motorcycles (Group 1)

Please keep this leaflet safe so you can refer to it in the future.

We review these rules every six months, following updated advice from the Secretary of State's Honorary Medical Advisory Panels.

Sight in one eye only

If you can see with only one eye, you may still be able to meet the standards for driving set out below. It may take up to three months for you to adapt to driving with one eye, so please be prepared for this. In particular, your ability to judge distances may be affected and you may not be so aware of objects to each side of you.

One eye is affected by a medical condition

If you have a medical condition that currently affects only one eye, you may still be able to meet the standards for driving set out below.

After having cataracts removed

If you have surgery to remove cataracts, your eyesight after the surgery must be within the standard of vision set out below to allow you to continue driving.

Standards for visual acuity

Visual acuity is the sharpness of your vision. By law, you must be able to read a standard size number plate (with glasses or contact lenses if necessary) from 20.5 metres (67 feet), or 20 metres (65 feet) if narrower characters (50mm wide) are displayed. If you do not meet this standard you cannot drive on a public road. If you do drive on a public road, you are guilty of an offence. You should regularly check for yourself whether you meet this standard. Also, if the police suspect that you do not have the relevant standard of vision, they can make you take the 'number plate test'. If you cannot read the number plate, you could be prosecuted.

Standards for field of vision

Your field of vision is the area you can see when looking straight ahead. You must have an adequate field of vision to drive safely. To meet the standard for your field of vision, you must be able to see within a specific area without there being significant problems in the field of vision. If you have total loss of sight in one eye, you must not have any problem with the field of vision in your other eye. If you have any doubt about whether you can meet the relevant standard, get advice from your GP, optician or eye specialist.

In the interests of road safety, at all times you must be sure that you can safely control a motor vehicle. If your eyesight gets worse and you cannot read a number plate at the relevant distance, or you lose any of your field of vision, you must tell us. You should give us your name and address or your driver number whenever you contact us.

Contact us

If your GP, optician or eye specialist tells you to report your eyesight difficulty to us, you can download the appropriate medical questionnaire from the 'medical rules for all drivers' section of the website at www.direct.gov.uk/driverhealth

You can also do the following.

Phone us on 0300 790 6806.

Write to:

Drivers Medical Group
DVLA
Swansea
SA99 1TU.

Send an e-mail to eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

