

DriveABLE cognitive assessments

- How DriveABLE works
- How your licence may be affected

Driving abilities can change

Driving is a complex, fast-paced activity. The typical driver makes 30 decisions per kilometre, with less than a half-second to respond to changes on the road. Even the slightest driver impairment can have tragic and fatal consequences.

Driving is so familiar to us that we may not appreciate just how complicated a task it is. Driving requires cognitive skills such as attention, memory, decision-making and judgment. That's why it's important to acknowledge and accept that many of us will not be able to drive forever. When medical issues arise, even people with very good driving records can become unsafe behind the wheel, and a danger to themselves and others.

If you have a medical condition or are on medication that affects these requirements, your driving skills and abilities can be affected. In fact, drivers with cognitive impairment are at the highest risk of an at-fault collision compared to a wide range of other common medical conditions.

That's why physicians who have conducted a medical examination and are concerned about a patient's cognitive functioning and continued ability to drive safely are required to report their concerns to Manitoba Public Insurance.

If your physician has sent us a report suggesting your ability to operate a vehicle safely may be affected by a cognitive medical condition, you will need to take a DriveABLE cognitive assessment. This will allow us to determine whether your medical condition affects your driving.

What is a cognitive impairment?

Cognitive impairment is a specific phrase used to describe medical changes in the brain. These range from mild changes – perhaps as a result of multiple medications – through to dementia and Alzheimer’s. Cognitive impairment can also be caused by heart disease, diabetes, brain injuries and numerous other medical issues.

What is DriveABLE?

DriveABLE is a special assessment that tests the specific cognitive functions essential for safe driving. It does not measure overall cognitive functioning or intelligence.

DriveABLE was developed through extensive research that compared the driving abilities of hundreds of cognitively-impaired and medically healthy drivers.

Who needs to take a DriveABLE assessment?

The requirement to take a DriveABLE assessment is unrelated to age. Only drivers whose cognitive function is a concern are referred to Manitoba Public Insurance for a DriveABLE assessment.

How does DriveABLE work?

DriveABLE consists of two distinct levels of assessment. The first level is a computerized assessment at a Manitoba Public Insurance office. The second level is an on-road evaluation in a specially-equipped dual-controlled vehicle. The on-road evaluation is not always necessary and is based on how you score on the in-office assessment.



The in-office assessment

For the in-office assessment, you will be asked to complete a series of tasks using a computerized touch screen. Absolutely no knowledge or even familiarity with computers is needed; you only need to touch the screen.

Specially-trained Manitoba Public Insurance staff will administer this assessment and you will be provided with a complete explanation and practice time at the beginning of every task. It typically takes about one hour and, like an eye or hearing test, you cannot study to pass it.

Results are judged against other drivers the same age who do not have a cognitive impairment. For example, if you're 45, your results are measured against those of a healthy 45 year old.

Once you complete the in-office assessment we will contact you by letter regarding your results and next steps. There are three possible outcomes:

Pass – No further testing is necessary, but you may be required to provide periodic medical reports so we can monitor your medical condition to determine its effect on driving ability. This is particularly important for medical conditions that may deteriorate over time.

Inconclusive – If you wish to continue driving, you will be required to complete and pass the on-road evaluation.

Fail – The in-office assessment is highly predictive of how a driver will perform on the on-road evaluation. Therefore, if you do poorly on the in-office assessment, you'll likely have similar results on the on-road evaluation. Should you receive a fail outcome on the in-office assessment, you still have the option to complete the on-road evaluation.

After either level of assessment – or if you choose to take no further testing – we'll consider your results, along with all relevant information, and determine whether your licence should be cancelled for your own safety and the safety of others.

The on-road evaluation

The DriveABLE on-road evaluation is not like a traditional Manitoba driving test, which tests a driver's overall skills, ability and understanding of the rules of the road. Instead, the DriveABLE on-road evaluation uses a special road course designed to reveal driving errors associated with cognitive decline.

To ensure that drivers who take the on-road evaluation are not held to a higher standard than the general population, minor driving errors typically made by healthy drivers are not part of the scoring.

Only errors related to cognitive abilities are scored.

The on-road evaluation is taken in a vehicle with dual controls. This allows our driving examiner to take control of the vehicle if the situation warrants. The test is suitable for both urban and rural drivers as familiarity with the area will not affect the scoring.

If you pass the on-road evaluation, no further assessment is required.

If you fail the on-road evaluation, your driver's licence will be cancelled. Again, this determination is always made with your safety and the safety of others in mind.

What is the cost of the assessment?

The in-office assessment costs \$50. The on-road evaluation is an additional \$75. You must pay immediately prior to your appointment.

Be sure to bring your driver's licence to your appointment, as well as glasses and/or hearing aids if you use them.

Where do the assessments take place?

In-office assessments and on-road evaluations are available in Winnipeg and Brandon.



Planning for your driving retirement

Manitoba Public Insurance does not take the decision to cancel a driver's licence lightly. In all decisions around your ability to drive, we strive to balance individual fairness with public safety for all road users.

If your driver's licence is cancelled, or if you decide to retire from driving, family and community support can ease your transition into driving retirement. Visit mpi.mb.ca for a list of useful resources to help in the transition.

Appeal process

If your licence has been cancelled due to your medical condition and you wish to appeal the decision, you may contact the Medical Review Committee. This committee is appointed by the provincial government. It operates independently of Manitoba Public Insurance and provides an appeal process in cases where a driver's licence has been cancelled on medical grounds.

Medical Review Committee

200-301 Weston Street
Winnipeg, MB, R3E 3H4
Phone: **204-945-7350**
Fax: **204-948-2682**

More questions?

For additional information, contact our Driver Fitness department by calling **204-985-1900** or toll-free **1-866-617-6676**.



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