



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customercare@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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Driving after spinal cord injury (page 1 of 4)

The advice below is a general overview of what you need to do before you return to driving following a spinal cord injury. Everyone's individual circumstances differ. Our advice is that if you require more in-depth information and advice on anything you should arrange a discussion with your primary occupational therapist. If you are an outpatient, please speak to a member of the outpatient OT team.

Spinal cord injury is a 'notifiable condition' and it is your responsibility to inform the DVLA otherwise you may be fined up to £1,000, your insurance will be invalidated and if you have an accident you may be prosecuted.

Notification

New driver

If you are a new driver, re-applying having been disqualified or had your licence surrendered, complete a D1 form to apply for a car licence, or a D2 form to apply for a lorry or bus licence. After you have completed the forms send them with a completed Medical Questionnaire (all forms are on www.gov.uk) to the DVLA. Forms can be saved online and emailed to the Drivers Medical Group, DVLA (see references on page 3 and 4 for details).

There are various Medical Questionnaires for different medical conditions; ensure you fill out the appropriate form relating to spinal cord injuries.

Licence holders

If you already hold a licence, you need to send in a completed Medical Questionnaire to the DVLA which can be completed online.

Correspondence is usually sent to your home address, so informing them you are in hospital is useful. Speak to a member of your care team who will be able to give you with the correct address for correspondence to be sent to you in hospital. Correspondence can also usually be arranged via email.

You must wait for the DVLA decision about your licence before you begin driving again after a spinal cord injury.

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DVLA

The DVLA may send you a medical consent form asking for permission for their medical advisor to seek further information about your medical condition from your doctor or consultant. Once the medical advisor has sufficient information they will make a recommendation about your licence. A recommendation usually takes 3 weeks if no further information is required or up to 90 days if further information is required.

The medical advisor may recommend that you attend a specialist Mobility Centre for a driving assessment. If it is requested that you have an assessment, the DVLA will cover the cost. You may have the assessment privately, in which case it will cost you £80 - £100. The assessment looks at what adaptations you may require to enable you to drive safely. A written report is provided detailing the outcome of the assessment including recommendations.

An assessment report for the Mobility Centre can be useful for charitable applications for funding towards buying an adapted car. It identifies exactly what you require and how much it is likely to cost.

It is useful to photocopy all correspondence. The DVLA can email forms directly rather than sending them to your home address.

Learning to drive

The Motability scheme may be able to provide financial support to help you learn to drive. This can involve funding for up to 40 hours of tuition. To qualify for this you need to be a current customer of the Motability scheme and hold a provisional driving licence. If you are granted support for tuition you must have the tuition within 12 months. The scheme will not support funding for practical or theory tests. You may contact the Motability Customer Service team to discuss this in more detail (see references on page 4).

Paraplegic drivers

May need hand controls. An assessment at a Mobility Centre and driving lessons in an adapted car is recommended.

Tetraplegic drivers

May require a specialist assessment and a wider range of car adaptations. Driving lessons in an adapted car is recommended.

Motability

This may be applied for by people who have been awarded at least 3-years worth of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) enhanced rate of mobility component. PIP has replaced the Disability Living Allowance (DLA), however, those receiving the DLA high rate of mobility component may be eligible for the Motability scheme.

Applicants for PIP need to have made their application before their 65th birthday. If you are aged over 65 years, you will be entitled to claim the Attendance Allowance but this does not

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include a mobility component and therefore you will not be able to apply for the Motability scheme.

The Motability scheme covers car insurance, breakdown cover, repairs and servicing and ensures the user will always have a car to drive. Driving assessments at a Mobility Centre are free of charge if arranged through Motability.

Blue Badge

If you receive the PIP you will automatically be eligible for a Blue Badge if you score 8 points or more on the 'Moving Around' activity of the PIP. This activity assesses your physical ability to get around, 8 points or more being awarded to those who are unable to walk or cannot walk further than 50 metres. If you do not qualify for the PIP you can still apply for a Blue Badge through your local council authority. You can check your eligibility for the Blue Badge scheme online (see references for the link on page 4) or by contacting your local council authority by phone.

Tax exemption

You can apply for car tax exemption if you receive the higher rate mobility component of either the DLA or PIP or if you receive the War Pensioners Mobility Supplement. The vehicle needs to be registered in your name or your nominated driver's name. The vehicle must only be used for the disabled person's needs.

You can get a 50% reduction in vehicle tax if you receive the standard rate mobility component of the PIP. You cannot get a 50% reduction if you receive the lower rate mobility component of the DLA.

ServiceCall

ServiceCall is a way for a disabled driver, wheelchair or scooter user to call for service at premises where access or use of the service being provided is difficult or impossible. ServiceCall uses a wireless sender and receiver to transmit a request for help to any establishment with a receiver installed. This is done by the user aiming their handset in the general direction of the receiver and depressing the activation button. The receiver then emits a visual and audio alarm to the alert staff inside the premises to the user's presence.

You can order a ServiceCall device through the ServiceCall website or by phone (see references on page 4 for details).

Funding

There are a variety of options when considering help with financing adapted controls, wheelchair accessible vehicles or any other equipment that will support your independent living. These options can be especially useful if you are not entitled to Motability. Charity and grant funding can be available from a variety of sources. The Ricability website has a page that lists a number of charities that may be able to provide funding (see reference list on page 4).

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References

1. Forum of Mobility Centres: www.mobility-centres.org.uk
2. Driving and Transport, Driving with a Disability or Health Condition – links on: www.gov.uk
3. Wessex DriveAbility (covers the Wessex area): www.wessexdriveability.org.uk or telephone 023 805 54 100.
4. Personal Independence Payment: www.gov.uk/pip

You can arrange a meeting through the discharge co-ordinators with James, DWP advisor, at the Spinal Unit to discuss your entitlement.

Further resources

Motability

www.motability.co.uk

Motability Customer Services Team 0300 456 4566 or online via:

www.motability.co.uk/about-us/contact-us/general-enquiry-form

DVLA D100

'Driving Licences' booklet, D1 and D2 forms available from the Post Office.

Blue Badge information

Search on: www.gov.uk

Blue Badge check eligibility - bluebadge.direct.gov.uk/directgovapply.html

Drivers Medical Group

DVLA

Swansea

SA99 1TU

Car drivers telephone: 0300 790 6806

Lorry or bus drivers telephone: 0300 790 6807

Email Medical Department: eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk

Others

- Naidex – mobility road show for car trials, equipment, latest developments: www.naidex.co.uk
- Disabled Living Centres: www.assist-uk.org/centre-details
- ServiceCall Scheme – for attended service at supermarkets, petrol stations etc: www.service-call.net Tel: (01629) 814488 - or Freephone 0800 458 3008.
- Ricability – wide range of information for drivers: www.ricability.org.uk
- Charity funding - www.rica.org.uk/content/finance
- Road Tax exemption: www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vehicles-and-transport

Ask your therapist if you require any assistance with the above.

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