

# DRIVING AFTER STROKE IN ALBERTA

## INFORMATION FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

### DID YOU KNOW?

- 30-40% of individuals who experience a stroke resume driving
- The best predictors of driving outcome appear to be vision, cognition, driving experience and functional ability
- Driving is a complex skill
- Research shows that we make approximately 20 decisions during each mile
- The more experience an individual has driving the more automatic his/her actions become

### DETERMINING FITNESS TO DRIVE: WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY IS IT?

Alberta Transportation is responsible for determining driver fitness and making decisions regarding a person's privilege to drive. It is the stroke survivor's responsibility to inform Alberta Transportation that he/she has had a stroke. By law, each person who holds an Alberta Driver's License is required to personally report a medical condition that can affect his/her driving ability.

There is, currently, no mandatory/discretionary statutory provision for Alberta physicians to report. The Alberta College of Physicians and Surgeons encourages routinely reporting all failed medical standards for the operation of a motor vehicle. Although such reporting is not mandatory under the Act, physicians and other health care professionals in Alberta are protected from legal action when so doing.

The *Traffic Safety Act*, Section 60 states that:

1. *No liability accrues to a physician, optometrist or other health care provider by reason only that the physician, optometrist or other health care provider provides to the Registrar under this Act information respecting a person's medical condition that may impair that person's ability to operate a motor vehicle in a safe manner.*

Reporting fitness to drive poses an ethical dilemma for many health professionals. Decisions and actions taken by a professional must be based on sound reasoning and rationale. Health professionals should review their professional code of ethics and standards of practice.

### CCMTA MEDICAL STANDARDS FOR DRIVERS

#### Single or recurrent TIA

Patients who have experienced a single, or recurrent TIA, should not be allowed to drive any type of vehicle until a neurological assessment and appropriate investigations are completed. Driving may be resumed if the neurologic assessment shows no residual loss of functional ability, including motor function and cognitive ability, discloses no obvious risk of sudden re-occurrence and any underlying causes have been addressed with appropriate treatment.

#### Cerebral aneurysm

- Symptomatic aneurysm is an absolute barrier to driving any vehicle.
- In case of an asymptomatic, incidentally discovered aneurysm the driver may be eligible for any class of licensure upon receipt of a favourable opinion from a neurologist/neurosurgeon.
- Surgically treated cerebral aneurysm waiting period of 3 months private driving, 6 months commercial driving.

#### Stroke

- Patients should not drive for at least one month. Driving may resume if:
  - No significant motor, cognitive, perceptual or visual deficit. Where there is reported to be a residual loss of function and ability a road test is recommended.
  - Neurological assessment discloses no obvious risk of sudden recurrence.
  - Underlying cause has been appropriately treated.
  - No post stroke seizure has occurred.

### PATIENT INFORMATION

- The effect of a medical suspension on car insurance is dependent on the insurance company. You may wish to contact your insurance company to inquire about their policy.
- For excellent patient information about driving after a stroke check [www.medicine.mcgill.ca/strokinge/](http://www.medicine.mcgill.ca/strokinge/)

Prepared by the Alberta Provincial Stroke Strategy  
(Please check [www.strokestrategy.ab.ca](http://www.strokestrategy.ab.ca) for updated versions) Last updated: November 2009

## THE PROCESS TO RETURN TO DRIVING AFTER STROKE

- The physician completes a Medical Examination for Motor Vehicle Operators. This form is available online at <http://www.servicealberta.ca/pdf/mv/MedicalTrans3050.pdf>. The physician may request that the stroke survivor provide additional information, such as a visual assessment in order to complete the form.
- Submit the completed Medical Examination for Motor Vehicle Operators form to an Alberta Registry Agent or directly to Alberta Transportation, Driver Fitness and Monitoring (DFM) at 4999 – 48 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T6B 2X3.
- Once the report has been submitted, the stroke survivor will need to wait for instructions from DFM about returning to driving. DFM may ask the person to undergo a driving evaluation.

## IMPORTANT CONTACTS

### Driver Fitness and Monitoring Alberta Transportation

Main Floor, Twin Atria 4999 - 98  
Avenue Edmonton, Alberta T6B 2X3  
Phone: 780-427-8230  
Fax: 780-422-6612

### Driving Evaluation Programs/Services

#### Alberta Health Services

Ph: 780-735-7999 Edmonton Glenrose  
Ph: 780-608-8683, 679-2900 Camrose  
Ph: 780-657-3361 Two Hills  
Ph: 780-384-3652 Sedgewick  
Ph: 780-632-3331 Vegreville  
Ph: 780-662-3984 Tofield  
Ph: 780-853-5270 Vermilion

#### Complete Rehab and Wellness Service

Ph: 780-532-4921 Grande Prairie

#### Drive-Able

Ph: 403-252-2243 Calgary  
Ph: 403-317-1463 Lethbridge  
Ph: 403-309-6180 Red Deer  
Ph: 780-624-2581 Peace River  
Ph: 403-528-4860 Medicine Hat  
Ph: 780-433-1494 Edmonton

### Accessible Transportation Options

**Beaver County/Tofield** Tofield Handi-van Society 780-662-3269  
**Brooks** Brooks Handibus 403-362-6190  
**Calgary** Access Calgary 403-537-7770  
**Camrose** Rose City Handivan Society 780-672-8777  
**Cardston** Handibus 403-635-1025  
**Crowsnest Pass** Handibus 403-562-8833  
**Coaldale** Handibus 403-380-0228  
**Drumheller** Valley Bus Society 403-823-1319  
**Edmonton** Disabled Adult Transportation System (DATS) 780-496-4567 or Driving Miss Daisy 780-470-0123  
**Edson** The Edson Seniors Transportation Society 780-723-1122.  
**Fort McMurray** Specialized Transportation Service 780-743-7909  
**Grande Prairie** Disabled Transportation Society (DTS) 780-876-0637  
**Lethbridge** LA Transit 403-320-3885 Lethbridge Access- A- Ride 403-329-6464  
Genesis Medi Shuttle Inc. 403-320-9057  
**Lloydminster** Lloydminster Handivan Society 780-205-1666  
**Magrath** Handibus 403-317-0737  
**MD of Rocky View** Rocky View Regional Handibus Society 403-948-2887  
**MD of Smoky River/Falher/Donnelly/Girouxville** Smoky River FCSS 780-837-2220  
**Medicine Hat** Special Transit 403-529-8214 or Buddy Program 403-529-8384  
**Milk River** Handibus 403-647-3773  
**Morinville** Town of Morinville at 780-939-4361  
**Nampa** Nampa FCSS 780-322-3954  
**Olds** Sunshine Bus at 403-556-8003  
**Picture Butte** Handibus 403-732-4762  
**Pincher Creek** Handibus 403-627-2509  
**Raymond** Handibus 403-752-4561  
**Red Deer** Red Deer Transit 403-342-8225 or Associated Cab 403-343-3300.  
**St. Albert** [www.stalbert.ca/handibus-service](http://www.stalbert.ca/handibus-service)  
**Spruce Grove** Spruce Grove Specialized Transit Service 780-962-2456  
**Stettler** Stettler and District Handibus Society 403-742-5858  
**Taber** Handibus 403-223-2224  
**Vegreville** Vegreville Transportation Services Society 780-632-7363.  
**Westlock** County of Westlock 780-349-3346

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