

Diplopia (double vision) and driving

Patient Information



Ophthalmology

You are experiencing symptoms of double vision. This leaflet will explain how this affects you if you have a driving licence.

What is diplopia and how is it treated?

Diplopia is also known as double vision. Diplopia means seeing two of something when you are looking at only one object. It can happen when there is a problem/condition affecting the muscles which move the eyes, a problem with the nerves or blood supply to the muscles, or a fracture or injury to the eyes or surrounding tissues. Diplopia can be there all the time or some of the time.

Treatment, such as prisms or occlusion, can sometimes correct diplopia while it is being worn, though this does not treat the cause of diplopia. Prisms are see-through lenses which are worn on glasses. Prisms change the direction of light coming into your eye and can join together the double images you see. Occlusion is when you cover one eye with a patch or you have a frosted covering on one lens, and it takes away the second double image you see with that eye.

Can I drive with diplopia?

The Driver and Vehicle License Agency (DVLA) advice is to stop driving while you have diplopia. You should tell DVLA about diplopia. You should not drive until it either goes away on its own or DVLA have said you are allowed to drive with treatment (as mentioned above), as long as you have adapted to it and this fully controls the diplopia. There are certain exceptions if you have had diplopia for a long time.

If you wear some form of treatment for diplopia, you must ensure that you still meet the legal requirements to drive. For example, you must meet the monocular vision (looking through one eye) standards with your non-covered eye if you use occlusion. Group 2 (bus, lorry, coach etc) drivers are not allowed to drive with occlusion. You may wish to see

how you feel as a passenger before trying to drive using diplopia correction, and you should proceed with caution. DVLA rules are put in place to keep us all safe. Even if you only have diplopia some of the time, it could affect your driving some of the time. Your insurance could be invalid if you are involved in an accident while you have a medical condition which could affect your driving, and you have not told DVLA about this condition.

“You can be fined up to £1,000 if you don’t tell DVLA about a medical condition that affects your driving you may be prosecuted if you’re involved in an accident as a result.”*

*from www.gov.uk/diplopia-and-driving.

What are my responsibilities?

- Do not drive with diplopia
- Inform DVLA

People with a driving licence must tell DVLA if they have or develop any medical conditions which can affect driving. This includes diplopia. You can tell DVLA how your diplopia is being treated or controlled.

How do I report a medical condition?

- Report your condition online via <https://www.gov.uk/diplopia-and-driving>; or
- Fill in form V1 (for car or motorbike) or form V1V (for bus, coach or lorry) and send it to DVLA - the address is written on the forms. You can find these forms online and print them, or request them from DVLA.

What happens next?

Once you have informed DVLA, wait for them to contact you. They may say you can drive with diplopia correction. If DVLA require you to give up your licence, you may be able to re-apply for it, if and when your diplopia has resolved or is controlled well enough. In some situations you may be allowed to drive even when your diplopia cannot be controlled, if a sufficient length of time has passed and you are considered to be stable and adapted to the diplopia. DVLA may request a report from your consultant to aid in their decision.

This leaflet is intended for information purposes. While we have aimed to provide up to date information, please check for any recent changes to DVLA guidance.

For further information please visit:

www.gov.uk/transport/driving-and-medical-conditions

Or contact DVLA by post:

Drivers' Medical Enquiries

DVLA

Swansea

SA99 1TU

NHS Highland Orthoptic Department:

Contact Number: 01463706331