



Health

Hunter New England
Local Health District

Tamworth Driver Assessment Education Session: Tips and Tricks

Dr Rebecca Morrissey, Rehabilitation
Specialist TRRH

Susan Elms, Occupational Therapist
TRRH

15 June 2021



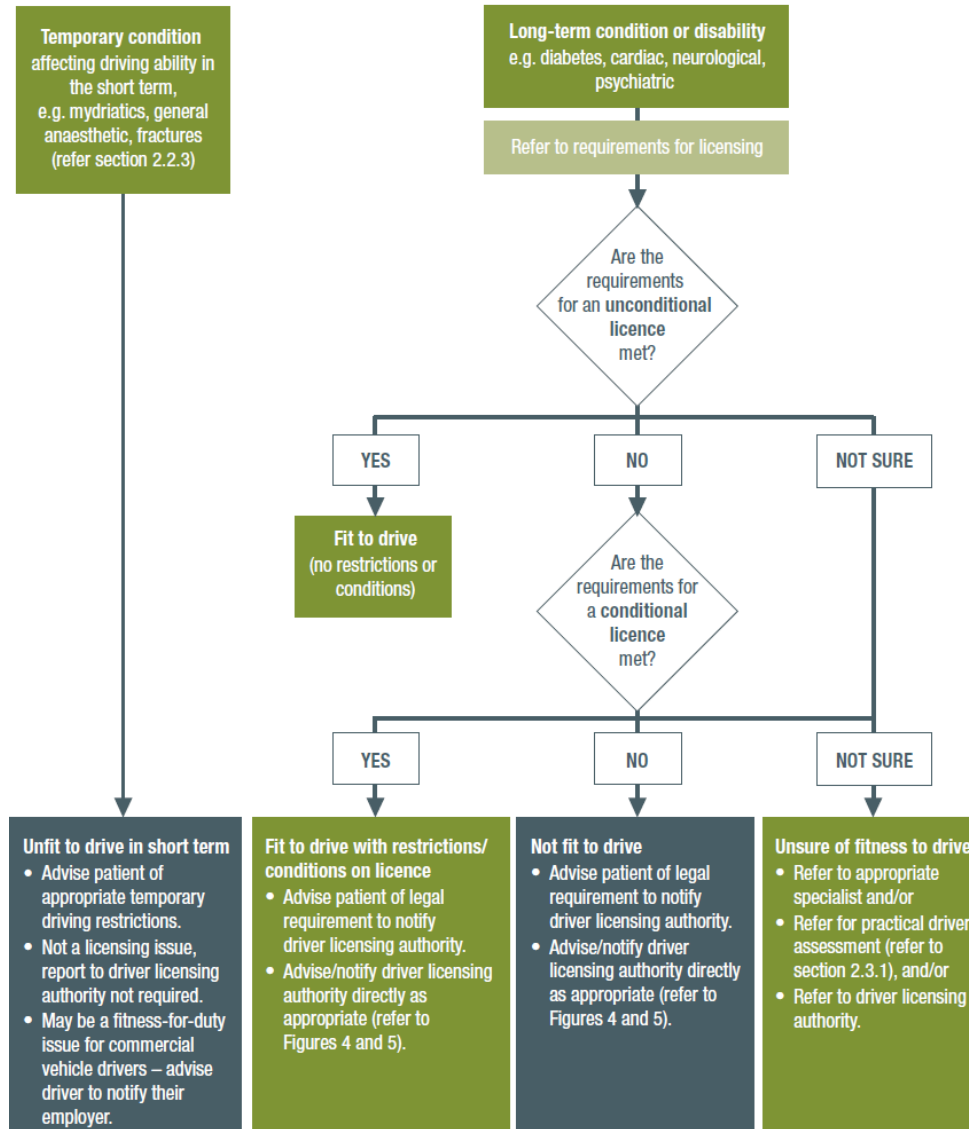


Session outline

- Review of the assessment pathway for private and commercial licences
- Understanding the principles of assessing fitness to drive and how it is done by a medical specialist and Occupational Therapist
- Knowing when to refer for a specialist assessment; an on-road driving test with RMS or an OT Driver Assessment
- Some common misunderstandings
- Case studies










Pathway



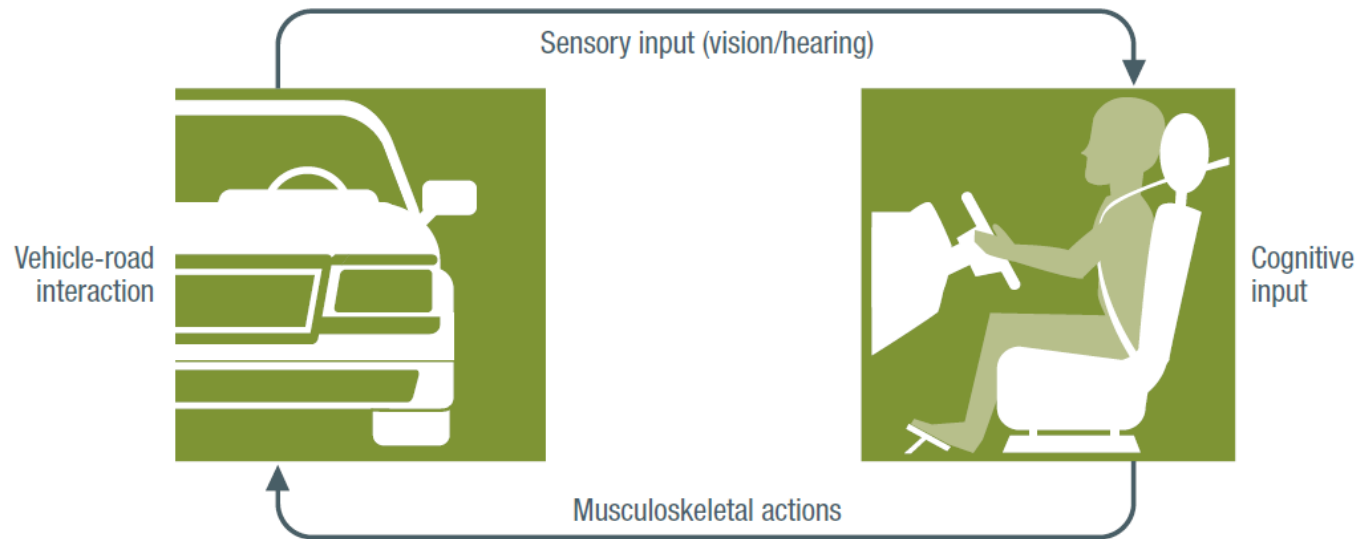


Medical standards for private and commercial vehicle drivers

National licence classes		Which standard to apply (private or commercial)
Motorcycle (R) 	Motorbike or mototrike.	Private standards apply UNLESS driver holds or is applying for an authority to carry public passengers for hire or reward, in which case the commercial standards apply.
Car (C) 	Vehicle not more than 4.5 tonnes GVM (gross vehicular mass) and seating up to 12 adults including the driver.	Private standards apply UNLESS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • driver holds or is applying for an authority to carry public passengers for hire or reward (e.g. taxi driver)
Light rigid (LR) 	Any rigid vehicle greater than 4.5 tonnes GVM or a vehicle seating more than 12 adults, that is not more than 8 tonnes, plus a trailer of no more than 9 tonnes GVM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is undertaking a medical assessment as a requirement under an accreditation scheme • holds or is applying for an authority to hold a dangerous goods driver licence • holds or is applying to hold authority to be a driving instructor (may vary between jurisdictions). In these cases the commercial standards apply.
Medium rigid (MR) 	Any two-axle rigid vehicle greater than 8 tonnes GVM, plus a trailer of no more than 9 tonnes GVM.	Commercial standards apply at ALL times.
Heavy rigid (HR) 	Any rigid vehicle with three or more axles greater than 8 tonnes GVM, plus a trailer of no more than 9 tonnes GVM.	
Heavy combination (HC) 	Prime mover + single semi-trailer greater than 9 tonnes GVM and any unladen converter dolly trailer.	
Multiple combination (MC) 	Heavy combination vehicle with more than one trailer.	



Principles of assessing fitness to drive





Driving is a complex instrumental activity of daily living. It involves a complex and rapidly repeating cycle that requires the ability to interact with the vehicle and external environment at the same time.

The repeating cycle involves:-

- Information about the road environment is obtained via the visual and auditory senses
- The information is processed cognitively through use of short and long term memory and judgement in order for decisions to be made
- Decisions are put into effect via the musculoskeletal system, to produce mechanical actions to alter the vehicle in relation to the road environment



The assessment process employed during a Specialist consultation and OT Driver Assessment takes into consideration the essential ingredients needed to maintain the repeating sequence. These include:-

- Sensory input- vision, visuospatial perception, hearing
- Cognitive function- attention and concentration, comprehension, memory, insight, judgement, decision making, reaction time, sensation
- Motor function- muscle power, range of motion, coordination



When to refer for a Specialist or OT Driver Assessment

When a person presents with a long-term condition or disability and you are NOT SURE if they meet the requirements for an unconditional licence

Such conditions include:- stroke, MCI, TBI, Parkinson's disease, cardiac, amputation, SCI, neurological conditions (MS, Huntington's), psychiatric conditions and general frailty

N.B: The RMS can refer for a specialist review or an OT Driver Assessment if they deem the documented medical condition warrants further clarification (upon completion of the FTD report)



Some common misunderstandings

- Age
- Apparent frailty
- MCI and poor testing results
- The impact of hearing on cognitive testing
- Difference between referring for an OT Driver Assessment vs a general driving test with the RMS and the impact this can have
- The intricacies of assessing stroke patients



Case Studies

- Speech impairment-failing the clock face test
- MCI
- Amputee- Right BKA
- Charcott Marie Tooth Disease
- Huntington's Disease
- SCI-modifications required
- Vision- narrowed visual fields and compensation required