



Driver & Vehicle
Licensing
Agency

Vision and driving

The legal eyesight standard
for driving



Visual acuity

Visual acuity is the sharpness of your vision.

Car or motorcycle (group 1)

- you must be able to read a number plate from 20 metres
- you may wear glasses or corrective lenses to meet the legal eyesight standard
- your visual acuity must be at least 6/12 (decimal 0.5) on the Snellen scale with both eyes open, or in the only functioning eye if sight in one eye only (monocular)

Lorry or bus (group 2)

- your visual acuity, as measured by the 6 metre Snellen chart, must be at least 6/7.5 (decimal Snellen equivalent 0.8) in the better eye and at least Snellen 6/60 (decimal Snellen equivalent 0.1) in the worse
- you can reach this standard using glasses with a corrective power not more than (+) 8 dioptries, or with contact lenses. There's no specific limit for corrective power of contact lenses

Biopic (telescope) devices are not acceptable for use when driving in Great Britain.

Visual field

Your field of vision is the area you can see when looking straight ahead.

Car or motorcycle (group 1)

Legislation requires that car or motorcycle (group 1) drivers should normally have a field of vision with a width of at least 120 degrees and at least 50 degrees on either side at fixation. In addition, expert medical advice to DVLA recommends that there should be no significant “scotomata” (areas of field loss) encroaching within 20 degrees of fixation.

If you have total loss of sight in one eye, you must not have any problem with the field of vision in your other eye.

Lorry or bus (group 2)

You must have an uninterrupted horizontal visual field of at least 160 degrees with an extension of at least 70 degrees left and right and 30 degrees up and down. No defects should be present within a radius of the central 30 degrees.

Sight in one eye only – Monocularity

Car or motorcycle (group 1)

If you have vision in only one eye (monocularity), you may still be able to meet the legal eyesight standards for driving.

It can take 3 months or more for you to adapt to driving with vision in one eye. In particular, your ability to judge distances may be affected and you may not be so aware of objects to each side of you.

You should not drive until you have been advised by your healthcare professional or eyesight specialist that you have fully adapted to monocularity.

In addition, you should not resume driving unless you are able to meet the visual acuity and visual field standards.

Lorry or bus (group 2)

Monocular vision drivers who have sight in one eye only or their sight in one eye has deteriorated to a corrected acuity of less than 3/60 (decimal Snellen equivalent 0.05) cannot normally be licensed to drive group 2 vehicles.

The exceptions are:

- 1.** You were licensed to drive group 2 vehicles before 1 April 1991 and the Traffic Commissioner who issued the licence knew that you had sight in only one eye before 1 January 1991, you must have:
 - a visual acuity of at least 6/12 (decimal Snellen equivalent 0.5) if you held a Group 2 licence on 1 April 1983

or

- 6/9 (decimal Snellen equivalent 0.6) if you were licensed after that date.

DVLA will send you a certificate of experience for you to fill in once they get a valid application.

You cannot apply for new vehicle category entitlements – only those you had previously held.

- 2.** You are applying to renew entitlement to drive category C1 (vehicles between 3500kg and 7500kg) that was granted with your group 1 (car or motorcycle) licence if you had passed a car driving test before 1 January 1997.

One eye is affected by a health condition

If you have a health condition that currently affects only one eye, you may still be able to meet the legal eyesight standard for driving. However, should your health condition affect both eyes you must let us know. You can do this by visiting:

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

If you do not meet the legal eyesight standard for driving, you cannot drive on a public road.

If you do drive on a public road, you are guilty of an offence. Also, if the police suspect that you do not have the relevant standard of vision, they can make you take the “number plate test”. If you cannot read the number plate, your driving licence may be revoked (cancelled) and you could be prosecuted.

If you have any doubt about whether you can meet the legal eyesight standard, get advice from your healthcare professional or eye specialist.

(Eyesight specialist includes Consultant Ophthalmologist, Optometrist, Optician).

You should regularly check whether you meet this standard. Regular eyesight tests will reassure you that you still meet the legal eyesight standards for driving.

Contact us

You should give us your name and address, or your driver number whenever you contact us.

If your doctor or eye specialist tells you to report your vision difficulty to us, go to

www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving

for information about how to notify us.

Telephone:

0300 790 6806

Write:

Drivers Medical Group,

DVLA Swansea

SA99 1DX

**When was the
last time you had
an eye test?**

If you drive, make sure you
have one at least every 2 years.

www.gov.uk/driving-eyesight-rules