

INFORMATION ON DRIVING AND DIABETES: GROUP 2 VEHICLES

This information leaflet offers information on what is now required if you wish to hold a Group 2 Lorries, bus, taxi and HGV driving licence and to help ensure that driving is safe and hazard free.

LICENCE GROUPS

GROUP 1: includes motorcars and motorcycles

GROUP 2: includes Lorries, buses, large goods vehicles and Public Service Vehicles such as taxis and minibuses or motor homes (categories C1, C1E, D1, D1E, C, CE, D and DE)

HYPOGLYCAEMIA (low blood sugar)

Hypoglycaemia, or hypo, is a blood glucose level of less than 4 mmol/l. Hypos can happen when you are treated with insulin or some diabetes tablets. There are certain diabetes tablets that do not cause hypos. The risk of hypoglycaemia is the main danger to safe driving. Hypoglycaemia may endanger your life and that of other road users. Many accidents caused by hypoglycaemia are because drivers keep on driving even though they have warning symptoms of hypoglycaemia. If you experience any warning symptoms of hypoglycaemia whilst driving you must stop as soon as safely possible- do not ignore warning symptoms.

Early symptoms of hypoglycaemia include:

- Sweating, shakiness or trembling, feeling hungry, fast pulse or palpitations, anxiety, tingling lips

If these symptoms are not treated it may result in more severe symptoms such as:

- Slurred speech, difficulty concentrating, confusion, disordered or irrational behaviour which may be mistaken for drunkenness

Impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia is where you are unable to recognise the hypo unless your blood glucose is below 3 mmol/l.

Severe hypoglycaemia is where you were completely dependent on another person to treat your hypo.

What sort of hypoglycaemia episode needs to be reported?

- **Severe hypoglycaemia** requiring assistance from another person at any time of day or night must be reported. The requirement of assistance includes admission to Accident and Emergency, treatment from paramedics/partner/friend who has to administer glucagon or glucose because you cannot do this for yourself. It does NOT include another person offering or giving assistance, in circumstances where you are aware of your hypoglycaemia and are able to take appropriate action independently.
- **Impaired awareness of hypoglycaemia** is where you are unable to recognise the hypo until your blood glucose is below 3 mmol/l.

What types of oral diabetes drugs can cause hypoglycaemia?

Medicine group	Generic (proper) name	Brand (trade name)
Sulphonylurea	Glibenclamide	
	Gliclazide	Diamicon/Diamicon MR
	Glimepiride	Amaryl
	Glipizide	Glibenese/Minodiab
	Tolbutamide	
Prandial glucose regulator (Glinides)	Nateglinide	Starlix
	Repaglinide	Prandin

REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUP 2 DRIVERS (bus or lorry)

Following a change in driver licensing regulations anyone who uses insulin to control their diabetes or is treated by tablets in the Sulphonylurea or Glinide class (see table above), may apply for or renew vocational entitlements to drive categories C1, C1E, D1, D1E, C, CE, D or DE. Details of vehicle categories are on the DVA website.

Key requirement for Group 2 drivers

If you have one episode of severe hypoglycaemia requiring the assistance of another person you must inform the DVA and stop driving.

Other requirements

- You must tell the DVA if you have diabetes and take any of the above tablets. If you are on insulin treatment you will need to have an independent medical assessment every year. This also applies to holders of C1 license which may previously have been included on a standard car/motorbike license.
- You must tell the DVA if you have had laser treatment to **either** eye.
- You must tell the DVA if you have problems with vision in either eye. You must be able to read a car number plate from 20 metres. Also you must not have been told by a doctor or optician that your eyesight is currently worse than 6/12 (decimal 0.5) on the Snellen Scale (eye chart). If there is any doubt you should discuss with your optician or doctor. If required, you may wear glasses or corrective lenses to meet both of these standards.
- You must tell the DVA if you develop any problems with the circulation or sensation in your legs or feet which makes it necessary for you to drive certain types of vehicles only, for example automatic vehicles or vehicles with hand operated accelerator/brake. This must be noted on your driving licence.

- You must tell the DVA if any existing medical condition gets worse or you develop any other condition that may affect your driving safely.
- If you use insulin, you must monitor your blood glucose levels at least twice daily and before driving and every two hours during your journey using a glucose meter with a memory function.
- If you take tablets which can cause hypoglycaemia (see table above) then you must regularly monitor blood glucose at least twice daily and store on a glucose meter with a memory function and before driving and every 2 hours during your journey.
- If you use insulin, then at your annual assessment by the independent specialist, you must provide three months (90 days continuous) of blood glucose meter readings with a memory meter used at least twice daily.
- You must have full awareness of hypoglycaemia i.e. you must detect a hypo before your blood glucose is 3 mmol/l or less.
- If you have type 2 diabetes, but are advised to start insulin, then this must be reported to the DVA and you must not drive a Group 2 vehicle until your condition has been stabilized and you have obtained approval from the DVA following independent medical review (this can take 3-6 months).

Medical questionnaires for Lorry and Bus licence holders

If you are applying for or renewing your lorry or bus entitlement you need to complete the 'medical examination report' (DLM1). These forms are available from local vehicle licensing offices, MOT Centre or directly from DVA by calling 0845 402 4000

<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/medical-questionnaires-for-lorry-and-bus-licence-holders>

HOW TO CONTACT THE DVA:

By post

Send both parts of your driver licence, along with a covering letter detailing the nature of your condition to:

Drivers Medical Section
DVA
Castlerock Road
Waterside
Coleraine
BT51 3TB

Telephone or email

You can notify DVA of a medical condition by phone or email. Remember to quote your full name, date of birth and/or driver number (if known). You must also give details of your specific medical condition or disability in order that you can be sent the appropriate medical questionnaire.

- telephone 0845 4024 000 (lines are open Monday to Friday, from 9:00am to 5:00pm)
- email dvlni@doeni.gov.uk

STAGES NEEDED WHEN APPLYING FOR OR RENEWING THE GROUP 2 LICENCE

There are three stages you need to go through when applying for or renewing the vocational entitlements shown above. Details of these stages can be found at the link below:

Stage 1- Application forms

What steps you need to take for the first stage:

- Request application form DL1 (NI) and DIAB1 (VOC) medical questionnaire from the DVA customer services (0845 402 4000)
- Complete and return these to DVA for assessment before proceeding to stage 2

Stage 2- Your Own Doctor's Medical Questionnaire

What happens next?

- If you are cleared to proceed to Stage 2, you will be issued with form DIAB2 (VOC) medical questionnaire
- This form will be sent to either your own GP or Diabetes Consultant (whoever manages your condition)
- DVA will pay for any fee charged for this questionnaire
- If required, you may also be issued with a DLM1 Medical Examination Report which must be completed by your own doctor. The notes below offer guidance as to whether a DLM1 is required
- You are responsible for any fees that may be charged for completing the DLM1

Stage 3- Insulin treatment only- Specialist Medical Questionnaire and examination by a consultant specialising in diabetes

This stage is applicable only to those treated with insulin

- An independent hospital Consultant (specialising in the treatment of diabetes) will be nominated by the DVA, who will complete an annual diabetes examination report, based on an examination of you and an assessment of you
- At the examination, the Consultant will need to see the preceding three months continuous blood glucose readings available on a blood glucose meter with memory function and covering a three month period during which you were on insulin
- The DVA will pay for this examination

QUALIFYING CONDITIONS YOU MUST MEET

All of these conditions must be met before your application will be considered:

- You have had no hypoglycaemic event requiring the help of another person in the last 12 months
- You must have full awareness of the symptoms of hypoglycaemia
- You must be able to show an understanding of the risks of hypoglycaemia
- You must check your blood glucose levels at least twice daily and at times relevant to driving
- You must keep a fast acting carbohydrate source in your vehicle at all times when driving
- You must have no other medical condition which would make you a danger when driving using any vocational entitlement
- You will be required to sign an agreement to comply with the directions of doctors treating your diabetes and immediately report any significant changes to your condition to DVA

ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS FOR PERSONS TREATED WITH INSULIN

Further requirements if you are treated with insulin:

- You must undertake blood glucose monitoring using a meter with a memory function to measure and record blood glucose levels
- You will be required to attend an examination every 12 months with a Consultant specialising in the treatment of diabetes. You must have at least three months blood glucose readings available on the memory of your meter for the Consultant to inspect. This should be a continuous set of readings (i.e. at least twice daily blood glucose readings and before driving and every 2 hours during your journey). You should have been on insulin during this period and the readings are for the three month period preceding the date of the assessment

FURTHER INFORMATION

Notes and guidance

- On your first application for Group 2 entitlement, you must complete form DLM1
- A DLM1 will not be needed if you have previously submitted one to DVA and you are still under the age of 45 years. A DLM1 will be required at the age of 45 and every 5 years from then on until the age of 65 from when a DLM1 will be required every 12 months
- Do not send in an application if you cannot meet any of the qualifying conditions of if you have any other condition which would prevent you from holding a vocational licence category
- If you are required to undergo annual medical examination, and the report issued by the independent diabetes specialist indicates that you meet the required medical standards, your Group 2 licence may only be issued for a period of one year. Renewing the licence will be subject to further medical examination

SAFE DRIVING TIPS

- If you are on insulin, you must check your blood glucose no more than two hours before getting behind the wheel and every two hours whilst driving. The results must be recorded on a meter with a memory
- If you take non-insulin medication which may cause a hypo you must check your levels at least twice per day and at times relevant to driving. The results should be recorded on a meter with a memory
- Avoid delaying or missing meals and snacks
- Make regular stops on a long journey
- Always keep hypo treatments in the vehicle
- Do not drink alcohol and drive
- If you have a hypo whilst driving:
 - Stop the vehicle as soon as possible
 - Switch off the engine, remove the keys from the ignition and move from the driver's seat
 - Take some fast-acting carbohydrate, such as glucose tablets or sweets, followed after 10-15 minutes, or once the blood glucose is above 4 mmol/l, by some form of longer-acting carbohydrate.
 - Do not start driving until 45 minutes after blood glucose has returned normal.