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# Managing sight loss: advice for everyday living

Fact sheet 1e: Driving

May 2019



## Driving – what you need to know

- One of the most difficult things mentioned by visually impaired people is the loss of independence associated with giving up driving.
- The law states that every driver must be able to read a pre-September 2001 format number plate at 20.5 metres (or a post-September 2001 format number plate at 20 metres) in good light.
- If your sight is affecting your ability to drive or if the eye specialist has advised you that you are not safe to drive, you are required to contact the Drivers Medical Branch, DVLA, Swansea, SA99 1TU. Tel: 0870 600 0301.
- The DVLA must be told at once if:
  - you have any physical or mental disability or condition which affects your fitness as a driver or which might do so in the future (you do not need to tell the DVLA if the effect of the disability or condition is not expected to last more than three months)
  - you come to know in future that you have such a disability or condition.
- Failure to comply is a criminal offence. Drivers who do not meet the vision requirements and who come to the attention of the police may be liable for a fine of up to £1,000.
- You should be aware that you are responsible for reporting any changes in your vision to both your

insurance company and the DVLA. You may not be covered by your insurance if you have not made them aware of an eye condition that may affect your ability to drive. The DVLA will arrange for you to have a field test and an examination by an ophthalmologist to find out the impact of your sight loss on your driving ability.

For further information about this, contact the DVLA.

- There are other transport options available to you if you are unable to drive. They include Dial a Ride and Good Neighbour Schemes. There are also travel concessions available – more information can be obtained from your local borough council.

