



CAR TRAVEL: UNDERSTANDING DRIVING AFTER SCI/CES INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet contains information about understanding driving after spinal cord injury (SCI) or cauda equina syndrome (CES). This includes informing the DVLA and possibly qualifying for road tax exemption.

Check out our Access All Areas: Travel and Mobility video series on car travel and listen to our podcast series (see page 4)

You can connect with people who can share their experience and advice via your local [SIA Community Support Group](#) and [SIA Support Network Facebook Group](#).



CAN I DRIVE WITH A SPINAL CORD INJURY?

Driving after a spinal cord injury (SCI) is possible and can really help you to be independent and return to work and leisure activities. It is one of the easiest ways to get around.

Click on the image below to watch a video about Ian, a C5 complete tetraplegic and a powered wheelchair user. He uses a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) with a lift, and many adaptations that are tailored to his needs.



WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO OR CAN'T RETURN TO DRIVING AFTER MY SCI/CES?

If you are unable to return to driving for whatever reason, or don't want to, then there is the option of being driven in a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or standard car as a passenger.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE RETURNING TO DRIVING?

INFORMING THE DVLA/DVA

In England and Wales, the law says you must tell the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority (DVLA) that you have a new medical condition. In Northern Ireland, this is the Driver and Vehicle Agency (DVA)

- [Driving with medical conditions](#)
- [How to tell DVA about your medical condition](#) (Northern Ireland)
- [Blue Badges](#) (GOV.UK)



You will need to complete a form and send it to DVLA/DVA. In England and Wales, this is Form G1 for a car or motorcycle licence and form G1V for a bus, coach or lorry licence. Consult the DVA for the process to follow for Northern Ireland.

If you are currently in hospital it is helpful if you can complete the form with your occupational therapist. If you are out of hospital, then speak to your GP.

A driving assessment is recommended for everyone. It can be helpful to send off the recommendations from this assessment with the form so the DVLA have the best information about your needs (see information sheet 'Car Travel: Getting back to driving') for more information about driving assessments. This helps inform the DVLA of your needs more accurately for them to make the necessary changes to your licence. If they receive incorrect or incomplete information, it can lead to your licence being restricted.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO BEFORE RETURNING TO DRIVING?

INFORMING YOUR INSURANCE COMPANY

You need to tell your insurance company of your new medical condition, otherwise your policy will not be valid. This may include that you need adaptations to drive your car.

VEHICLE TAX

You or your driver might qualify for 'road tax exemption' (where you will not have to pay road tax) if you receive certain benefits:

www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/vehicles-and-transport

USEFUL LINKS

Check out our Access All Areas: Travel and Mobility video series that has three videos featuring drivers with spinal cord injury and cauda equina syndrome. John who uses a manual wheelchair, Ian who uses a powerchair and Joe who walks a little and also uses a manual wheelchair. [Click on the images below to play the videos.](#)



For more information, visit our [Travel Hub](#) or contact us at:

Spinal Injuries Association, SIA House, 2 Trueman Place, Oldbrook, Milton Keynes, MK6 2HH

e: travel@spinal.co.uk t: 0800 980 0501 (freephone support line: Monday - Friday 10.00am-4.00pm)