



Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency

INF188/6

# Can I drive while my application is with DVLA?

**Please keep this leaflet safe so you can  
refer to it in the future**

**There is a provision in law under Section 88  
of The Road Traffic Act (RTA) 1988 that may  
allow you to drive while DVLA processes your  
application.**

In practice, this means that when you send your application to DVLA to be renewed and your licence expires (runs out) while we are processing your application, you may be able to continue driving.

## To take advantage of this law, you must meet the following criteria:

- You must be confident that your application will not be refused due to any medical condition you declared. If you are unsure, please seek advice from your doctor. You can also look up your condition in the 'At a Glance' guide, which can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance) to see whether you meet the medical standards for driving. As this guide is intended for health care professionals, you may wish to discuss with your doctor
- You must have held a valid driving licence\* and only drive vehicles you are qualified to drive
- You must meet any conditions specified on your previous licence, for example, if your licence says you must wear glasses to drive, then you must continue to wear them
- You sent your fully completed application to DVLA within the last 12 months
- Your last licence must not have been revoked or refused for medical reasons
- You must not be currently disqualified by a court
- You must not have been disqualified as a high risk offender on or after 1 June 2013. A high risk offender is a driver convicted of a serious drink drive offence.

\*this licence can be: a full GB licence, a GB provisional licence, a community licence, a Northern Ireland licence, a British external/British Forces licence or an exchangeable licence.

**DVLA cannot tell you if this section in the law applies to you. This is because we cannot confirm whether or not your medical condition meets the criteria in the first bullet point on page 2, until we complete our investigations. You, or your doctor, are in the best position to make this decision. If you contact us while you wait for your licence, all the adviser can do is explain the Section 88 criteria.**

**Section 88 of The RTA 1988 is valid until any of the following apply:**

- You receive your new driving licence, as this now covers you to drive
- You receive a letter from DVLA explaining that your application has been refused or that your licence has been revoked
- Your application is more than a year old
- You have been disqualified from driving since your application has been sent to DVLA

## Here are some scenarios which may help explain how this law could apply to you.

**I have a medical condition that I have already told DVLA about. DVLA gave me a licence when I first declared the condition and my condition has not changed. I have no other new medical conditions. Can I drive?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application for a new licence and as long as you meet all the Section 88 criteria you may drive.

**I have a new medical condition that I have told DVLA about on my recent application. Can I drive?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application and as long as you meet all the Section 88 criteria, you may drive. It is important that you are satisfied that the medical condition you have declared on your application does not stop you from driving. If you are unsure, check with your doctor before you make a decision. You can also look up your condition in the 'At a Glance' guide, which you can find at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance) to see whether you meet the medical standards for driving. As this guide is intended for healthcare professionals, it can be complicated. Your doctor should be able to help you if necessary.

**I have a medical condition that DVLA already knows about, but it has changed/developed since my last application. Can I drive?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application and as long as you meet all the Section 88 criteria you may drive. It is important that your medical condition, as it is today, would not bar you from driving. If you are unsure, you should check with your doctor before you make a decision to drive.

### **I voluntarily surrendered my licence and have now applied for a new one. Can I drive?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application for a new licence and as long as you meet all the Section 88 criteria you may drive. If your medical condition meant you had to take a specified amount of time off driving to ensure the stability of your condition, you must still complete that time off driving before you drive under Section 88 of The RTA. If you are unsure please check the 'At a Glance' guide, which can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance) or check with your Doctor.

### **I am going abroad and I would like to drive while I'm there. Am I covered for this?**

Because the Section 88 provision is in UK legislation, it may not be accepted in other countries. We advise you to check with the relevant licensing authority before you travel.

### **My licence was revoked/refused for medical reasons. Can I drive?**

No. You must wait for DVLA to reissue you with a new driving licence before you can start driving again.

### **My last licence entitled me to drive lorries/buses. It has expired and I am now only applying for a licence to drive a car. Can I drive? And if so, what can I drive?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application, and as long as you meet the Section 88 criteria, you may drive a car while you wait for the decision on your application. During this time you cannot drive a lorry or bus. If you would like to drive these vehicles you would need to reapply.

**I drive a bus/lorry for a living and I have sent my application to DVLA to renew my licence. I do not have any medical conditions. Can I drive?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application for a new licence, as long as you meet the Section 88 criteria and providing your group 2 licence has not been suspended by a Traffic Commissioner you may drive.

**I am over 70 years old and have sent my licence to DVLA to renew my entitlement to drive. Can I carry on driving while my form is with you?**

As soon as DVLA receives your application and as long as you meet all the Section 88 criteria you may drive. If you are unsure about whether you meet the medical criteria for driving, you can check your condition(s) in the 'At a Glance' guide for healthcare professionals, which can be found at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/at-a-glance) or check with your Doctor who can advise you.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: It is your responsibility to make sure you meet the Section 88 criteria at all times while driving prior to receiving your licence.**

*From 1st October 2014, you'll still need to tax your vehicle but you won't get a tax disc.*

[www.gov.uk/dvla/nomoretaxdisc](http://www.gov.uk/dvla/nomoretaxdisc)