



Driving and Epilepsy

Having a seizure while driving is a serious danger, not only to the driver and passengers, but also to others on or near the roadway. Driving is therefore usually restricted from individuals with epilepsy.

Decisions regarding driving privileges are considered on an individual basis upon discussion with your physician, usually your neurologist, and the application of guidelines established by the Motor Vehicles Branch of the Provincial Government as part of the Motor Vehicles Act.

The Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles (OSMV) is the administrative authority governing drivers. They delegate service-delivery and decision-making powers to ministry staff and in some cases agencies (such as ICBC).

Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles (OSMV) contact information:
250-387-7747 or toll-free: 1-855-387-7747

Website: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv

OSMV Drivers with Epilepsy Fact Sheet: www.pssg.gov.bc.ca/osmv/shareddocs/factsheet-epilepsy.pdf

If you do not have driving privileges, advance planning and flexibility can help you get to where you need to go. Below are some tips:

- Learn the schedules, rates, and routes of the public transit services in your area. Transit BC coordinates community transit services in the province. You can get schedules and information about those services at www.transitbc.com
- Investigate carpool or rideshare opportunities to get to work, school, or other locations.
- Consider using a home delivery service for groceries and prescriptions. Often these are free or low-cost.
- Enquire about accessible transit services for people with disabilities in your community, such as HandyDart or volunteer driver services for seniors. These may assist you with essential transportation such as going to a medical appointment.
- If you are able to and feel comfortable doing so biking is a great way to get around. Use designated bike routes and lanes or streets with minimal traffic. Always wear a helmet.
- Purchase items for delivery online or by phone as much as possible.
- When booking rail, ferry, or long-distance bus trips (such as Greyhound) ask whether there is a discounted rate for people with disabilities.
- Ask family, friends, or neighbours for assistance. They may be able to give you a ride to the same locations when they are going (eg. grocery store, mall, or social event).



Seizure Type	Private Drivers Class 5-8	Commercial Drivers Class 1-4
Single unprovoked seizure before a diagnosis	Need neurological consultation, including EEG and Imaging. Driving suspension until a diagnosis or cause determined, minimum three months.	Need neurological consultation, including EEG and Imaging. Driving suspension until a diagnosis or cause determined, 12 months.
After epilepsy diagnosis	May drive if six months seizure free on medication, and physician is confident that the person is conscientious and reliable.	May drive when seizure free on or off medications for five years, with support of their physician/neurologist.
After surgery to prevent epileptic seizures	Must be at least six months seizure free after surgery.	May drive when seizure free on or off medications for five years, with support of their physician/neurologist.
Seizures in sleep or immediately upon awakening	May drive if seizures only occur in sleep or upon awakening for at least five years.	May drive when seizure free on or off medications for five years, with support of their physician/neurologist.
Medication withdrawal or change: A) Initial withdrawal or change in medication	Must not drive for a period of three months from the time medication has been discontinued or changed.	May drive when seizure free on or off medications for five years, with support of their physician/neurologist.
B) If seizures recur after supervised withdrawal or change in medication	Can drive once resume taking medication, if physician feels medication is adequate, and if person was previously seizure free for one year.	May drive when seizure free on or off medications for five years, with support of their physician/neurologist.
Auras (simple partial seizures)	May drive if no impairment in level of consciousness or cognition, seizures are unchanged for more than 12 months, and neurologist approves.	
Alcohol-withdrawal induced seizures	May drive after six months if alcohol and seizure free for six months and completed a recognized rehabilitation program for substance dependence, with a statement received from the Director of the Alcohol and Drug Centre involved.	May drive after six months if alcohol and seizure free for six months and completed a recognized rehabilitation program for substance dependence, with a statement received from the Director of the Alcohol and Drug Centre involved.

If you have controlled seizures and have obtained driving privileges it is critical that you take your medications as prescribed and avoid fatigue or alcohol around periods of driving. If you have experienced a breakthrough or unaccustomed seizure or loss of awareness, stop driving and contact your doctor or neurologist.

Note: In BC having epilepsy or another medical condition will not affect your insurance rates. Insurance rates in BC are determined by your location, your claims history, the class of driver's license, and any optional coverage that you choose to purchase.

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**You can join the BC Epilepsy Society as a member and receive all the program and service benefits.
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