

Changes to eyesight standards for driving

Visual Acuity standard for all drivers

- The requirement that all drivers must be able read a number plate from 20 metres will be retained. This requirement will still be tested as part of the driving test and the inability to meet this minimum standard a road traffic offence. In addition, all drivers must have a binocular visual acuity of Snellen decimal 0.5 (6/12). Although drivers will not be required to have a formal eyesight test before they apply for a driving licence, any driver who cannot meet this standard will not be licensed. Glasses or contact lenses may be worn to meet these standards.

Visual Field standard for Group 1 drivers

- Drivers must have a horizontal field of vision of at least 120 degrees. In addition, the extension should be at least 50 degrees left and right and 20 degrees up and down. No defects should be present within the radius of the central 20 degrees. This requirement applies to drivers who are binocular or monocular.

Visual Acuity standards for Group 2 drivers

- The ability to meet the visual acuity standards for Group 2 driving is formally checked as part of the medical examination report completed in support of a first application for a lorry or bus licence and on periodic licence renewal from age 45.
- As well as being able to read a number plate from 20 metres and to have a binocular visual acuity of Snellen decimal 0.5 (6/12), drivers of lorries and buses must have a visual acuity of Snellen decimal 0.8 (6/7.5) in the better eye and decimal 0.1(6/60) in the worse eye.
- There is no longer a requirement for Group 2 drivers to have a minimum uncorrected acuity but if glasses are worn for driving they must be of a power no greater than plus eight (+8) dioptres.
- Drivers who were first licensed to drive Group 2 vehicles before 1 January 1997 may still benefit from special arrangements that were negotiated
- All Group 2 drivers should have a horizontal visual field of at least 160 degrees with the extension being at least 70 degrees left and right and 30 degrees up and down. No defects should be present within the radius of the central 30 degrees.

Substantial reduction of vision in one eye for Group 2 drivers

- Where there has been a substantial reduction in vision in one eye, there must be an appropriate adaptation period before the driver resumes driving. The driver's visual acuity must not fall below the minimum visual acuity allowed in either eye.

Impaired contrast sensitivity

- Whether the driver suffers from impaired contrast sensitivity will be considered in the medical examination undertaken as part of the application process.

Changes to the D4 Medical Examination report

- The vision assessment section of the D4 medical examination report that lorry and bus drivers must have completed when they first apply for a licence and on licence renewal from age 45, will be changing in a few months to capture the changes to the visual acuity standards. Although most reports will still be completed by doctors, some may need to be taken to opticians/optometrists for completion of the vision assessment. Further details will be provided in due course.