Medical Standards for Licensing – Sleep Disorders

Requirements for unconditional and conditional licences are outlined in the following table.

Medical standards for licensing – sleep disorders Health professionals should familiarise themselves with the information in this chapter and the tabulated standards before assessing a person's fitness to drive.		
Condition	**Private standards** (Drivers of cars, light rigid vehicles or motorcycles unless carrying public passengers or requiring a dangerous goods driver licence – refer to definition in **Error! Reference source not found.**)	**Commercial standards** (Drivers of heavy vehicles, public passenger vehicles or requiring a dangerous goods driver licence – refer to definition in **Error! Reference source not found.**)
Sleep apnoea, excessive sleepiness and other sleep disorders (e.g., all sleep apnoea, idiopathic hypersomnia and other central disorders of hypersomnolence) Refer also to narcolepsy **(continued overleaf)**	A person is **not** fit to hold an **unconditional licence**: if the person has an established sleep apnoea syndrome (sleep apnoea on a diagnostic sleep study and moderate to severe excessive daytime sleepiness*); **or** if the person has frequent self-reported* episodes of sleepiness or drowsiness while driving; **or** if the person has had motor vehicle crash(es) caused by inattention or sleepiness; **or** if the person, in the opinion of the treating doctor, represents a significant driving risk as a result of a sleep disorder. A **conditional licence** may be considered by the driver licensing authority subject to **periodic review**, taking into account the nature of the driving task and information provided by the **treating doctor** as to whether the following criteria are met: the person complies with treatment; **and** the response to treatment is satisfactory.	A person is **not** fit to hold an **unconditional licence**: if the person has an established sleep apnoea syndrome (sleep apnoea on a diagnostic sleep study and moderate to severe excessive daytime sleepiness*); **or** if the person has frequent self-reported* episodes of sleepiness or drowsiness while driving; **or** if the person has had motor vehicle crash(es) caused by inattention or sleepiness; **or** if the person, in the opinion of the treating doctor, represents a significant driving risk as a result of a sleep disorder. A **conditional licence** may be considered by the driver licensing authority subject to **periodic review**, taking into account the nature of the driving task and information provided by a **specialist in sleep disorders** as to whether the following criteria are met: the person complies with treatment; **and** the response to treatment is satisfactory.

Medical standards for licensing – sleep disorders

Health professionals should familiarise themselves with the information in this chapter and the tabulated standards before assessing a person's fitness to drive.

Condition	Private standards (Drivers of cars, light rigid vehicles or motorcycles unless carrying public passengers or requiring a dangerous goods driver licence – refer to definition in **Error! Reference source not found.**)	Commercial standards (Drivers of heavy vehicles, public passenger vehicles or requiring a dangerous goods driver licence – refer to definition in **Error! Reference source not found.**)
Sleep apnoea, excessive sleepiness and other sleep disorders **(continued)**	** The treating doctor should not rely solely on subjective measures of sleepiness such as the Epworth Sleepiness Scale to rule out sleep apnoea. Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found.**. **Error! Reference source not found.***	*The treating doctor should not rely solely on subjective measures of sleepiness such as the Epworth Sleepiness Scale to rule out sleep apnoea. Refer to section **Error! Reference source not found.**. **Error! Reference source not found.***
Narcolepsy	A person is **not** fit to hold an **unconditional licence**: if narcolepsy is confirmed. A **conditional licence** may be considered by the driver licensing authority subject to **periodic review**, taking into account the nature of the driving task and information provided by a **specialist in sleep disorders** on the response to treatment.	A person is **not** fit to hold an **unconditional licence**: if narcolepsy is confirmed. A **conditional licence** may be considered by the driver licensing authority subject to at least **annual review**, taking into account the nature of the driving task and information provided by a **specialist in sleep disorders** as to whether the following criteria are met: cataplexy has not been a feature in the past; **and** medication is taken regularly; **and** there has been an absence of symptoms for **6 months**; **and** normal sleep latency present on MWT (on or off medication).

IMPORTANT: The medical standards and management guidelines contained in this chapter should be read in conjunction with the general information contained in Part A of this publication. Practitioners should give consideration to the following:

Licensing responsibility

The responsibility for issuing, renewing, suspending or cancelling a person's driver licence (including a conditional licence) lies ultimately with the driver licensing authority. Licensing decisions are based on a full consideration of relevant factors relating to health and driving performance.

Conditional licences

For a conditional licence to be issued, the health professional must provide to the driver licensing authority details of the medical criteria not met, evidence of the medical criteria met, as well as the proposed conditions and monitoring requirements. The presence of other medical conditions While a person may meet individual disease criteria, concurrent medical conditions may combine to affect fitness to drive – for example, hearing, visual or cognitive impairment (refer to Part A section **Error! Reference source not found.**. **Error! Reference source not found.** and section **Error! Reference source not found.**. **Error! Reference source not found.**).

The nature of the driving task

The driver licensing authority will take into consideration the nature of the driving task as well as the medical condition, particularly when granting a conditional licence. For example, the licence status of a farmer requiring a commercial vehicle licence for the occasional use of a heavy vehicle may be quite different from that of an interstate multiple combination vehicle driver. The examining health professional should bear this in mind when examining a person and when providing advice to the driver licensing authority.

Reporting responsibilities

Patients should be made aware of the effects of their condition on driving and should be advised of their legal obligation to notify the driver licensing authority where driving is likely to be affected. The health professional may themselves advise the driver licensing authority as the situation requires (refer to section **Error! Reference source not found.** and step 6).