

Functional Assessments

Medical Reporting by Healthcare Practitioners

The *Highway Traffic Act* **requires** physicians, optometrists and nurse practitioners in Ontario to report to the ministry patients age 16 or over who have certain medical or visual conditions that may make it dangerous to drive. In addition, physicians, nurse practitioners, optometrists and occupational therapists have the discretion to also report patients who, in their opinion, have a condition that may make it dangerous to drive.

What is a Functional Assessment?

A functional assessment, also called a Driving Evaluation, is a comprehensive assessment performed by an occupational therapist and a driving instructor. It includes an in-clinic medical assessment and an on-road driving evaluation. The assessment takes 3-4 hours to complete and, if required for licensing purposes, must be completed at a ministry approved functional assessment centre.

The in-clinic portion of the assessment involves a number of tests appropriate to your medical condition including:

- A basic vision screening
- A physical evaluation, including tests for range of motion, joint movement, strength, sensation, balance, reaction time and mobility
- Cognitive and visual attention assessment tests relating to attention, concentration, memory and divided attention.

The on-road portion evaluates basic driving manoeuvres to help determine if your medical condition affects your ability to drive safely.

Why a functional assessment?

Not all medical conditions can be adequately assessed based on a medical report or physical examination. Reports of conditions that affect attention or judgement or that result in motor or sensory impairment may result in a request for a functional assessment with an occupational therapist at a functional assessment centre.

When a functional assessment is required, a letter will be sent along with a list of approved functional assessment centres across the province. The list is also available on the Medical Review web page. You are free to choose any centre on the ministry's approved list. The assessment must be received by the due date in the letter or your licence will be suspended.

If your licence is already suspended, the functional assessment centre will make arrangements with the ministry for a temporary driver's licence **valid for one day** so you can complete the assessment.

The cost of the assessment is set by the assessment centre and is not covered by OHIP or the Ministry of Transportation.

The cost ranges from \$400 to \$800, but may be more. In some cases, insurance companies may cover the costs of the assessment. The fee includes the services of an occupational therapist and a driving instructor, the use of the vehicle, the associated insurance costs and the preparation of the report.

Note: Assessments are conducted for Class G drivers only. If you have a higher class of licence you may be required to undergo a ministry retest at a DriveTest Centre once you have passed the functional assessment.

How are licensing decisions made?

All medical information is assessed against national medical standards. The ministry will take into consideration all medical information and the opinions of all the healthcare professionals who have assessed you.

Appeal Procedures

All medical licence suspensions can be appealed to the Licence Appeal Tribunal. However, suspensions for failing to meet mandatory vision standards cannot.

For more information on the appeal process, including details on making an appeal, you can contact the Tribunal by calling 416-314-4260 or 1-800-255-2214 (toll free). You can also visit the Tribunal's web site at <http://www.sse.gov.on.ca/lat>.

For more information on the medical review process and the national medical standards, please visit us at <http://www.mto.gov.on.ca/english/safety/medical-review.shtml>