

# WHAT DOES AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DRIVER ASSESSMENT INVOLVE?

Victorian law permits specially trained and registered Occupational Therapists the right to conduct a driver assessment where there is medical concern about a client's ability to drive.

Occupational Therapy is a client-centred health profession concerned with promoting health and well-being through occupation. The primary goal of occupational therapy is to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life (WFOT, 2012).



Through undertaking an Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment, **Occupational Focus** aims to assist people with medical conditions, disability, impairment or age related conditions to resume or continue driving in a safe and legal manner.

The Occupational Therapist is an independent specialist and does not work for and is not paid by VicRoads.

The Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment is structured to assess the impact of injury, illness or the aging process on driving skills such as judgement, decision making skills, observation and vehicle handling, and the person's ability to drive safely.

The final decision regarding recommendations and licencing is made by VicRoads.

The assessment involves three parts:



## MEDICAL ASSESSMENT

Prior to an Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment, a current VicRoads Medical Report from the client's own doctor or specialist must be provided, which shows they are medically fit to drive. If the client also has any visual problems, they may also be required to provide a visual report.

Being medically fit does NOT exempt a client from undergoing an Occupational Therapy Driver Assessment, as a doctor cannot assess a client's practical driving skills.

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

Private Assessments for members of the general public

Services to the Insurance, Transport Accident Commission, Workers Compensation and medicolegal market

**CONTACT:** Cath Cleveland, Principal Consultant  
E | [info@occupationalfocus.com.au](mailto:info@occupationalfocus.com.au)  
M | 0430 517 499 F | 03 8692 2898



OCCUPATIONAL FOCUS

## SERVICES AVAILABLE

Private Assessments for members of the general public

Services to the Insurance, Transport Accident Commission, Workers Compensation and medicolegal market

### OFF ROAD ASSESSMENT

This component entails a comprehensive clinical assessment which aims to evaluate a client's fitness to drive and factors that may impact driving abilities. It involves the following:

- An interview about your medical and driving history;
- Physical screen to determine the presence of any physical limitations;
- Visual screen to assess visual acuity, peripheral vision and eye movement patterns;
- Cognitive screen to determine any difficulties with concentration, attention, memory, planning, insight and problem solving skills; and
- Knowledge of current road rules and road craft to ensure you are aware of road laws and how to apply these in appropriate situations.

The results of the off road assessment help to determine the needs for the on road assessment such as vehicle type, need for vehicle modifications, specialist driving techniques, where the assessment should be conducted and potential issues that may impact on the driving task. This component of the assessment may take up to two hours.

### ON ROAD ASSESSMENT

This is a performance based road test. It involves a variety of driving situations and varied levels of traffic complexity. The assessment is conducted with an Occupational Therapist in a dual control vehicle (automatic or manual), with a driving instructor present to maintain safety and give route directions. Where necessary the vehicle will be set-up with any special requirements or modifications to meet the client's specific needs.



The key areas which will be assessed include: observation skills, speed control, lane positioning, planning and judgement, and physical control/reaction time.

The driving instructor will provide feedback about driving performance measured against licencing authority standards. The Occupational Therapist assesses the impact of the medical conditions(s) on the client's ability to drive safely and legally.

Following the assessment, recommendations are made and a report is forwarded to VicRoads and other relevant parties as agreed by the client (GP, referrer, other family members). Follow-up is organised if required.

**Do you know someone who would benefit from this type of assessment?  
Feel free to give Occupational Focus a call on 0430 517 499 to make a referral.**

**CONTACT:** Cath Cleveland, Principal Consultant  
E | [info@occupationalfocus.com.au](mailto:info@occupationalfocus.com.au)  
M | 0430 517 499 F | 03 8692 2898

