

Learning to Drive



Drivers Assessment

Anyone with Hydrocephalus or Spina Bifida should have an assessment before spending a lot of money on lessons and a car. Hydrocephalus can affect driving ability (for example how to judge speed and distances, co-ordination, concentration etc.) and it is important to see if this is likely to be a problem. If you have Spina Bifida, you might need hand controls, different seating or a way of getting your wheelchair in and out of the car.

The M.A.A.T.S Programme is a programme run by The Irish Wheelchair Association. The programme provides professional 'one to one tuition' for people who wish to learn to drive. Whether you are a total beginner or are returning to driving after acquiring a disability you can avail of driving tuition in an automatic and fully adapted car through our M.A.A.T.S programme

Prior to receiving tuition, all pupils undergo thorough assessment. Assessments normally take one to two hours and are carried out by Occupational Therapists and Driving Instructors. The Service also provides information on all aspects of motoring services, entitlements etc.

If you wish to avail of this service or need any information regarding this please ring us on (061) 313691 or call to our office at Unit 10 Docklands Business Park, Dock Road, Limerick, or visit the website www.iwa.ie.

Applying for a drivers licence

In order to avail of the Driving Tuition and Assessment service, people are required to be provisional license holders. All first time licence applicants are reminded that they are required to complete a theory test. This test is conducted at a nation-wide network of 41 different locations. The user-friendly computerised test caters for people with disabilities. All venues for the Theory Test should be wheelchair accessible.

Some people, especially with Hydrocephalus, may find this difficult so ask about any extra help or time which might be available to you. You can do practice tests via Irish Motoring website <http://www.irishmotoring.ie/theorytest/index.php?vtype=car>.

For further information on the Theory Test visit www.dttts.ie

Selecting and Buying a Vehicle

Buying a major item like a car calls for many considerations; finance, model of car, automatic or manual etc. For a disabled driver attention to the specifications and features of a vehicle is all important for accessibility.

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The information presented here has been gathered to support people when selecting and purchasing a vehicle. It is recommended that this information is drafted into a personal checklist. The use of a checklist would ensure that all driving / passenger needs are met prior to purchase i.e. that people can physically transfer in and out of the vehicle, vehicle controls can be used with ease etc.

Visit <http://www.iwa.ie/services/advice.aspx> for further information.

Vehicle Adaptations

People may require their vehicles to be modified in order for them to drive or to be carried as a passenger. Adaptations can be made to a vehicle to meet the needs of drivers and passengers with disabilities.

Visit <http://www.iwa.ie/services/advice.aspx#adaptation> for further information

Schemes and Entitlements

There are a number of schemes and entitlements available for drivers with a disability. For further information visit Entitlements on www.sbhi.ie.