

Driving and Traumatic Brain Injury

ADED – The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists

Traumatic brain injury and acquired brain injury commonly occur due to motor vehicle collisions or neurological impairments. Injuries may cause a loss of consciousness of less than five minutes to several weeks or more. Any level of injury can result in symptoms that may impact safe driving. Driving problems may be caused by problems with vision, accuracy and speed of eye movements, speed of response, visual or auditory attention, memory, problem solving, judgment and/or loss of physical skills. New learning and insight into difficulties may be affected which may result in difficulty with compensation. Without a comprehensive driver evaluation, unsafe driving encounters, unpredictable driving actions, or repeat collisions may occur.

Warning signs to look for:

- Inappropriate driving speeds (too fast or too slow)
- Slow to identify and avoid potentially hazardous situations
- Needs help or instruction from passengers
- Doesn't observe signs, signals or speed limits
- Does not respond to important road, traffic, or warning information
- Easily frustrated or confused
- Pattern of getting lost, even in familiar areas
- Collisions or near misses
- Blames their driving mistakes on the behavior of other drivers

A driver rehabilitation specialist, with knowledge of the medical conditions, can provide a comprehensive evaluation and assist you with determination of safe driving potential.

This assessment should include:

- Vision perception
- Functional ability
- Reaction time
- Behind-the-wheel evaluation

