



# Fitness to Drive: key issues for patients with brain metastases

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# Outline

1. Standards of fitness to drive for lung cancer.
2. Standards of fitness to drive for brain metastases.
3. Process of application to regain driving licence.
4. Advising your patient.
5. Questions and Answers

# Medical standards of fitness to drive

The interpretation and application of the law by Panels of Experts:

- **Neurology**, Cardiology, Diabetes, Vision, Alcohol / Substance Misuse, Psychiatry

Medical Standards

- legal standards (seizures/epilepsy, diabetes, vision)
- advice from Panels of Experts (brain metastases)

***Assessing fitness to drive – a guide for medical professionals (gov.uk)***

## Primary lung cancer

Group 1 (car, motorcycle)	Group 2 (bus and lorry)
May drive and need not notify DVLA <u>unless</u> there is <u>cerebral metastasis</u> .	<p>Must not drive and must notify DVLA.</p> <p>Only drivers with <b>non-small cell lung cancer</b> staged <b>T1 N0 M0</b> may be permitted to drive.</p> <p>Other lung cancers - <b>no driving for 1 year</b> following definitive treatment.</p>

## Primary lung cancer

Group 1 (car, motorcycle)	Group 2 (bus and lorry)
May drive and need not notify DVLA unless there is cerebral metastasis.	<b>May</b> drive and must notify DVLA. (if brain scan evidence of intracranial metastasis/es must <b>stop</b> driving).



## Medications that must be notified to DVLA

**NONE.**

- it is illegal to drive if impaired by drugs (illicit or prescribed)
- if impaired by medication → it is the driver's responsibility not to drive
- DVLA would expect:
  - drivers will self-regulate during such periods
  - drivers to discuss the issue with their prescribing healthcare professional

# Drug Driving - Medical Defence



It's an offence to drive if you have over the specified limits of certain controlled drugs in your blood (e.g. morphine) and you have not been prescribed them.

- **Medical Defence:**

- medicine was prescribed and taken according to the instructions
- patients may choose to have evidence with them when driving

# Lung Cancer and Brain Metastases (BM)



LC presents with intracranial involvement in 20% of patients at diagnosis<sup>1</sup>.

30–50% of non-small-cell lung cancer patients develop BM<sup>2</sup>.

The proportion of patients diagnosed with asymptomatic BM has risen over time<sup>3</sup>.

1. Myall NJ, Yu H, Soltys SG, Wakelee HA, Pollom E. Management of brain metastases in lung cancer: evolving roles for radiation and systemic treatment in the era of targeted and immune therapies. *Neurooncol Adv.* 2021 Nov 27;3(Suppl 5):v52-v62
2. Winslow N, Boyle J, Miller W, Wang Y, Geoffroy F, Tsung AJ. Development of brain metastases in non-small-cell lung cancer: high-risk features. *CNS Oncol.* 2024 Dec 31;13(1):2395804.
3. Steindl, Ariane et al. Changing characteristics, treatment approaches and survival of patients with brain metastasis: data from six thousand and thirty-one individuals over an observation period of 30 years. *European Journal of Cancer*, Volume 162, 170 – 181.



# Standards for Brain Metastases

- apply to first occurrence, recurrence and progression
- refer to seizure risk and/or risk of recurrence, and risk of deterioration
- brain metastases must **always** be notified to DVLA by the drivers

# Management

<b>Observation</b>	<b>May drive</b>
Biopsy	6 months off
Surgery	1 year off
Radiotherapy	
Immunotherapy	
Targeted therapy	
Chemotherapy (primary)	
Whole brain radiotherapy	2 years off

# Observation

- Asymptomatic brain metastases under 'observation' **may drive:**
  - if **not treated**
  - if **already on systemic treatment for lung cancer** (which is unchanged)
- If symptomatic brain metastatic lesion is not treated, **driving must stop**

## Brain Metastases – asymptomatic, incidental finding on brain imaging

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
<b>Observation</b>  (No treatment for the BM)	May drive	<b><u>Stop</u> driving until 2 scans 12 months apart confirm stability of lesion/s</b>

## CASE 1

Stage 3 lung cancer.

Surveillance MRI reveals asymptomatic brain metastasis (BM).

**PLAN.** – No treatment for the BM and repeat MRI in 3 months.



**CASE 1** (Stage 3 lung cancer, MRI shows asymptomatic brain metastasis, no treatment)

**Question. What would you advise about driving?**

1. Stop driving but no need to notify DVLA (the DVLA's landline is always busy).
2. Stop driving and must notify DVLA.
3. Can drive and must notify DVLA.
4. Can drive but only exceptional journeys (avoiding rush hour and motorways).

**CASE 1** (Stage 3 lung cancer, MRI shows brain metastasis, no treatment)

**Question. What would you advise about driving?**

1. Stop driving but no need to notify DVLA (the DVLA's landline is always busy).
2. Stop driving and must notify DVLA.
- 3. Can drive and must notify DVLA.**
4. Can drive but only exceptional journeys (avoiding rush hour and motorways).

## Brain Metastases – asymptomatic, incidental finding on brain imaging

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
<b>Observation</b>  If receiving systemic treatment for primary lung cancer ( <b>which is unchanged</b> by the identification of brain metastases)	May drive	<b><u>Stop</u> driving until 2 scans 12 months apart confirm stability of lesion/s</b>

## Brain Metastases – asymptomatic, incidental finding on brain imaging

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
<b>Observation</b>  If receiving systemic treatment for primary lung cancer <b>BUT it is changed</b> by the identification of brain metastases	<u>Stop</u> driving for 12 months	<u>Stop</u> driving for 5 years

## CASE 2

- Mrs BT is on targeted therapy A for lung cancer
- Brain MRI reveals 2 tiny asymptomatic brain metastases
- Plan – Continue targeted therapy A + repeat MRI in 3 months

**Question. – What would you advise about driving?**



## CASE 2

- Mrs BT is on targeted therapy A for lung cancer
- Brain MRI reveals 2 tiny asymptomatic brain metastases
- Plan – Continue targeted therapy A + repeat MRI in 3 months

**Question. – What would you advise about driving?**

**Can drive.** Asymptomatic BM already on systemic therapy.

## CASE 2 (cont.)

- 3 months later, MRI shows significant growth in the brain metastases
- Plan – To switch targeted therapy A for targeted therapy B

**Question. – What would you advise about driving?**

## CASE 2 (cont.)

- 3 months later, MRI shows growth in the brain metastases
- Plan – To switch targeted therapy A for targeted therapy B

**Question. – What would you advise about driving?**

**Can drive** until targeted therapy B is started, **then stop driving for 1 year.**

## Brain Metastases – asymptomatic, incidental finding on brain imaging

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
Biopsy	<u>Stop</u> driving for 6 months	<u>Stop</u> driving for 6 months

## Brain Metastases – Surgery and/or Radiotherapy

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
Surgery and / or Radiotherapy	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>1 year</b> after treatment	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>5 years</b> after treatment  If stability or improvement on MRI



## Brain Metastases – Whole Brain Radiotherapy

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
Whole Brain Radiotherapy	<u>Stop</u> driving for 2 years	<u>Stop</u> driving for 5 years  Each case will then be considered individually

## CASE 1

Stage 3 lung cancer.

Surveillance MRI reveals asymptomatic brain metastasis (BM).

**PLAN.** – No treatment for the BM and repeat MRI in 3 months.

**Can drive and must notify DVLA.**

## CASE 1 (cont.)

New Brain MRI confirms growth in the asymptomatic brain metastasis.

**PLAN.** – Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS).

**CASE 1 (cont.)** (New Brain MRI confirms growth in the brain metastasis. **PLAN.** – SRS.)

**Question. What would you advise about driving?**

1. Stop driving for 1 year.
2. Stop driving for 2 years.
3. No driving restriction is required as asymptomatic brain metastasis
4. Can drive until SRS and then stop driving for 1 year.

**CASE 1 (cont.)** (New Brain MRI confirms growth in the brain metastasis. **PLAN.** – SRS.)

**Question.** What would you advise about driving?

1. Stop driving for 1 year.
2. Stop driving for 2 years.
3. No driving restriction is required as asymptomatic brain metastasis
- 4. Can drive until SRS and then stop driving for 1 year.**



## Brain Metastases – Targeted Therapy or Immunotherapy

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
<b>Targeted therapy</b> or <b>Immunotherapy</b>  ( <u>no other primary</u> treatment for BM)	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>1 year</b> after starting targeted therapy or immunotherapy	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>5 years</b> after starting targeted therapy or immunotherapy

## Brain Metastases – Targeted Radiotherapy or Immunotherapy

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
<b>Targeted therapy</b> or <b>Immunotherapy</b>  (after surgery or radiotherapy)	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>1 year</b> after completion of <u>surgery</u> or <u>radiotherapy</u>	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>5 years</b> after completion of <u>surgery</u> or <u>radiotherapy</u>

## Brain Metastases – Chemotherapy

Management	<u>Group 1 (car)</u> period off driving	<u>Group 2 (lorry, bus)</u> period off driving
1. If <b><u>adjuvant</u></b> to surgery / radiotherapy	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>1 year</b> after surgery / radiotherapy	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>5 years</b> after starting chemotherapy
2. If Chemotherapy is the <b><u>only</u> primary treatment</b>	<u>Stop</u> driving for <b>1 year</b> after starting Chemotherapy	

## CASE 3

- metastatic lung cancer presented with a seizure in April 2024
- MRI revealed solitary supratentorial brain metastasis
- surgical resection of brain metastasis in April 2024
- followed by stereotactic partial brain radiotherapy in May 2024
- started on 1<sup>st</sup> line palliative immunotherapy in June 2024 (still on)

<b><u>CASE 3.</u> Metastatic lung cancer presented with a seizure. MRI revealed supratentorial brain metastasis.</b>	<b>Group 1 period off driving</b>
seizure at presentation	<b>1 year</b>
surgical resection of brain metastasis – April 2024	
stereotactic partial brain radiotherapy – May 2024	
started on 1 <sup>st</sup> line palliative immunotherapy in June 2024 (still on maintenance)	

<b><u>CASE 3.</u> Metastatic lung cancer presented with a seizure. MRI revealed supratentorial brain metastasis.</b>	<b>Group 1 period off driving</b>
seizure at presentation	<b>1 year</b>
surgical resection of brain metastasis – April 2024	<b>1 year</b>
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<b><u>CASE 3.</u> Metastatic lung cancer presented with a seizure. MRI revealed supratentorial brain metastasis.</b>	<b>Group 1 period off driving</b>
seizure at presentation	<b>1 year</b>
surgical resection of brain metastasis – April 2024	<b>1 year</b>
stereotactic partial brain radiotherapy – May 2024	<b>1 year</b>
started on 1 <sup>st</sup> line palliative immunotherapy in June 2024 (still on maintenance)	<b>No ‘extra’ restriction</b> <b>Could drive 1 year after completion of radiotherapy</b>

# Panel recent advice

## 1. Whole Brain Radiotherapy (WBRT) – Group 1 driving:

- leptomeningeal metastases treated with WBRT and that have demonstrated a durable response to treatment and no progression to observe 1 year off driving

## 2. Solitary infratentorial brain metastasis – Group 1 driving:

- drive on recovery from treatment

# Brain Metastases and Seizures

- Seizures require **12 months off** car driving in patients **with** brain metastases
- However, normally 6 months if cancer **without** brain metastases

## CASE 4<sup>1</sup>

- Mr LC presents to the Emergency Department with a seizure
- Stage 4 lung cancer with liver metastasis
- MRI is within normal limits. Investigations are normal
- Diagnosis is unprovoked seizure of unknown cause

**Question. – How long does Mr LC have to stop driving for?**

## CASE 4<sup>1</sup>

- Mr LC presents to the Emergency Department with a seizure
- Stage 4 lung cancer with liver metastasis
- MRI is within normal limits. Investigations are normal
- Diagnosis is unprovoked seizure of unknown cause

**Question. – How long does Mr LC have to stop driving for?**

**6 months**

## CASE 4<sup>2</sup>

- Mrs CL presents to the Emergency Department with a seizure
- Stage 4 lung cancer with liver metastasis
- MRI shows small brain metastasis
- Diagnosis is unprovoked seizure

**Question. – How long does Mrs CL have to stop driving for?**

## CASE 4<sup>2</sup>

- Mrs CL presents to the Emergency Department with a seizure
- Stage 4 lung cancer with liver metastasis
- MRI shows small brain metastasis
- Diagnosis is unprovoked seizure

**Question. – How long does Mrs CL have to stop driving for?**

**1 year**



# Reapplication for driving licence - revoked by DVLA



## 1. **Can reapply** for driving licence once:

- condition has improved or stabilised + medical standards for driving are met
- 8 weeks before the end of the revocation period

## 2. **To reapply**, they must:

- complete a D1 form + medical questionnaire (BT1 form) + consent
- **if possible**, provide updated medical evidence - letter from LC Nurse Specialist
- **must wait** until DVLA completes medical enquiry and grants the licence

# Reapplication for driving licence - voluntarily surrendered



## 1. **Can reapply** for driving licence once:

- condition has improved or stabilised + 8 weeks before standards for driving are met

## 2. **To reapply**, they must:

- complete a D1 form + BT1 form + consent
- **if possible**, provide updated medical evidence - letter from LC Nurse Specialist
- **may be able to drive** as soon as they meet the medical standards for driving

# Section 88 of the Road Traffic Act 1988

Can I drive while my application is with DVLA?

- may allow a driver to return to driving even though they do not hold a current licence
- **In practice:**
  - driver has applied to regain a driving licence that had been voluntarily surrendered\*
  - driver meets standards of fitness to drive
  - DVLA has received a correct and complete application for a driving licence

**\*Section 88 never applies if licence has been revoked or refused by DVLA**

## CASE 5 – lung cancer + solitary brain metastasis

1. Complete surgical resection of brain metastasis on 20 June 2024.
2. Driving licence was voluntarily surrendered.
3. Patient is well. MRI brain in May 2025 shows no recurrence of brain metastasis.
4. Patient applies to regain driving licence. Application has been received by DVLA.

## CASE 5 – lung cancer + solitary brain metastasis

1. Complete surgical resection of brain metastasis on 20 June 2024.
2. Driving licence was voluntarily surrendered.
3. Patient is well. MRI brain in May 2025 shows no recurrence of brain metastasis.
4. Patient applies to regain driving licence. Application has been received by DVLA.
5. By law, patient could start driving again on 20 June 2025.

# Advising your patient

- Know the standards of fitness to drive:
  - *Assessing fitness to drive* – email DVLA [medadviser@dvla.gov.uk](mailto:medadviser@dvla.gov.uk)
- Establish driving status:
  - valid driving licence or voluntarily surrendered or revoked by DVLA?

# Advising your patients

- can drive or must not drive + must inform DVLA
- if medical standards are not met → do advise **to surrender** the licence \*
- if they don't do it, you may have to notify DVLA on their behalf
- **always** document any advice given in the notes

\* Section 88



# Change in Law

In July 2022, **the law changed** to enable healthcare professionals other than doctors to complete DVLA medical questionnaires.

**“registered healthcare professional”** means a person on the register of:

- (a) the Nursing and Midwifery Council
- (b) the General Medical Council
- (c) the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)

# Take-Home Messages

1. Standards for brain metastases (BM):
  - Asymptomatic and observation (no treatment or no new treatment) – may drive car
  - Asymptomatic and treatment for BM – normally 1 year off car driving
2. Seizures require 12 months off car driving in patients with brain metastases
3. If standards are not met → do advise patients to surrender driving licence

# Thank you

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Driver & Vehicle  
Licensing  
Agency