

# Guidelines for Driving if taking Strong Medications



This leaflet gives advice to people who are taking prescribed medication and wish to drive.

REMEMBER: IF YOUR DRIVING IS FOUND TO BE IMPAIRED,  
YOU ARE GUILTY OF BREAKING THE LAW.  
WHETHER YOU ARE TAKING MEDICATION OR NOT

## 1. What do the rules say?

The Crime and Courts Act 2015 states that it is an offence if you are taking strong medication and cannot drive safely or taking drugs that are not legally prescribed.

Police will have new powers to test and prosecute drivers who are suspected of having certain medications in their body over a set limit, unless these have been legally prescribed

If a roadside (saliva) test shows a person has taken a controlled medication (see list in Section 2), they can be requested to provide a blood sample to see if the levels of medication are above the set limit. If found to be above the limit, they may be prosecuted ...

**However**, the new offence has a 'medical defence' to protect patients who are taking medications that have been prescribed for them.

Police will not prosecute a patient who tests positive for these medications as long as:

- Their driving is not impaired **AND**
- They can provide evidence that they are taking medication as directed by a healthcare professional.

For example, if you are taking Morphine for pain the police will not prosecute you if:

- your driving is not impaired **AND**
- you can provide evidence that you are taking the Morphine as directed by your doctor.

## 2. Which drugs are included?

- 'Opioid' painkillers: Morphine, Methadone, Oxycodone and Fentanyl
- 'Benzodiazepines': Diazepam, Lorazepam, Clonazepam, Temazepam – used to treat anxiety or inability to sleep.
- Ketamine

### 3. When is it safe to drive?

It is **YOUR** responsibility to consider if your driving is, or might be, impaired on any given occasion.

#### Do **NOT** drive if:

- You feel that your driving is at risk of being impaired e.g., if you experience sleepiness, dizziness, poor co-ordination, visual problems, slowed/impaired thinking or confusion.

This is most likely when:

- you have just started taking a medication listed in Section 2
- the dose of that medication has recently changed
- you are taking more of the medication for breakthrough pain or anxiety
- you take any amount of alcohol (however small) in addition to these medications.



#### The advice is...

- Not to drive for at least 5 days after starting any of these medications
- If the dose has been changed
- You start to feel drowsy or unable to concentrate.
- Keep taking your medication as advised by your healthcare professional
- Check the leaflet that comes with your medication for information on how it might affect your driving ability.

## 4. If you feel that you are safe to drive:

If you are not drowsy after you have been taking your medication for a minimum of 5 days you may start to drive. Your first trip should be

- **Short**
- **On Familiar roads**
- **At a time with less traffic**



- Keep taking your medications as prescribed.
- You should take with you evidence that the medication has been prescribed by a healthcare professional to treat a medical problem.

Suitable evidence could include:

- a copy of the prescription for the medication
- a copy of the specific advice given to you by your doctor showing what the medication is, how much you take (dose) and when

## 5. Do I need to Inform the DVLA or my Insurance if I am taking prescribed medication?

You do NOT need to inform the DVLA of your prescriptions, however there maybe information about your illness the DVLA should know. Advice is available at [www.dvla.gov.uk](http://www.dvla.gov.uk)

You DO need to inform your car insurance company about your current state of health and medication regime. Each company is different but your insurance may be invalid if you do not inform them.

Further information: <https://www.gov.uk/drug-driving-law>



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