

## What will be in the Handbook?

It will focus on the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by a driving assessor.

### Knowledge

1. Disabling medical disorders and their impact on driving.
2. Ways of compensating for reduced or absent limb function.
3. Ergonomics and use of different driving techniques and/or technical aids.
4. Understanding the importance of visual, cognitive, emotional and other higher cortical functions for driving.
5. Normal and abnormal driving behaviour.
6. Legal requirements (European legislation)
7. Ethics, including confidentiality and data protection.
8. Helping a disabled person access funding for tuition, adaptations etc.

### Skills

1. Communication skills
2. How to assess / examine a person's impairments, functional deficits and residual skills
3. How to observe and interpret driver actions.
4. Understand when and how to intervene to maintain road safety.

### Attitudes

1. Empathy with the person being assessed.
2. Professional objectivity in reaching a conclusion.

### Contact and Support

PORTARE comprises representatives of the following organisations: Forum of Mobility Centres (UK); CBR Medical Dept (NL); EDPC (NL), TÜV SÜD Life Service (DE); SRA (SE); DfT (UK); IRCSS E. Medea (IT); Mobilita Servizi (IT). Financial support is being provided by the Forum of Mobility Centres and IRRS (Slovenia) has offered help with printing. Additional help will be needed to bring this project to fruition. If you would like to learn more about this work, and/or provide additional funding, please speak to one of the PORTARE representatives at the conference or contact us at:

[www.car-adaptation.org](http://www.car-adaptation.org)

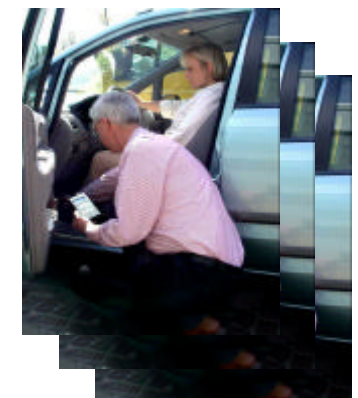
PORTARE

## Handbook of Driving Assessment

PORTARE is a voluntary cooperation between a group of European experts to create a **Handbook of Driving Assessment**.

This textbook and associated educational material will

- Provide an appropriate, accessible and available compilation of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by a driving assessor.
- Be suitable for use in all European countries, many of which have no such service or expertise.
- Stimulate improved practices throughout the continent.



## What is a Driving Assessment?

A driving assessment is not the same as the conventional driving test which all must sit in order to obtain a licence. The most important part of the assessment is an in-car evaluation, but it also considers other aspects – medical, visual, physical (including need for adaptations) and cognitive – so that the disabled person's overall fitness to drive and requirements for assistance with outdoor mobility can be addressed.

## What's Fitness, Ability and Behaviour?

Three terms are used widely to describe a person's status as a driver 'ability', 'fitness' and 'behaviour'. These words are related to each other but it may be helpful, particularly to people whose first language is not English, to recognise that they focus on different aspects of driving:

- **'Ability'** is what a person can do
- **'Fitness'** includes medical risk as well as competence / ability
- **'Behaviour'** is what the person does in practice

Assuming that the person does not have an absolute legal bar to driving, whether caused by a medical condition such as poor visual acuity or as a result of a court decision, the extent of overlap will vary according to situation and circumstances.

## Who needs a Driving Assessment?

The main groups are:

1. Those whose *fitness to drive* is in doubt (mainly with severe or progressive diseases of the nervous system such as stroke, multiple sclerosis, head injury, parkinson's disease or dementia).
2. People with physical impairments (including some of the above) who need independent advice on *adaptations* or wish to try them out free of commercial pressure.

## Surely Fitness to Drive is covered by Licensing Laws?

Yes, but the regulations are very vague about the types of diseases and conditions which those attending for an assessment suffer from. Family doctors or other professionals to whom people turn for help or advice also lack the expertise and facilities to carry out such work. They tend to play safe and advise people not to drive. Yet the majority

of those lucky enough to come for a driving assessment are found suitable to resume or continue driving, sometimes with technical aids. Conversely, those advised against driving are much more likely to accept the decision after a full, fair and objective assessment than on the basis of professional guesswork.

Licensing authorities in countries which have established driving assessment services also rely on them to assist with problem cases.

## Why is a Handbook of Driving Assessment needed?

Driving assessors come from a number of backgrounds - driving examiners / instructors, occupational therapists, psychologists and others. Each brings to the role their professional expertise but must learn new skills appropriate to the job. The training has historically been an apprenticeship with formal education and evaluation of competence limited to a few services. A major barrier to progress has been the lack of a textbook or training manual specifically suited to their disparate needs. A Europe wide initiative is justified because of the:

- current unmet need for driving assessments,
- certainty that these numbers will rise in the future as society ages,
- paucity of countries offering such services, and
- the relatively small number of assessors required in each country.

## Shouldn't old or disabled people resit a driving test?

Emphatically **NO**, unless required to do so by the licensing authorities or courts. A conventional driving test has a different focus (on ability) from the assessment of fitness to drive described above. There is no evidence that disabled or elderly people in general have an increased accident risk. Those with certain conditions may, however, have driving problems or pose an increased risk; an assessment will try to help them remain mobile and independent while also being able to prove whether or not they are safe drivers. It is therefore much less threatening than a formal test would be. Remember also that the majority of safe experienced drivers would struggle to pass such a test! It is obvious from the curriculum that a **qualified driving assessor** will be trained to a different, much higher, standard than an ordinary driving examiner or instructor; other professionals doing this job will also benefit from its holistic approach and focus on driving skills and behaviours.