

THIS IS GENERAL ADVICE ONLY PLEASE CHECK WITH YOU LOCAL ROAD AUTHORITY AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Driving for Short Statured People

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Getting your License

Learners Permit:

You will have to complete a learner permit application in which you must notify your road authority of any serious or chronic medical condition or disability which may affect your fitness to drive. Generally I think it will be pretty obvious to the road authority when we go to take a test!, but it's still the legal responsibility of the driver to notify the road authority. It is an offence not to disclose this information. The learner period allows you to try various adaptive equipment to determine what best suits your condition.

The road authority may give you a medical report form for your doctor to complete. Such as

https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/~media/files/formsandpublications/licences/medical_report.pdf

<http://www.support.transport.qld.gov.au/qt/formsdat.nsf/Forms/QF3712>

Some states (i.e. Qld) may require you to carry a medical certificate to say you're medically fit to drive.

Probationary License

You will have to complete a driver licence application in which you must notify your road authority of any serious or chronic medical condition or disability which may affect your fitness to drive. It is an offence not to disclose this information.

Drivers requiring the use of major modifications are recommended to undertake assessment and training with a recognised and driver trained Occupational Therapist, before having a vehicle modified. Occupational Therapist will be able to assist with finding the right modifications suited to the specific disability and assist in having the modification fitted in the vehicle by an approved installer.

A list of Occupational Therapists with driver training in Victoria can be found here:

<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/~media/files/formsandpublications/licences/ot-list-oct-2017.pdf>

A list for all states can be found here: <http://www.otaus.com.au/find-an-occupational-therapist>

Conditions

The Road authority will typically put a condition on your license, typically pedal extensions. This may be marked as V for driver aids or vehicle modifications and may say pedal extensions. This condition will apply if you have been notified by your road authority that specific driver aids or vehicle modifications are required for you to drive. If you have a conditional licence you will only be able to legally drive a car with the modifications that are designed to accommodate your disability.

Parking

You may be eligible for a parking permit, visit [australian disability parking scheme](#) or your state road authority for more information.

Links:

<http://www.disabledmotorists.org.au/>

Victoria - Vicroads

<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences/medical-conditions-and-driving/licensing-and-driving-for-people-with-a-disability>

<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences/medical-conditions-and-driving/medical-review>

<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/licences/medical-conditions-and-driving/medical-review/occupational-therapy-driving-assessment>

For more info call VicRoads Medical Review on Tel: 13 11 71.

NSW – Road & Maritime Services

<http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au/roads/licence/health/driving-with-disability.html>

For more info call RMS Technical Enquiries on 1300 137 302.

QLD – Department of Transport & Main Roads

<http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Licensing/Medical-condition-reporting.aspx>

For further information on medical condition reporting, please contact the Manager (Licensing) on (07) 3066 2129.

Choosing a car

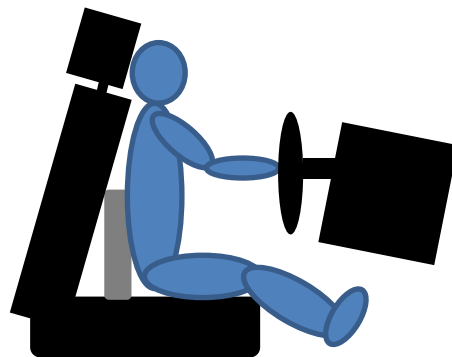
You may have been saving up for a car of your own, or you'll be using your mum or dad's car to drive in, but if you have the option of picking a car, you should consider things like the seat and steering wheel adjustment, and the height of the car. When we are driving we should aim to have good visibility but also be comfortable with the seating arrangement. Most cars built in the last decade have both seat height and steering wheel adjustment. You may need to put the seat all the way up. This is very useful for people who have a shorter torso so that they can see clearly over the dash and see all your mirrors. The height adjustment may be a manual lever or on nicer cars, may be electric.

Once you have the right seat height, you should adjust your steering wheel so that your hand can reach straight out but slightly loose in the now recommended 9 o'clock 3 o'clock position.

If you have a hatch or wagon, you may need to get a strap attached to close it. One trick I have found with sedan boots is to close it from the side of the boot, around near the back windscreen. The other consideration for cars is the height of the cabin. If the car is a 4wd or SUV, the door sills and seats will be much higher of the ground and may require climbing. I think often we have to climb to reach stuff, so this might be fine if you're young and agile but this may not suit someone older.

Seating

Often short statured people will also need a back seat cushion to help maintain a better driving position. I find by having a backrest, my knees are able to sit on the edge of the seat so I'm able to bend my legs down the pedals. In the cars I've driven I have usually bent the seat forward so that the lower back leans against the backrest, and the top of my back leans against the seat. I've also flipped the headrest around so it doesn't poke out. Work with your engineering firm to see what works best for you. Here's a dodgy diagram of how I position my seat:



Vehicle Modifications

There are various engineering firms around the country that do vehicle modifications for short statured drivers. They can help with pedal extensions, false floors, seating arrangements and airbag disabling. Modifications need to be done by an approved firm who do work that is compliant with local road authorities. For example, there is Australian design regulations on the thickness of steel used in pedal extensions etc.

For people who are particularly short, you may need a modified seating bracket. This will be strapped in over the seat, and will give you much more height and place you in a better position closer to the dash.

The key vehicle modification will be the pedal extensions. The pedal extensions may clip over the pedals themselves, or they may clamp on to the pedal bracket. In my case the brake extension clips over, and there's a socket attached to the accelerator bracket to insert an accelerator extension. Some European with pedals on the floor may need a special bracket to attach. The pedals should be

constructed and fitted by an automotive engineering firm that complies with the local road authorities regulations. Pedals will generally have to be uniquely fitted to a car and an individual so that they extensions are the right length and placement for the driver.

You may also need to get a false/removable floor underneath the steering wheel. This may help you to climb into the seat. Also it helps to have a foot rest when we're using the pedals. In particular you may need to rest your heel as you push the accelerator. This is especially helpful for highway driving if you need to keep a constant speed especially if you don't have cruise control. This will save your feet from dangling off the seat.

Some engineering firms may also be able to disable your airbag. Airbags can be lifesaving but they work with quite explosive force so this may be a problem if you sit too close. Discuss this issue with the engineering firm and they should be able to advise. If the airbags are disabled, your road authority may ban anyone else from driving it. This was the case with Rima of Big Brother fame. So this may be an issue you need to deal with.

Funding

Some states may offer funding for vehicle modifications. However there may be waiting lists and other criteria so check with the schemes. Note that with the NDIS rollout, this may affect the provision of these schemes.

VIC

Vehicle Modifications Subsidy Scheme (VMSS) <http://swep.bhs.org.au/vmss> - The VMSS is part of the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program and is funded by the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS). Eligible drivers/passengers with permanent disabilities living in Victoria may receive a subsidy of up to \$10,000 (over a seven year period) for the cost of certain modifications.

QLD

Vehicle Options Subsidy Scheme (VOSS) - VOSS provides financial support to eligible people with a disability for a detailed assessment of vehicle modification requirements with a recommendation (prescription) for the best solution; Vehicle modifications, purchase of an already modified vehicle, or a vehicle to be modified to match identified needs; and Lessons to learn to drive the modified car. Successful applicants still need to pay the gap between the subsidy and the full cost of the modifications or purchase price of the vehicle.

You must meet specific eligibility criteria to access the scheme. For more information, contact your local Disability Services office or email vossmail@communities.qld.gov.au.

AUTOMOTIVE ENGINEERS

Please find a list of automotive engineers that may provide suitable modifications.

THE SSPA DOES NOT ENDORSE OR GAUARANTEE ANY OF THIS COMPANIES

NSW

<http://www.pmeautoconversions.com.au/>

<http://www.mobilityengineering.com.au/>

<http://www.gforceautomotive.com.au>

<https://totalability.com.au/>

QLD

<http://www.kcfdisabilityengineering.com.au/>

<https://autoextras.com.au/>

SA

<http://www.cgoodallengineering.com.au/>

VIC

<http://www.franksengineering.com.au/>

<http://www.reflexeng.com.au/>

<http://www.csv.com.au>

WA

<http://www.tleng.com.au/>