

fact sheet

Austin, TX 78701 Mobile Clinic 512-689-0236 safedrivingrehab.com

Adaptive Driving Program

Driver Rehabilitation For Licensed Adults

Whenever a driver has a change in mental or physical condition that could affect ability to drive, the person is responsible for informing the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and completing any required testing which includes a comprehensive driver evaluation. This type of assessment is performed by an Occupational Therapy Driver Rehabilitation Specialist. One can find a list of OT-DRS's or CDRS's in the area and other helpful information by looking at the ADED and AOTA webpages.

This professional prescribes adaptive driving equipment if needed and teaches people how to drive with these special modifications. If driving is not the safest choice, the OT will help improve community access, mobility, safety and independence in other ways.

Driver evaluations and training are available for a variety of individuals dealing with a medical status change. More common referrals can include driving changes due to:

- Stroke/TBI/MCI
- Amputation
- Orthopedic change
- Neuropathy
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Dementia/Alzheimer's
- Progressive Diseases
- Post-surgical or illness

Natural aging processes and even prescription drugs can hinder safe driving ability. Vision, movement, sensation, strength, flexibility, reflexes, memory and other foundations can weaken over time. Changes are often gradual and may go unnoticed by the driver or overlooked by loved ones until something rather serious happens. For this reason, early identification, referral, and driver retirement planning is advised.

Conversations about safe driving changes and acknowledgement of the best decision about driving future can be quite difficult for loved ones. That's an area where an OT-DRS can help out. They offer unbiased professional judgement about a person's driving ability and risks while helping devise a plan for



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when driver restriction, retirement or cessation may become necessary.

To begin any driver evaluation, a prescription will be needed from the doctor (primary or specialist). The evaluation consists of two parts after initial intake and payment arrangements are discussed.

First, there is a clinical evaluation of pre-driving. Second, a behind-the-wheel evaluation will occur. A valid driver's license or permit is required to drive on public streets; however it is not required for parking lot assessment. This is utilized to identify appropriate adaptive equipment needs prior to obtaining a permit for adapted driver training prior to the DPS performing a road test.

The driver evaluation will include a report of outcomes and recommendations which will be shared with the referral and payor source. If follow up training is recommended, the therapist will estimate the number of hours needed for services.

Since driving is not considered "medically necessary" it is typically not covered by insurance. Many providers are private pay only. Supportive funding cans sometimes be obtained by agencies such as Voc. Rehab, VA, and charities in advance.

Missy Bell, OT-DRS, has over 25 years working with diverse populations. Missy holds the highest level badges in Driving by AOTA for adults and adolescents. Her driving rehab experience began in 2001. She started private practice driving rehab in 2013 and is now pursuing her CDRS after getting all needed hours. Missy holds volunteer roles with AOTA, ADED & TX and is working with Pearson assessments on standardized driver testing for the US. Missy offers private mobile OT Driving rehab & supplementary support services in Austin and the central Texas region.

For more Info. or to sensitively discuss a referral, please contact missy@safedrivingrehab.com or 512-689-0236.