



Freedom & Mobility

Tel: 1-866-514-9957

Comprehensive Driver Evaluation

A Comprehensive Driving Evaluation looks at the clients physical and cognitive abilities as they relate to their ability to drive. Physical abilities include the ability to get in and out of the vehicle, operate the primary and secondary driving controls and gather information from the environment. Cognitive abilities include the ability to communicate both receptive and expressive, knowledge of the driving task, judgment, visual perceptual skills, decision-making skills, problem solving skills and memory.

At Freedom and Mobility, a certified driver rehabilitation specialist (CDRS) who is also an occupational therapist and licensed driving instructor completes all driving evaluations. Both new and experienced drivers are eligible for assessment. Training in the use of adaptive equipment or for licensure is conducted by a combination of certified driver rehabilitation specialists and licensed driving instructors depending on the needs of the individual.

Driving evaluations are appropriate for persons who may require adaptive equipment to compensate for physical disabilities, persons who have cognitive or perceptual disabilities, people who have to transport a mobility device and even for people who suffer from PTSD symptoms related to a motor vehicle collision. A comprehensive evaluation consists of two main components, the clinical assessment and the on-road assessment. The exact tests done will vary from client to client depending on the diagnosis and deficits observed.

The clinical assessment includes

- History – medical and driving, this includes any secondary conditions that could affect driving
- Vision – includes acuity, color perception, depth perception, peripheral vision, ocular motor control, tracking and scanning
- Hearing
- Strength – upper and lower extremity strength, active and passive range of motion, neck rotation, tone
- Coordination – fine and gross motor coordination, head and trunk control and brake reaction time
- Balance – sitting and standing (static and dynamic)
- Ambulation
- Wheelchair and mobility device use – the type of device, amount of use, ability to load and unload it from the vehicle and the dimensions of the device (this can affect vehicle selection)
- Cognitive screening – knowledge of road rules and signs, processing speed, attention (divided and sustained), memory, visual perceptual skills

The on-road assessment includes

- Transfer skills – ability to independently enter and exit the vehicle
- Vehicle handling skills- the ability to operate the primary controls (gas, brake and steering) and the secondary controls (turn signals, ignition, gearshift, lights, wipers, etc.)
- Applied road knowledge
- Applied cognitive, language and perceptual skills- this may include the client's ability to navigate in familiar areas when memory is an issue
- Wheelchair/mobility device loading
- Training with adaptive equipment if needed- the most appropriate equipment is identified and training is initiated. Additional training is often required for proficiency.
- Evaluations may occur in a car or modified van depending on the client's needs. Equipment ranges from the standard factory equipment to high tech controls that allow the client to control the vehicle through servomotors.

Recommendations are made based on the client's performance in all aspects of the evaluation. In general, the recommendations fall in one of four categories.

- Pass- Resume driving without restrictions, may include a recommendation for reassessment at a later date if condition/function deteriorates
- Complete training to improve a specific skill or learn to compensate for a deficits, for a new driver this could include training to licensure with or without adaptive equipment
- Compete training with adaptive equipment including a final fitting at the vendor's shop to check the client off in their personal vehicle
- Fail – not appropriate for driving at this time, may include recommendation for reassessment at a later date if condition improves or may be for driving cessation in situations where improvement cannot be expected
- Recommendations are made for specific adaptive driving equipment, vehicle selection and structural modification as needed and may be given at the end of training