

Experienced Drivers' Self-Assessment Questionnaire

Instructions:

Circle or underline your answers (YES or NO) to each of the following questions.

Based on your answers, you may be advised to read relevant driving and road safety tips on the reverse side of this sheet.

Health-related Issues

1. Are you able to walk without using an assistive device (e.g. walking stick or frame)? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 1	8. If you are 75 or over, do you require a medical certificate to continue driving? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 7
2. Are you able to look behind you to reverse and complete blind-spot checks in both directions, without removing your feet from the correct pedals or losing control of steering? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 1	9. Do you always read the labels on your medications, and have you asked your doctor or pharmacist if your medication can affect your driving? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 8
3. Do your joints ache or become stiff on long trips? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 2	10. Do you ever miss taking your medication? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 9
4. Are your reactions to unexpected situations slower than they used to be? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 3 and 30	11. Do you have trouble judging the distance of other vehicles or changing focus from your instrument panel to the road? Do you have more trouble adjusting to glare and/or night driving than you did previously? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 10 and 11
5. Do you often get tired or feel sleepy while driving during the day? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 4 and 5	12. Do you ever get surprised by pedestrians or other vehicles coming from your left or right while you are focussing straight ahead? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 10 and 11
6. Do you get tired or feel sleepy on long trips? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 5	
7. Do you suffer from any chronic medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, epilepsy, diabetes, vision/hearing impairment)? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 6	

Driving-related Issues

13.	Do you drive without wearing a seatbelt? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 12 a) When you sit in the driver's seat, is your chest less than 25cm (10 inches) from the steering wheel? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 13 b) When you sit in the driver's seat, is your eye level less than 10cm (approximately 4 inches) above the top of the steering wheel? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 13 c) When you sit in the driver's seat, can you completely depress the clutch, accelerator and brake pedals without discomfort? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 13
14.	Are you able to reach and operate your turn indicators, horn, hazard light switch, headlight switch (including high and low beam), handbrake and turn the steering wheel full lock from left to right and back again without pain or discomfort? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 14
15.	Are you able to get in and out of your vehicle without discomfort? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 15
16.	Do you regularly lose your sense of direction, get lost or have trouble deciding on an appropriate route to your destination? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 16
17.	Do some traffic situations or the actions or behaviour of other drivers upset you? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 17
18.	Do you have trouble driving through, or turning at, busy intersections or roundabouts? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 18 and 19
19.	Do you keep up-to-date with changes to road rules? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 19
20.	Do you have trouble deciding who to give way to at an intersection? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 18 and 19

21.	Does driving in heavy traffic make you feel uncomfortable? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 20 and 30
22.	Do you feel more comfortable driving well below the speed limit? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 21
23.	Do you feel uncomfortable driving in unfamiliar territory? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 16 and 20
24.	Do you predominantly drive in one type of traffic environment (e.g. city or country)? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 23
25.	Do you have trouble merging with, or entering fast moving traffic? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 24
26.	Do you find that you are easily distracted or that your thoughts wander while driving? YES / NO If YES, go to Tip 25
27.	Do you feel confident to complete a U-turn safely and without discomfort? YES / NO

Other Issues

28.	Have you caused any minor crashes or experienced any near misses in the past 12 months and/or have you received a warning or ticket from a police officer in the past 12 months? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 26, 19 and 30
29.	Have your children, family members, friends or passengers expressed concerns about your ability to drive safely? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 27 and 30
30.	Do you find that other drivers react negatively to your driving, e.g. blowing the horn, flashing their headlights or driving aggressively around you? YES / NO If YES, go to Tips 28 and 30
31.	Do you have regular health and vision checks? YES / NO If NO, go to Tip 29

See the following pages for relevant tips.

Disclaimer: This questionnaire has been designed to help you identify areas related to your safety that may need to be addressed. Being honest in your answers will achieve the best results. The advice offered in relation to your answers is a guide only and is not intended to be professional advice about your driving ability. For a full evaluation of your driving ability, medical, driving theory and practical assessments would need to be performed by an appropriately qualified medical practitioner. However, your answers give a subjective indication about your ability to continue driving safely. If you or others who observe your driving have any concerns about your continued ability to drive, further professional advice should be sought. Please do not send completed copies of the questionnaire to RACQ, as the Club will not record or store any results.

Experienced Drivers' Self-Assessment Questionnaire Tips

Tip 1: As people age, it is normal for their mobility and flexibility to gradually decrease. However, if you notice that this decrease in mobility is affecting your ability to drive, consult your doctor.

Tip 2: Along with decreased flexibility and mobility, decreased muscle strength and other conditions such as arthritis can affect an individual's ability to drive safely as they get older. If you are experiencing stiffness or aches in your joints while you are driving, consult your doctor for further advice and treatment. You will probably also have to start planning for more frequent breaks on long trips, so that you don't sit in the one position for prolonged periods of time.

Tip 3: It is normal for your reactions, and your ability to process information to become slower as you get older. If you notice that you are becoming slower in reacting to unexpected situations while driving, you should allow yourself extra time and space to make decisions in traffic and avoid complex and unpredictable traffic situations. Contact your doctor to discuss this matter further.

Tip 4: If you are having trouble getting enough, good quality sleep at night and/or you are feeling tired or sleepy while driving during the day, you should consult your doctor. If you are on medication it may also be making you drowsy, so discuss this with your doctor as well.

Tip 5: If you are on a long trip, you will need to take a 15 minute break for every two hours of driving, and you should not drive for anymore than ten hours in one day. You may not realise it, but when you are driving your body and mind are working hard to make decisions and concentrate on the road. As you age you may need to take more frequent breaks, e.g. every hour, and you may need to drive shorter distances in order to maintain vigilance. Share the driving with another licensed driver if you can. Remember - good quality sleep is the only cure for fatigue or tiredness.

Tip 6: If you suffer from a chronic medical condition(s), ask your doctor about how these conditions affect your ability to drive safely. If your doctor issues you with a medical certificate that suggests you should only drive under certain conditions, you must notify the Department of Transport and Main Roads so that the certificate and any conditions can be added to the conditions on your licence. If it is a condition of your licence, you must carry a medical certificate at all times while driving. Have regular medical check-ups to monitor

your condition. You are legally required to notify the Department of Transport and Main Roads of any medical condition that affects your ability to drive.

Tip 7: In Queensland, all drivers aged 75 years or older must carry a medical certificate stating that they are fit to drive at all times while driving. If this medical certificate mentions conditions, you must inform the Department of Transport and Main Roads of these conditions and comply with them at all times (along with any conditions on your licence itself).

Tip 8: Always read the labels before taking any medication. You should also ask your doctor or pharmacist about the medications you take and if they can affect your driving. If your medication affects your ability to drive, ask your doctor or pharmacist for an alternative, use public transport or ask family or friends to drive. You have a responsibility to not drive while under the influence of any drug or medication.

Tip 9: Stick to the prescribed dosages of your medication. Do not drive if you have missed a dose of your medication, as this can be very dangerous. Contact your doctor or pharmacist for further advice about when it will be safe to drive again.

Tip 10: Consult your optometrist or ophthalmologist. If you have a prescription for corrective lenses, it may need updating. If you don't wear corrective lenses, they may be prescribed. Have regular eyesight tests - at least once every two years. If you need corrective lenses to drive, report this to the Department of Transport and Main Roads and it will become a condition on your licence, which you will have to comply with at all times.

Tip 11: If you do not have a problem with your vision, you may simply be focussing too much on the road in front of you, neglecting to 'scan' the road environment around you. Change your focus regularly by scanning from the road environment and signs ahead, to your mirrors, to your instrument panel, and back again.

Tip 12: You must always wear a seatbelt. Only persons carrying a doctor's certificate stating that they have a medical condition or physical characteristic that excludes them from wearing a seatbelt are permitted to drive or travel in a motor vehicle without one. If you have trouble reaching or properly using your seatbelt without discomfort, discuss this with your doctor.

Tip 13: To help the airbag to protect you in a crash, you should adjust your seat so that your chest is no closer than 25cm (10 inches) from the steering wheel, and to provide a minimum level of vision you should make sure that your eye level is at least 10cm (approximately 4 inches) above the top of the steering wheel. You should also be able to completely depress any pedals without discomfort. If you are not able to achieve this through seat adjustments, you should discuss this with your doctor. Remember that if you have adjusted your seat you should ensure you adjust your mirrors to suit your driving position.

Tip 14: If you are unable to locate these controls, check your vehicle owner's manual. If you have any pain or discomfort while using these hand-operated vehicle controls, you should discuss these issues with your doctor.

Tip 15: You should consult your doctor and ask if there are any treatments or assistive devices that may help you enter or exit the vehicle.

Tip 16: Start planning your trips prior to traveling, and don't forget to plan your return trip.

Tip 17: Try not to let other drivers or traffic situations upset or distract you while driving. Concentrate on obeying the road rules and driving safely. Give yourself time and space to react to other road users and their mistakes.

Tip 18: Plan your trips so that you use intersections where there are traffic lights that control all the turning movements of vehicles. If this is not possible, plan your trips so that you travel at different times of the day, when there is less traffic. You may also need to refresh your knowledge of the road rules in relation to roundabouts.

Tip 19: The Department of Transport and Main Roads publication *Your Keys to Driving in Queensland* is a good source of road rules and driving information. All drivers have a responsibility to know and adhere to the road rules, and if you have not updated your road rules knowledge since you got your licence, there may have been some changes.

Tip 20: Alter your driving patterns and plan your trips to avoid busy roads, and/or times of the day when there is a lot of traffic. If you still feel anxious and nervous, even after altering your driving patterns, you should probably consider an alternative form of transport for these trips.

Tip 21: Driving below the speed limit (within reason) is not illegal, but a substantial reduction could delay and frustrate other road users. If you are driving noticeably slower than in previous years, you need to identify the reason and take steps to address it. For example, if you are having trouble with your vision, you should see your optometrist or ophthalmologist. If there is no obvious medical reason, restrict your driving to roads zoned at lower speed limits to better suit your comfort level.

Tip 22: In unfamiliar territory, it is also a good idea to avoid driving at night, in busy traffic and in adverse weather conditions, which affect response times and decision making.

Tip 23: Be aware that when you drive in a different traffic environment, different demands will be placed on your driving skills. Drive to the prevailing conditions, and plan your trips in unfamiliar territory.

Tip 24: If you are having trouble merging with moving traffic, this could be due to difficulty with turning your head to perform a shoulder check. Remember that you can turn from the waist instead. You should also consult your doctor about how you could improve your flexibility. You may need to install special blind spot mirrors on your vehicle. If you have trouble judging the distance of other vehicles, you may have a problem with your eyesight and should therefore consult your optometrist or ophthalmologist. If you match your speed with the traffic that you are trying to enter/merge with, you will find the manoeuvre much easier. Always remember to indicate your intended movements and give way where necessary.

Tip 25: Driving is a complicated task and requires your full attention. Determine what is distracting you from driving, and remove or overcome the distraction. If you are still unable to give driving your full attention and concentration, do not drive and seek professional advice.

Tip 26: Think about the cause(s) of the incident(s) as it/they may indicate an underlying problem with your driving behaviour or physical capabilities (especially vision). Adapt your driving behaviour accordingly and seek medical advice.

Tip 27: Remember that your family and friends have your safety in mind and that while having them express concerns might be embarrassing, it can be a good indicator that your driving or vehicle is not to the standard that it once was. Listen to the concerns and take steps to address them.

Tip 28: You may be causing a hazard or delay. Consider the situations in which this occurs. You may be driving indecisively because you are in unfamiliar territory, or you may be driving over-cautiously due to another problem (e.g. poor vision). Consider your behaviours that provoke negative reactions from other road users and take steps to avoid these in the future.

Tip 29: You must start having regular health and vision checks. You are legally required to report to the Department of Transport and Main Roads any health issues which impact your ability to drive safely. This includes eyesight problems, or if you need corrective lenses to drive. Have regular eyesight and general health check-ups to help ensure you are at your best behind the wheel.

Tip 30: If you wish to have a professional driving assessment, please contact us for more information.

For more information about RACQ Road Safety Education, please call the Community and Education Department on 1300 853 658.