Medical Advisory Board for Driver License

Dealing with the aged
How the Medical Advisory Board was Created

The Texas Medical Advisory Board for Driver Licensing was established in 1970 by enactment of Articles 4447F and 6701J-1 (Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes), whereby the Texas Department of Health advises the Texas Department of Public Safety in the licensing of persons having medical limitations which might adversely affect driving. This is now mandated under Health and Safety Code, Title 2- Subtitle A, Chapter 12, SubChapter H.
The ultimate goal of the agencies involved is to allow all who can drive safely to do so and to continue to reduce the number and severity of motor vehicle accidents in Texas.
Dealing with Older Drivers

The quality of life for the aging can be greatly affected by their mode of transportation.
Driving can be crucial for performing necessary chores and maintaining ties to society. Many older adults continue to work past retirement age or engage in volunteer work or other organized activities.
The patient should be counseled not to drive during any of the following acute events:

- Pre-syncope or syncope
- Angina
- Seizure
- Transient ischemic attack
- Hypoglycemic attack
- Sleep attack or cataplexy
The following are some of the problems that the Medical Advisory Board look at:
General Medical

- **Aging** - Aging accounts for the most important organic factors contributing to driving problems.

- **Pulmonary diseases** - Such as emphysema, bronchitis and asthma. In advanced stages any one or a combination of these could produce dyspnea and syncope, thus limiting the applicant's capacity to drive safely.

- **Malignancies** - Anything involving the central nervous system or other vital organ systems, when causing general debility or disturbance of judgment or consciousness. The determination should be made on an individual basis with a comprehensive driving test.
Cardiovascular Diseases

Cardiovascular disease, especially when associated with pre-syncope, syncope or cognitive deficits, including unstable coronary syndrome, arrhythmias, congestive heart failure, hypertrophic obstructive cardiomyopathy, and valvular disease.
Neurologic Diseases

Neurological disorders constitute dangers to drivers because there exists the risk that an alteration of consciousness may occur. Neurological conditions commonly reviewed by MAB include transient cerebral ischemic attacks, cerebrovascular accident, convulsive disorders, movement disorders, narcolepsy and excessive daytime sleeping, and peripheral neuropathy, and dementia.
Psychiatric Disorders

Evaluation of psychiatric disorders as they relate to the driving task is challenging because of the wide variety of disturbances, treatments and degrees of severity. The degree of symptom control and any existing side effects from prescribed medication are considered.
Alcohol Abuse

Alcohol abuse associated with driving a motor vehicle has proven to be one of the greatest hazards to the motoring public.
Drug Abuse

In addition to considering the effects of prescription drugs, attention must also be focused upon abuse of non-prescription drugs and illegal drugs.
The severity of the disease and accompanying symptoms may dictate the advisability of restriction or denial of the driving privilege. Metabolic conditions commonly reviewed by MAB include chronic renal failure and diabetes mellitus.
Musculoskeletal Disabilities

Skeletal integrity, joint mobility and muscle strength and coordination are prerequisites for competent management of motor vehicles. With a driver proficiency test the functional capacity of impaired musculoskeletal performance can be determined.
Vision

Diseases affecting vision, including cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, macular degeneration, glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, field cuts, and low visual acuity even after correction.
Unexplained Blackouts

Any type of blackout or loss of consciousness that is unexplained.
How do I Report Unsafe Drivers

Any physician licensed to practice medicine in the state of Texas may inform the Department of Public Safety. This release of information is an exception to the patient-physician privilege. There is a form for reporting but a letter from the physician will suffice. Also any police officer or citizen may report someone to the Department of Public Safety.
Medical Advisory Board’s WEB address:

- [http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/mabhome.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/emstraumasystems/mabhome.shtm)

Other helpful links:

**NATSA**


**AMA**