

Patient information: strabismus service

Diplopia (double vision) and Driving FAQ's- Group 1 licence holders (private cars and motorbikes)

Double vision, also known as diplopia is seeing two images of the same object. It can come on suddenly or gradually, and may be short or long-term. It may not be present all of the time. There are many causes of diplopia, some of which are treatable.

Can I still drive with diplopia?

The DVLA does not allow you to drive with double vision as it is unsafe. If you develop double vision and/or this is confirmed by your hospital eye specialist, you should stop driving and inform the DVLA of your diagnosis.

Driving is allowed if the diplopia can be controlled. This may be done with a prism (a special type of lens that bends light and brings the two images together) or by occluding one eye. This can either be done with a patch, with frosting on one side of your glasses or with a

special type of contact lens. The eye that is not covered must have good enough vision to meet normal driving requirements. This requires time to adapt as distances and awareness of objects in the peripheral field of vision may be altered. This process can take months and so it is important to check with your doctor or optician that you have adapted fully before driving. It is also advisable to drive in good light on quiet roads at the beginning. In the case of long-term diplopia, there may be special cases where driving is allowed with DVLA approval, without the use of a prism or occlusion.

Why do I need to report diplopia to the DVLA?

You can be fined by the DVLA for not telling them about a medical condition that affects your driving.

