

Driving Guidance (DVLA) - Hypomania or Mania

Why this matters:

Mania and hypomania can cause elevated mood, poor judgment, impulsivity, and decreased insight. These symptoms can seriously impair your ability to drive safely.

Should I stop driving?

Yes. You must not drive during any acute episode of hypomania or mania. This includes any period of elevated or unstable mood, impaired concentration, or poor insight.

Do I need to tell the DVLA?

Yes. You must notify the DVLA if you have had an episode of mania or hypomania.

When can I drive again?

You may return to driving if your condition is stable and you meet the licensing requirements below.

Stable condition

Group 1 (Cars and Motorcycles):

- Must not drive and must notify DVLA
 - Licensing may be considered if:
 - You have remained well and stable for at least 3 months
 - You have adhered to any agreed treatment plan
 - You are free from any medication effects that would impair driving
 - You have a favorable report from a suitable specialist
- A lack of insight that affects driving safety is a bar to licensing.*

Group 2 (Lorries and Buses):

- Must not drive and must notify DVLA
 - Licensing may be considered if:
 - You have remained well and stable for at least 12 months
 - You have adhered to any agreed treatment plan
 - You are free from any medication effects that would impair driving
 - You have a favorable report from a specialist in psychiatry
- A lack of insight that affects driving safety is a bar to licensing.*

Unstable condition

Defined as **4** or more episodes of significant mood swing in the past **12 months**.
There is a particular danger if driving during repeated mood changes. There must be no driving during any acute illness.

Group 1 (Cars and Motorcycles):

- Must not drive and must notify DVLA
 - Licensing may be considered if:
 - You have remained well and stable for at least **6 months**
 - You have adhered to any agreed treatment plan
 - You are free from any medication effects that would impair driving
 - You have a favorable report from a suitable specialist
- A lack of insight that affects driving safety is a bar to licensing.*

Group 2 (Lorries and Buses):

- Must not drive and must notify DVLA
 - Licensing may be considered if:
 - You have remained well and stable for at least **12 months**
 - You have adhered to any agreed treatment plan
 - You are free from any medication effects that would impair driving
 - You have a favorable report from a specialist in psychiatry
- A lack of insight that affects driving safety is a bar to licensing.*

Additional considerations

- The minimum effective dosage of any antipsychotic medication should be used, in line with good practice.
- Drug tolerability should be optimal and not associated with deficits in alertness, concentration, or motor performance.
- For established illness with a history of relapse, the risk of recurrence must be considered low.

*If you are unsure about your diagnosis or what it means for your driving, **ask** your doctor or healthcare team for advice before driving.*

How do I tell the DVLA?

Fill in **form M1** (Mental Health Conditions), which you can find at:

<https://www.gov.uk/bipolar-disorder-and-driving>

Or call the **DVLA Medical Enquiries line**: 0300 790 6806.

Do not drive until the DVLA has responded if you've been asked to stop.

Your responsibility

You must **not drive** if your condition or medication affects your ability to do so safely. Some antipsychotic medicines can cause **drowsiness** or **slowed thinking**, especially at the start of treatment. Always speak to your doctor before returning to driving.