



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 favourable 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 favourable report from a specialist in psychiatry

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Unstable condition

Defined as four 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 favourable 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 favourable 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 any deficits that might impair driving, such as reduced alertness, concentration, or motor performance.
- If the patient has an established illness with a history of relapse, the risk of future relapse 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.

