

What is the Program?

Driver Assessment and Rehabilitation Service (DARS) has been a Ministry of Transportation (MTO) approved assessment centre since 1992. In 2013, DARS became an approved Functional Assessment Centre (FAC) and in 2014 awarded one of the WSIB Driver Rehabilitation contracts for Northeastern Ontario.

We offer a variety of comprehensive assessments and services for drivers (passengers) of all ages. Our goal is to meet clients' needs and ensure a safe return to driving whenever possible. All assessments are performed by an experienced licensed Occupational Therapist trained in the field of driver assessment and rehabilitation.

What do we offer?

Driver Evaluation:

A comprehensive evaluation for drivers who have a medical condition which may affect their cognitive or physical ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. The assessment usually includes an in-clinic portion followed by an on-road evaluation.

Driver Training:

Some clients may require further practice and/or training to become safe on the road. We create an individualized treatment program including sessions with a qualified driving instructor.

Vision Waiver Assessment:

An assessment for drivers who do not meet the MTO's G license vision requirements but may be able to safely compensate for their visual deficits. Individuals must first be deemed eligible by the MTO to participate in this program. DARS is the only centre in the Northeast approved by the MTO for this assessment.

Vehicle Modifications:

Our therapists provide an assessment and/or consultation for individuals requiring vehicle modifications in order to enter their vehicle, transport a mobility device (wheelchair or scooter) within the vehicle, or operate a motor vehicle using adaptive equipment.

Driving Anxiety Treatment:

A customized assessment and treatment program for those who are having difficulty returning to driving due to anxiety or fear of driving after an accident.

Driver Assessment Rehabilitation Service (DARS)

Community Care and Rehabilitation
First Floor, North Tower
Ramsey Lake Health Centre



Part of
Forward to Function



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Health Sciences North
Horizon Santé-Nord

(disponible en français)

What Can I Expect During My Assessment?

Part 1 – In-Clinic Assessment

The Occupational Therapist will ask you about your relevant medical information and general driving history. Depending on your assessment needs, you may undergo testing designed to evaluate cognitive and perceptual skills required for driving. You will also have a basic vision screen as well as testing of your physical strength and range of motion. If you require adaptive controls to drive safely, the various options available will be discussed with you.

Part 2 – On-Road Assessment

If appropriate, an in-car assessment is done with a Certified Driving Instructor, in a vehicle provided by the instructor. Both the Occupational Therapist and driving instructor observe in-car performance. We will look at your ability to physically manage the vehicle and your skills with respect to safety awareness and decision making in different traffic situations. If you require adaptive controls, you will be able to try them at this time as well.

Part 3 – Feedback Session

Following the clinical and in-car assessments, the Occupational Therapist will use the information gathered to make recommendations regarding your driving ability and if you have any training or equipment needs. Both the assessment results and recommendations will be explained in detail to you. We may find you safe to drive, recommend that you participate in further training or we may recommend driving cessation.

A detailed report will be sent to you, the referring physician, the Ministry of Transportation, and the third party funding, if applicable. Note that the final decision regarding license status is made by the Ministry of Transportation.

Who can Benefit from DARS Services?

People who have:

- ↪ A physical condition that makes normal operation of a vehicle difficult or unsafe (i.e. amputation, stroke, arthritis, upper or lower body weakness)
- ↪ Family who have expressed concerns about driving safety
- ↪ A medical condition that affects mental status or cognitive ability to drive safely (i.e. dementia, Alzheimer's disease, brain injury)
- ↪ Been directed by their physician or the MTO to undergo a driving evaluation
- ↪ A medically suspended license
- ↪ Visual deficits, including blind spots and conditions such as macular degeneration
- ↪ Anxiety and/or fear of driving following an accident

Referral Procedure

Anyone who feels they need an assessment can initiate the referral process, however we do require our referral form to be completed by your physician. This can be faxed to the DARS office and must be received before your assessment can be scheduled. If your license has been suspended we will assist in obtaining a temporary permit for the assessment purposes.

Fee

Driver assessment and rehabilitation is not funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (OHIP). In some instances third-party payers will cover the cost. Assessment fees are charged to cover costs of both the clinical and in-car assessments.

For Additional Information:

If you require further information, have specific questions, wish to receive a current fee schedule, or referral forms, please call:

Driver Assessment and Rehabilitation Service

Telephone: (705)523-7098
or 1-866-469-0822

Fax: (705)523-7051