

# Driving and Vehicle Modifications

- **Some people need changes to their car in order to drive safely**
- **People with long-term disability should talk to their doctor about notifying the authorities**
- **New technology makes it easier for many people to keep driving**

Because of weakness, fatigue or pain, some people who have had polio might find it difficult to drive or travel in a car. They might find that a disability parking permit is all they need, or they might need changes made to their car. The term “vehicle modifications” refers to changes to a person’s car or other vehicle to make driving and travelling easier. It is an example of [assistive technology](#).



## Disability Parking Permit

Some people find it difficult to get in and out of a car. Or, they might have trouble walking the distance from their car to the shops or appointments. These people might be eligible for a sticker or label on their car. These permits are different in each state. They allow the person to park in a specially designated space closer to the venue or park in a regular space for longer.

For information on disability parking permits in your state, visit the [Australian Disability Parking Permit](#) website and click on your state. You don't need to be a driver to apply for a disability parking permit.



## Responsibilities Of The Driver

If you are a driver with muscle weakness or other issues, you need to speak to your doctor. You are required to notify licencing if you have, or develop, a serious or chronic medical condition or disability (including Late Effects of Polio) that could affect your ability to drive safely. All states and territories have laws about this.

Your general practitioner or state licensing organisation might refer you for an Occupational Therapy (OT) driver assessment. The OT department at your local hospital might have a qualified driver assessor. The [OT Australia website](#) has a list of private driver assessors.

## Changes To Your Car (For Driving):

Sometimes, an OT will recommend that you make changes to your car so you can keep driving safely. These changes might include:

- Hand controls (instead of pedals)
- Extra-wide mirrors
- Spinner knob for one-handed steering
- Left foot accelerator

## Other Changes To Your Car

Whether you drive or are always a passenger, an OT can also recommend changes that make it easier for you to get in and out of the car. These changes might include:

- Swivel seat so you don't need to twist
- Handy-bar to help you stand up (works like the armrest on a chair)
- Hoists or ramps to make it easy to put your wheelchair into the car
- Roof mount to store the wheelchair on top of your car while you drive

Even if you are not a driver, it is recommended that you see an OT to ensure you get the right equipment and modifications. It is important to make sure that all modifications comply with Australian safety and design laws.



## Individual Help

- Ask your doctor for a referral to see an [Occupational Therapist \(OT\)](#)
- Contact the [Independent Living Centre](#) or 1300 885 886
- View the [NDIS Information on Vehicle Modifications](#)

*Thank you to Robin Lovell from Swinburne University for reviewing this fact sheet.*

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