



Vision tips for safe driving

People must be able to see properly to drive safely

To be able to drive safely, people need to be able to see clearly into the distance, as well as see what is going on around them.

Seeing into the distance:

Seeing clearly into the distance is known as visual acuity. When people apply for or renew their licence, their vision will be tested and measured by a scale which considers the size of the letters they can read on the test chart, and at what distance.

There are minimum visual acuity requirements for different classes of licences. Requirements can vary between states in Australia.

Seeing what is going on around:

A person's ability to see what is going on around them, outside their direct line of vision, is known as their visual field.

To drive effectively, people need to be able to see things, such as pedestrians and vehicles, which are outside of their direct line of vision.

Most people have a visual field of around 170 degrees. A span of 120 degrees is legally acceptable for most licences. People driving heavy vehicles or buses may require a higher vision span.

If people suspect that their visual acuity or visual field is declining, they are encouraged to visit their family doctor, an optometrist, or an Ophthalmologist for an eye examination.

Other eye concerns:

Colour Vision – people with colour vision defects can usually manage to drive, particularly if the condition is mild and they are aware of the potential limitations. Some states do not allow people with defective colour vision to drive certain vehicles, such as taxis.

Night Vision – Eye diseases such as cataract or retinal disorders can impede night vision. People with night vision difficulties should avoid driving after dark.

Double Vision – Double vision can lead to accidents when driving. People experiencing this condition should not drive.

People have a responsibility to themselves and others on the road to ensure they can see properly when they are driving. Contact your local Road and Traffic Authority for further information.