

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DRIVER REHABILITATION PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED DRIVING QUESTIONS

- 1. Is there a website where I can get more information about the driving program?** Yes, for general information go to www.rancho.org, and check under Patient Programs and Services / Driver Education and Training Program. We provide adaptive driver training for those with disabilities or functional impairments and for medically at-risk seniors. The hours are from 9-4:30 on weekdays. The staff includes an occupational therapist, gerontologist, licensed driving instructors, and certified driver rehabilitation specialist. We have a driving simulator and a modified car. The program is administered by the Rancho Research Institute.
- 2. Where are you located?** 7601 E. Imperial Highway, 900 Bldg., Room 88A, Downey, CA 90242.
- 3. Who can I contact if I have more questions?** Contact our Driver Rehabilitation staff at: Phone: (562) 385-7081, Fax: (562) 385-6167, Email: DriverTraining@rancho.org.
- 4. Where do I park?** There is free parking outside the building including many designated parking spaces for people with a DMV Disabled Persons parking placard. Access Services and the bus have stops on Rancho grounds.
- 5. Do I need my own car for the driver training?** No, the program has a modified car for training. The driving instructor has dual gas and brake pedals on the passenger side.
- 6. How can I get an appointment if I am NOT a Rancho patient?** We need a **Community Referral or Prescription** signed by a physician because we are a hospital-based program. The physician's personal prescription should include "Occupational Therapy Driving Evaluation and Training". Other medical information, including current list of medications and/or recent **Occupational and/or Physical Therapy** notes are always appreciated. Also, a **Client Information** form is needed. Once the completed paperwork is received, we can schedule an appointment.
- 7. How can I get an appointment if I am a Rancho patient?** The next time you have an appointment in clinic with your doctor or therapist, let them know you are interested in driving and a

referral can be generated. Once we receive the referral, a letter will be sent to you about our classes to attend or how to schedule an individual evaluation.

8. **How much will it cost?** Health insurances do not cover the driver training program. Please contact the program regarding the costs.

9. **How many sessions will be needed?** After the evaluation, we will determine the number of training sessions needed using the driving simulator or in the car. The number of sessions depends on your previous driving experience, your ability to use the driving equipment safely, and the severity of your disability or injury.

10. **What does the evaluation consist of?** The **OT clinical evaluation** is done in the therapy office. The OT evaluates vision (far/near acuity, side vision, scanning/tracking, center alignment, depth perception, etc.); cognition/thinking ability (processing speed, visual memory, problem solving, short term memory, etc.); the function of the arms and legs (strength, sensation, range of motion, coordination, reaction time, tone/spasticity, etc.); and medical conditions/medications. We also assess the importance of mobility in your life, access to your occupations or important activities, alternative transportation and funding issues. The **on-road evaluation** is done in the training car. Transfers in and out of the car, equipment loading, and comfortable fit in the vehicle are assessed. Assessment of appropriate driving equipment is done along with training of safe driving skills.

11. **Do I still need to go to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) if I get tested with Rancho?** Yes, you may still need to go to the DMV if you were notified by them for a re-examination or license renewal. We are **not** the DMV. We can prepare you for the DMV road test. You may be able to use our modified vehicle for the DMV test, depending on our availability.

12. **Do you use a driving simulator?** Yes, the driving simulator is used to practice pre-driving skills in the clinic such as sequencing, speed control, lane alignment, problem solving, reaction time, etc. as well as using some of the adaptive driving equipment.

13. **Who does the evaluation and training?** The OT/Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist does the clinical evaluation in the office. The Driving Instructor along with the OT/Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist will provide the driver training in our training vehicles.

14. **What type of driving equipment do you have?** Our training car is equipped with a left and right mechanical hand control, a right crossover turn signal extension, and reduced effort steering. There is a left foot accelerator for those who cannot use their right foot for driving. The vehicle has a variety of steering devices, like a spinner knob, tri-pin, or post, depending on the need. A chest harness is used for those with weak trunk muscles. There are a variety of different mirrors, cushions, and switches available.

15. **Shall I buy my vehicle now before the evaluation and do the training in my vehicle?** **NO**. Do not go out and buy a vehicle or driving equipment. It is recommended that you wait until after the evaluation and training are completed so that you do not buy the wrong things. Most certified vehicle vendors do not install equipment without proof of training. Also, do not buy a vehicle until you have your permanent wheelchair.

16. I am not interested in driving but I need to ride as a passenger in a vehicle. Can you help with this? Yes. We can do passenger evaluations and make recommendations regarding what types of vehicles are best.

17. Do I buy my equipment from your driving program? No. We write out a list of recommended vehicle modifications and equipment with a list of vendors to go to.

18. I will never drive alone. Can my family member help me get into the car and load my wheelchair? The DMV requires you to be independent with transfers into the vehicle and independent with loading equipment to be an independent driver. If you are unable to transfer independently then another option might be to use a van with a wheelchair ramp and drive while sitting in your wheelchair.

19. If I come to your program, will you report me to the DMV? The therapist and driving instructor provide their evaluations and recommendations to the physician who referred you. In California, it is the law and physician's responsibility to notify the DMV and recommend a re-examination if you have a reportable medical condition that might affect safe driving. The physician not the therapist or driving instructor does the reporting.

20. The DMV gave me a 5 page Driver Medical Evaluation Form. Can you fill this out? This form is issued by the DMV Driver Safety Office, a separate branch of the DMV. Your driving status needs to be re-examined and more medical information from your physician is needed. The therapists at the driving program cannot fill this out. Medical Records cannot fill this out. Only your Physician, Nurse Practitioner or Physician Assistant can complete this form. An informal hearing (in-person interview or telephone interview) will follow and the DMV Driver Safety Office will make a determination of the next steps.

21. I'm not sure if my license is valid or not. How can I find out? You can go to your local DMV office and ask for a print out of your license status. This costs about \$5.00 per page. You can also call the DMV at **(800) 777-0133** or obtain your record online at www.dmv.ca.gov/ Online Services/More Online Services/Driver Record Request (the cost is \$2.00).

22. My license was suspended. How do I get it back? You need to go to your local DMV, fill out an application for a license/permit, pay \$34.00 for a new license/permit, and pay \$55.00 for the suspension fee (costs subject to change). You may be required to take the vision and written test. You can get the free DMV handbook at the DMV office. If you go online at www.dmv.ca.gov/, you can get information about applying for a license and information about the written and road tests.

23. My license was suspended and I'm not sure if I want to invest in all the work to get my license back. Can you see me for a driving evaluation without a license? We can see you for the OT clinical evaluation. You can have pre-driving skill training using equipment on the driving simulator. No on-road evaluation is permitted without a valid license or permit.

24. If I fail my driving evaluation with you, does this mean I can't drive? If you do not do well the first time, you may be asked to return. We would need to assess learning skills or explore different driving equipment. It is recommended that you do not drive on your own until training is completed or you are cleared by the DMV. Alternative transportation may be explored.

25. I don't drive on the freeway. Do I have to drive on the freeway to pass the DMV drive test? No. You may qualify for a restricted license, including no freeway or no night driving.

26. Does your program train new drivers? Yes, we train new drivers. If you are under 18 years of age, our program **will not count** for the mandatory 6 hours of driver training needed to get your license. You must get these hours from a DMV licensed driving school. We do provide some driver education, assistance with sample written tests, and can check your vision to see if you can pass the DMV required 20/40 far vision test.

27. What If I have more questions about the Driver Rehabilitation Program, about getting my license, or about the DMV procedures? You can attend Driver Training Support Group via the Wellness Center, which we offer to the community, generally the 2nd and 4th Mondays each month from, 1-2:00pm