

SENIORS' MANDATORY DRIVERS' TESTS

The office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles requires that senior drivers as of the age of 80 and every two years thereafter undergo drivers' testing.

A reference herein to OSMV is to the Office of the Superintendent of Motor Vehicles. A reference to COSCO is to the Council of Senior Citizens' Organizations of B.C. (BCITRA's website has a link to COSCO's website.) The rest of this article consists of three parts, each of which describes a method of testing seniors:

The Driver Medical Exam Report,
The DriveABLE test, and
The On-Road Evaluation.

- **The Driver Medical Exam Report.** The OSMV sends a letter to drivers nearing the age of 80 and every two years thereafter requiring them to arrange a doctor's appointment re testing their cognitive faculties. Neither the fee (anywhere from \$50 and up) nor the tests are standardized. The doctor completes a Driver Medical Exam Report based on the results of the tests. These tests may include an eye examination and cognitive tests involving memory and reasoning. Fortunately, relatively few people fail. Not passing involves having to take the DriveABLE test.
- **The DriveABLE Test.** There is interesting information about the private individuals who devised this test. It is too much to cover here, but is available on the internet.

This test involves a computer with a touch-sensitive screen and some buttons, and takes about an hour to complete. It was designed to test for memory, attention span, reaction time, spatial judgment, and decision-making. The developers claim that it is scientifically valid, although some other sources dispute this claim. (More information is available on the internet.)

A medical professional working for a private company – Insight Driving Solutions -- administers the test. This company is under contract to the OSMV (not ICBC). Originally, seniors had to bring along a licenced friend, because on failure the tester would take away the driver's licence.

COSCO, in dealing with the OSMV, has effected a number of changes to alleviate any stress, particularly for seniors confronted with a computer for the first time. Seniors may now have a chance to practice, and a tester can no longer take away licences. COSCO has also established a workshop for seniors to help prepare themselves for this test. (See COSCO's website re Workshops.)

Finally, failed seniors may now take an "on-road evaluation."

- **The On-Road Evaluation.** If all else fails, a driver can (re)take the road test. Having been accident-free does not ensure that you will necessarily pass this test. The OSMV claims that the tester will not give drivers illegal directions. There are, however, stories of drivers being failed over rather trivial infractions. If you do have to undergo the road test, you are urged to get a copy of ICBC's "Learn to Drive Smart" from a Motor Vehicle Branch. The manual contains a wealth of reminders, tips, and information that every driver would do well to study. Some relevant areas include:

Signage (7 pages!),

Road markings (3 pages). The tester is sure to expose a driver to some of these, especially Reserved and Bicycle lanes,

Right-of-way,

Roundabouts,

Turning lanes and reserve lanes,

Passing and merging,

....and so forth for 160 pages.

There you have it. I hope this article proves helpful.

Note: The author of this article is not opposed to the testing of the elderly or where appropriate to the revoking of a driver's license.

Peter Abel, July, 2013