

# Fitness to drive with cardiovascular disease

No. 2017/19

## Executive summary

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Health Council of the Netherlands



Having cardiovascular disease may affect your medical fitness to drive. European legislation on this has recently been changed. On request from the Minister of Infrastructure and Water management (I&W), the Health Council of the Netherlands has assessed what this means for Dutch legislation.

The specific requirements for medical fitness to drive for people with cardiovascular disease are laid down in Chapter 6 of the Dutch Fitness Criteria Regulations 2000 (REG2000). That chapter needs an update: the scientific knowledge has changed and treatment options

have improved. In 2013, an expert group from the European Commission reviewed ten types of disorders for each driving licence group to determine which revisions are needed in the European driving licence directive. In 2016, the recommendations of the expert group led to changes in this directive.

The Fitness to Drive Committee of the Health Council has assessed the consequences of those changes for Dutch legislation. The Committee supports most of the changes and advises maintaining the format and formulation of the European expert group when processing those

adjustments in the REG2000, which is more specific than the European directive. For some disorders, this will lead to a relaxation of the requirements. For cardiac valve defects, the Health Council advises maintaining the European directive, which is stricter than the European expert group on that point. The only disorder for which the Committee advises not adjusting the current regulation is congenital heart defects.

The table below summarises the changes in the European directive based on the recommendations of the expert group and the advice from the Health Council.

	Recommendations from the expert group changes in the European directive	Advice from the Health Council
Heart failure	Criteria driving licence group 1 more flexible for heart failure class III	Follow recommendations from the expert group
Ischemic heart disease	More specific criteria (distinguish more disorders) Criteria driving licence group 2 more flexible for stable angina pectoris	Follow recommendations from the expert group Maintain less specific EU rules for acute coronary syndrome
Structural and electrical cardiomyopathy	More specific criteria and supplemented with LQTS and Brugada syndrome Criteria driving licence group 2 more flexible for hypertrophic cardiomyopathy	Follow recommendations from the expert group
Cardiac valve defects	More detailed criteria European regulations more stringent than expert group, fewer exceptions for driving licence group 1	Maintain more stringent European regulations
Congenital defects	Expert group would like to shorten the maximum eligibility period for driving licences European directive does not prescribe a maximum period	Do not follow recommendations from the expert group Maintain current period of maximum ten years
Arrhythmias	More specific criteria (distinguish more disorders)	Follow recommendations from the expert group
Ventricular arrhythmia	More specific criteria	Follow recommendations from the expert group
ICD	Expert group: apply time limits for driving impairment European directive: no time limits	Follow time limits from expert group
Blood pressure	Criteria more flexible	Follow recommendations from the expert group
Peripheral vascular disorders	Added	Follow recommendations from the expert group



The Health Council of the Netherlands, established in 1902, is an independent scientific advisory body. Its remit is “to advise the government and Parliament on the current level of knowledge with respect to public health issues and health (services) research...” (Section 22, Health Act).

The Health Council receives most requests for advice from the Ministers of Health, Welfare and Sport, Infrastructure and Water Management, Social Affairs and Employment, and Economic Affairs and Climate Policy. The Council can publish advisory reports on its own initiative. It usually does this in order to ask attention for developments or trends that are thought to be relevant to government policy.

Most Health Council reports are prepared by multidisciplinary committees of Dutch or, sometimes, foreign experts, appointed in a personal capacity. The reports are available to the public.

This publication can be downloaded from [www.healthcouncil.nl](http://www.healthcouncil.nl).

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