

Driving and Short Stature

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Short stature refers to those individuals notably below average height. Short stature can be present amongst the general population, or it can be the result of a specific diagnosis or condition. Vehicle choice and needs will vary from person to person.

A comprehensive driving evaluation completed by a driver rehabilitation specialist is recommended to assess how your short stature may affect your vehicle fit, and to offer recommendations for customized solutions to improve your safety.

A driver rehabilitation specialist can provide customized measurements in the vehicle to help that you have a safe position, and to offer recommendations for vehicle selection and adjustments. Recommendations can also be made for adaptations as deemed necessary and assist in collaboration with the installer. Since characteristics and dimensions of vehicles vary, it is important that the individual's fit be assessed in the vehicle owned or being considered for purchase.

Important considerations include:

- Vehicle fit for sufficient line of sight above the steering wheel. Torso height will also need to be considered as line of sight is raised to ensure legs do not interfere with the steering wheel
- Distance between chest and steering wheel for airbag safety
- Head restraint position and steering wheel tilt
- Leg length and positioning for accelerator/brake management
- Upper body limb length for steering wheel use and access to secondary controls (i.e. turn signal, wipers, temperature controls...)
- Ease and safety of getting in and out of the vehicle

MODIFICATION EXAMPLES:

- Examples of modifications can include:
- Pedal extensions and/or hand controls
- Emergency brake extension handle
- Steering wheel size, extension, or effort required to turn steering wheel
- Custom seating/cushion solutions
- Seatbelt positioning solutions
- Back-up camera



To locate a driver rehabilitation specialist in your area or if you are interested in becoming a driver rehabilitation specialist, please contact:

ADED – The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists
200 First Avenue NW, Suite 505 • Hickory, NC 28601
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WARNING SIGNS

- Difficulty reaching the pedals and/or having to reach with your toes to depress the brake or accelerator pedal
- Difficulty seeing the roadway ahead or feeling too low in seat (even with seat at max height). Optimal line of sight is 3+ inches above the steering wheel.
- Seated too close to the steering wheel (optimal distance is 10+ inches between chest and steering wheel)
- Difficulty turning the steering wheel

If the short stature is related to an underlying condition, other areas may need to be assessed by the driver rehabilitation specialist.

Note: Your state/province may require restrictions for modification items. Please check with your driver rehabilitation specialist and/or local Motor Vehicle Department.

If you or someone you know is having any of the above warning signs, a driver evaluation may be indicated. A driver rehabilitation specialist with knowledge about medical conditions can provide a comprehensive evaluation to determine one's ability to drive.

“By consulting with a driver rehabilitation specialist before you buy, you can learn what adaptive equipment you need now or may need in the future, avoid paying for equipment you don't need, and learn about opportunities for public and private financial assistance.” (NHTSA, 2021).

References:

National Highway Traffic Safety Association, NHTSA. (2021). *Adapting Your Vehicle*. Retrieved December 13, 2021, from <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/adapted-vehicles#cost-savings-1486>

CarFit Brochure (2020). Retrieved December 14, 2021, from https://www.car-fit.org/downloads/2020_CarFit_Brochure_EN.pdf