

440.00P Driver Evaluation and Training Procedure

April 1, 2002

See corresponding policy: 440.00 Driver Evaluation and Training Policy

Note: Vocational Rehabilitation procedures provide internal guidance for ACCES-VR staff only and create no procedural or substantive rights for any individual or group.

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Description

Driver Evaluation assesses whether an individual with a disability has the potential to drive safely and whether adaptive equipment or vehicle modifications are necessary. If vehicle modifications are required, a part of the driver evaluation will be a vehicle consultation to advise individuals as to which vehicles can accommodate their specific needs. Therefore, individuals should be strongly advised not to purchase a new or replacement vehicle until they have completed driver evaluation.

Driver Training instructs an individual on how to safely operate a vehicle. This service may be provided to new drivers or to experienced drivers who have had a change of functioning due to onset or progression of a disability. When training involves adaptive driving equipment or vehicle modifications the equipment used must be comparable to that which is recommended for the individual. A successful outcome of driver training occurs when the individual obtains or retains a state driver's license with any appropriate restrictions, so that he or she can achieve the employment goal.

Implications and Considerations Prior to Services

Counselors need to determine whether the individual requires these services to overcome a transportation barrier to achieve his or her employment goal. The availability and suitability of public transportation or other means of transportation should be considered.

The counselor should consider whether driving is medically contra-indicated. Conditions related to loss of consciousness, medications, impaired cognitive functioning, deficits in visual processing, etc., could all be factors in the appropriateness of a referral.

ACCES-VR must verify that an appropriate vehicle will be available to the individual at the conclusion of services. All individuals need to sign a Vehicle Availability Agreement (VES 730), for the record of services.

Discussion with the individual should cover the options for obtaining and maintaining a vehicle, including the possible use of a PASS or by setting aside earnings.

If the individual is eligible for driver evaluation and training services through other sources such as a school district, Worker's Compensation, the Veteran's Administration, or no-fault insurance, such benefits must be explored first. Services should not, however, be unnecessarily delayed while trying to obtain support from such other sources.

Driver training is subject to economic need considerations except when being provided at a regionally accredited adaptive driver training center. ACCES-VR does not consider available resources at other driver training providers if the cost to ACCES-VR does not exceed the cost at the regionally accredited adaptive driver training center closest to the individual and provides the training appropriate to the individual's needs as identified in the IPE.

Services

Referral

The referral package for driver evaluation and training services needs to include medical, and when necessary, psychological information that accurately describes the individual's current functional limitations. If an individual has a progressive disability and/or there has been a change in functional limitations, medical reports should reflect the individual's current functional level.

Assessment/Evaluation

Assessment is used to determine whether an individual has the potential to become a safe and independent driver and, when applicable, to assist the individual and ACCES-VR determine the vehicle and factory equipment of a new or used vehicle to best meet the needs of the individual with a disability.

Driver evaluations, for individuals with significant physical or cognitive limitations, are to be completed by an approved Driver Rehabilitation Specialist. When appropriate the Driver Rehabilitation Specialist will work with the individual, individual's physician, and if needed, the Medical Review Unit of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), to obtain any required DMV medical clearance for driving.

A driver evaluation includes both clinical and behind the wheel assessments.

Counselors need to make every effort to find and refer to programs that have the equipment that is believed to be appropriate for the individual's unique needs.

Generally, a vehicle consultation is completed as part of the driver evaluation to either determine whether the vehicle the individual owns will meet his or her needs, or to identify the type of new vehicle which will meet his or her needs. If the consumer has not purchased a vehicle this step should be done to assure the purchase of an appropriate vehicle.

It may be appropriate to offer driver evaluation services to a driver already licensed and experienced with adaptive driving equipment if a person experiences difficulty driving due to changes in functional capacity.

Driver Training

An individual may need driver training whether he or she is a new driver or an experienced driver with new limitations. Driver training, which requires adaptive driving equipment, may be authorized to a driving school approved by the DMV. Individuals with significant physical or cognitive limitations must obtain the driver training from a ACCES-VR approved Driver Rehabilitation Specialist.

While adaptive driver training is generally provided in conjunction with the individual's first experience with adaptive driving equipment and vehicle modifications, there may be other occasions for this service. Referrals may be appropriate if there has been a change in an individual's limitations due to progression of disability or following an assessment that reveals the need for different driving equipment than the person has been using.

Some programs have an agreement with ACCES-VR for Out of Town Driver Training and ACCES-VR is to follow the case service code and fee per that agreement.

New drivers also need to complete a one time, five-hour pre-licensing course which may be paid for by ACCES-VR. DMV approves specific driving instructors to offer this program.

A prerequisite that must be met before a driver training can be authorized is that adaptive driver training may be provided only if a driver evaluation report recommends training.

Driver Evaluation and Training for High School Students

School districts that offer driver evaluation and training services to their students are responsible for providing those services under equal access provisions of ADA and 504 to students with disabilities. Schools may not deny an otherwise qualified student with a disability access to driver education solely because reasonable accommodations to the vehicle are necessary. However, students with disabilities are subject to the same waiting lists and other possible restrictions as are other students. If a school district refuses to provide access to these services, ACCES-VR may assist with the initial cost

so that services are not delayed, and then ask the student and the family to work with the school district to alter the decision.

ACCES-VR may offer driver evaluation and training services to students requiring this service if their school district does not have a driver training program.

Service Limits/Case Service Codes

Adaptive driving instruction and retraining services are intended to insure that individuals are able to operate motor vehicles safely and meet the licensure requirements of the DMV. It is not intended to provide driving experience beyond this skill level. In addition, individuals who do not show appropriate progress within a reasonable length of time must be reevaluated to determine if driving is an appropriate goal.

Code	Description
140	Driver Evaluation - to assess whether an individual has the potential to drive safely and whether adaptive equipment or vehicle modifications are necessary. Maximum of 10 hours.
141	Driver Evaluation-Special - to be used only when a special agreement with a vendor is in place. Maximum of 10 hours.
142	Travel for Evaluation - paid to prior approved vendors for travel over 20 miles.
870	Driver Training - to provide instruction to an individual on how to operate a vehicle safely. <i>Maximum for initial authorization 20 hours. Additional 20 hours may be authorized, 10 hours at a time with written justification.</i>
871	Out of Town Driver Training - to be used only when there is a special agreement with a vendor in place.
872	Travel for Driver Training - paid to prior approved vendors for travel over 20 miles.
875	Pre-licensing Class - a mandatory, by DMV, five-hour classroom course for new drivers. There is a pre-approved flat fee set by DMV.