

Driving With Hand Controls

A State-by-State Guide for Disabled Drivers

Compiled by Wheelchair Wellness | Last updated: May 30, 2026 | Informational only — verify with your state DMV

READ THIS FIRST: Critical Disclaimer

This document is a starting point, not legal advice.

I am not an attorney. I am not your DMV. The information in this document was compiled from publicly available sources — official state DMV/DOR websites, published state administrative codes and statutes, NHTSA reports, CDRS provider documentation, and disability advocacy resources — but state policies change, examiners apply discretion, and there are specific situations where what's written here will not match what your state DMV actually tells you.

Before you spend a dollar on a CDRS program, install hand controls, take a road test, or make any other decision based on this document, you must call your state DMV's medical/driver review unit and confirm the requirements for YOUR specific situation. The phone numbers in each state entry are the place to start.

If a state DMV employee tells you something different than what is written here, **BELIEVE THEM, NOT THIS DOCUMENT**. Then please email me so I can update this resource for the next person.

roll@wheelchairwellness.com

IMPORTANT: Phone numbers and website URLs were verified as of the date on the cover page. Government phone numbers change. If a number listed here is disconnected, search your state's DMV website directly or call the main DMV line. Do not skip the verification step because a phone number didn't work.

Why this document exists

There is a genuine information gap in the disability community around driving with hand controls. People — especially young adults aging out of pediatric care, and people newly injured — are paying thousands of dollars for CDRS programs and equipment evaluations that they may not legally need in their state, simply because no one has told them otherwise.

Driver rehabilitation programs are valuable. For many people they are essential, and in some states they are legally required. But in other states, a person with full upper-body function, an SCI below T6, and a physician's clearance can complete a road test in a vehicle equipped with hand controls and have a restriction added to their license — without paying \$1,500–\$5,000 for a formal program.

This document tries to tell you, state by state, which category your state falls into and who to call to confirm. The honest answer for many states is 'it depends on the case' — but even that is useful information, because it tells you to call before paying for anything.

This is not just my impression. When NHTSA researchers tried to compile state data on driver-license restrictions related to adaptive driving aids, they reported that the effort did not produce enough information to estimate national adaptive-device usage. In other words, a federal agency itself documented that this information is not centrally tracked. (See Resources for the citation.)

A note about where 'requirements' come from

When you search for information about hand controls and CDRS programs online, you will notice that many mobility dealer websites use nearly identical language stating that 'new users require training with a Driving Rehabilitation Specialist.' This language comes from NMEDA (National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association) industry guidance

for their certified dealers — it is not state law.

This matters because if you Google 'do I need a CDRS in [your state],' dealer websites are often the top results. They sound authoritative. They use words like 'required.' But they are describing industry best practices, not legal requirements. Hospitals running driving programs and dealers selling equipment both benefit financially from you believing a CDRS program is always required.

This does not mean CDRS programs are worthless — they are clinically excellent and essential for many drivers, especially those with complex needs. But 'clinically recommended' and 'legally required in your state' are two different things, and this document tries to help you figure out which applies to you.

What every state has in common

These things are true across all 50 states and DC:

- You cannot be denied the opportunity to apply for a driver's license because of disability. (This is federal law under the ADA.) But you can be issued a license with restrictions based on your need for adaptive equipment.
- Every state can require a road test in a vehicle equipped with the equipment you intend to use. Whether the state will administer that test in a vehicle with portable (clamp-on) hand controls vs. requiring professionally installed equipment varies — sometimes by state, sometimes by individual examiner.
- Once your license has a hand-controls restriction, you are legally required to drive only vehicles that have the prescribed equipment. Driving a non-equipped vehicle is a license violation that can result in citation, fines, and potential insurance claim denial after a crash.
- Most state DMVs have a 'Medical Advisory Board' (MAB), 'Medical Review Unit,' or equivalent — a staffed unit that reviews cases of drivers with medical conditions or disabilities. The MAB can require additional evaluation, including a CDRS program, in any state, if it deems the case complex enough.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) — the state-funded service for people with disabilities pursuing employment — can usually pay for a CDRS evaluation, hand-controls equipment, and (in many states) some vehicle modification costs. How much you pay can depend on income; see the 'How to Pay' section. Each state's VR contact is listed in this document.
- Vehicle manufacturers offer mobility rebates toward adaptive equipment on new vehicles, applied for through the dealer. Always ask about current programs — and test getting yourself and your wheelchair in and out before you buy. (See 'How to Pay'.)

Categories used in this document

For each state, I've categorized the likelihood that a CDRS program will be required as one of:

YES (published process) — There is a documented, formalized state process that requires a CDRS evaluation and/or behind-the-wheel training before adaptive equipment can be added to a license. Examples: Maryland, Virginia, DC, Pennsylvania.

NO formal CDRS requirement in published administrative code — The state's published administrative code or statute establishes that restrictions are based on skills-exam performance and does not include a CDRS requirement. Important: 'NO formal requirement' does not mean a CDRS program can never be required in your case — the Medical Advisory Board can still order one if your case is referred to it. Example: Texas (37 TAC §15.57).

LIKELY — The state has a strong Medical Review process that, in practice, refers most adaptive-equipment drivers to a CDRS, even if not statutorily required. Examples: New Jersey, New York, Wisconsin, Ohio, Massachusetts.

CASE-BY-CASE — No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program for adaptive equipment licensing. In these states, whether you'll need a CDRS program depends on

your specific situation, your physician's input, and the medical review unit's discretion. Most states fall here. 'Case-by-case' should be read as: call and ask before spending money.

A note on how 'YES' is sourced

There are two kinds of 'YES' states. In some, the DMV itself publishes the requirement — Virginia, for example, posts its CDRS-referral policy on its own website. In others (parts of the Maryland, DC, and Pennsylvania processes), the requirement is documented mainly by driver-rehab providers and hospitals describing the de facto, state-administered process rather than by a directly-quotable state regulation. Both reflect a real process, but the second kind rests on provider documentation. Where that distinction matters, the state entry says so. A few states that are sometimes described online as 'requiring' a CDRS turned out, on inspection, to rest only on provider language — those are listed as LIKELY, not YES.

Most states here are labeled CASE-BY-CASE — not because they all work identically, but because most DMVs don't publish a clear policy, so the honest answer is 'call and ask before spending money.' As community members report their real experiences, some of these may move to firmer categories over time.

How to use this document

1. Find your state in the Quick Reference table (next page), then read its full entry in the alphabetical section.
2. Call the medical review / driver review unit phone number listed for your state.
3. Ask the seven questions in the 'Questions to ask when you call' section. Take notes.
4. If you can, ask the agent for an email or a link to where their answers are documented in writing.
5. Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation in your state if you have any employment goal at all (including future employment for students). VR can save you thousands of dollars.
6. If a CDRS evaluation is required (or even if it isn't but you want one), check whether your physician's prescription, your insurance, or VR will cover it before paying out of pocket.

Quick Reference: All States at a Glance

This table is for fast scanning. The detailed state entries follow.

State	CDRS Program?	Medical Unit Phone
ALABAMA	LIKELY	(334) 242-4400 (Driver License Division)
ALASKA	CASE-BY-CASE	(907) 269-5551 (Driver Services / Medical)
ARIZONA	CASE-BY-CASE	(602) 255-0072 (Customer Service); Medical Review via website
ARKANSAS	CASE-BY-CASE	(501) 682-7059 (Driver Control / Medical)
CALIFORNIA	CASE-BY-CASE	(800) 777-0133 (DMV); Driver Safety handles medical locally
COLORADO	CASE-BY-CASE	(303) 205-5600 (DMV); Driver Control handles medical
CONNECTICUT	LIKELY	(860) 263-5700 (DMV); Driver Services handles medical
DELAWARE	CASE-BY-CASE	(302) 744-2500 (DMV)
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	YES (published process)	(202) 737-4404 (DC DMV)
FLORIDA	CASE-BY-CASE	(850) 617-2000; Medical Review via local Driver License office
GEORGIA	CASE-BY-CASE	(678) 413-8400; Medical Affairs Section
HAWAII	CASE-BY-CASE	Honolulu DMV: (808) 768-9100; other counties vary
IDAHO	CASE-BY-CASE	(208) 584-4343 (Driver Services / Medical Records Unit)
ILLINOIS	LIKELY	(217) 785-3013 (Medical Review Unit)
INDIANA	CASE-BY-CASE	(888) 692-6841 (BMV); Driver Programs / Medical Unit
IOWA	CASE-BY-CASE	(515) 244-9124 (Office of Driver Services)
KANSAS	LIKELY	(785) 296-3671; KDOR_Medical.VisionUnit@ks.gov
KENTUCKY	CASE-BY-CASE	(502) 564-1257 (Driver Licensing)
LOUISIANA	CASE-BY-CASE	(225) 925-6146 (OMV)
MAINE	CASE-BY-CASE	(207) 624-9000 ext. 52119 (Medical Review Coordinator)
MARYLAND	YES (published process)	(410) 768-7513 (MVA Medical Advisory Board)
MASSACHUSETTS	LIKELY	(857) 368-8020 (Medical Affairs Branch)
MICHIGAN	LIKELY	(517) 335-0651 (Driver Assessment)
MINNESOTA	CASE-BY-CASE	(651) 296-2025 (DVS); Driver Evaluation Unit
MISSISSIPPI	CASE-BY-CASE	(601) 987-1224 (Driver Records)
MISSOURI	CASE-BY-CASE	(573) 751-4600 (Driver License Bureau)
MONTANA	CASE-BY-CASE	(406) 444-3933 (MVD)
NEBRASKA	CASE-BY-CASE	(402) 471-3861 (DMV)
NEVADA	CASE-BY-CASE	(775) 684-4368 (Driver License Division)
NEW HAMPSHIRE	CASE-BY-CASE	(603) 227-4030 (DMV)
NEW JERSEY	LIKELY	(609) 292-7500 (MVC); Driver Review Unit
NEW MEXICO	CASE-BY-CASE	(888) 683-4636 (NM MVD)

State	CDRS Program?	Medical Unit Phone
NEW YORK	LIKELY	(518) 474-0774 (DMV)
NORTH CAROLINA	LIKELY	(919) 861-3809 (Medical Review)
NORTH DAKOTA	CASE-BY-CASE	(701) 328-2600 (Driver License); Medical Coordinator
OHIO	LIKELY	(844) 644-6268 (BMV)
OKLAHOMA	CASE-BY-CASE	(405) 425-2196 (Senior Medical Officer / Medical Review)
OREGON	LIKELY	(503) 945-5000 (DMV); At-Risk Driver / Medical Programs
PENNSYLVANIA	YES (published process)	(800) 932-4600 (PennDOT); Medical Unit
RHODE ISLAND	CASE-BY-CASE	(401) 462-4368 (DMV Operator Control)
SOUTH CAROLINA	CASE-BY-CASE	(803) 896-5000 (SCDMV)
SOUTH DAKOTA	CASE-BY-CASE	(605) 773-6883 (Driver Licensing)
TENNESSEE	CASE-BY-CASE	(615) 251-5219 (Driver Improvement)
TEXAS	NO formal CDRS req. in admin code	(512) 424-2600 (Texas DPS Customer Service)
UTAH	CASE-BY-CASE	(801) 965-4437 (DLD)
VERMONT	CASE-BY-CASE	(802) 828-2000 (DMV)
VIRGINIA	YES (published DMV policy)	(804) 497-7100 (Medical Review Services)
WASHINGTON	CASE-BY-CASE	(360) 902-3900 (DOL)
WEST VIRGINIA	CASE-BY-CASE	(304) 558-3900 (DMV); Medical Coordinator
WISCONSIN	LIKELY	(608) 266-2327 (Medical Review & Fitness)
WYOMING	CASE-BY-CASE	(307) 777-4810 (Driver Services)

The Seven Questions to Ask Your State DMV

These are the questions to ask whoever picks up the phone at your state's medical review / driver review unit. The answers can save you thousands of dollars and can protect you from getting your license revoked or your insurance denied later.

Take notes. If you can, ask for the agent's name and ID number, and ask them to email you a summary or a link to the official policy. The biggest single source of bad outcomes in this whole process is verbal advice that the DMV later denies giving.

1. I have [a spinal cord injury / cerebral palsy / spina bifida / etc.]. Do I need to be cleared by a Medical Advisory Board, or just by my own physician, before I can be tested for a license with hand controls?
2. Will the DMV / driver examiner administer a road test in a vehicle equipped with portable (clamp-on) hand controls? Or do you require professionally installed equipment for the test?
3. What restriction code will appear on my license, and exactly what equipment does that code require?
4. Is a Certified Driver Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) evaluation required by state law, or is it only required if the Medical Advisory Board orders it?
5. What forms does my physician need to complete, and where do I send them?
6. If I already have a regular driver's license from before my injury / disability, what is the process for adding a hand-controls restriction?
7. Can I get a written copy of your answers, or a link to the official policy on your website?

Why each question matters

Question 1 (medical review): Tells you whether your state's Medical Advisory Board has to approve your file before anything else can happen. In states with strong MABs, nothing else matters until that step is done.

Question 2 (portable controls at road test): This is where most people lose money. If your state will administer a road test in a car with \$200 portable hand controls, you can save thousands on professional installation upfront. If they won't, you need to know that before you buy anything.

Question 3 (restriction code): Different states use different codes, and codes can be specific. You want to know what code will be on YOUR license, because that determines what equipment you're legally allowed to drive with.

Question 4 (CDRS by law vs. by case): The whole point of this document. If a CDRS program is statutorily required, you have to do it (or get VR to pay for it). If it's only required when the MAB says so, you might be able to skip it.

Question 5 (physician forms): Every state has different forms. Asking up front means your physician fills it out once, correctly, and you don't lose three weeks to the wrong paperwork.

Question 6 (existing license): If you had a license before your injury, the process is often simpler than for first-time drivers. The state already has you in their system.

Question 7 (written confirmation): Verbal advice from a DMV agent is worth less than the paper it isn't printed on. If you can get the same information in writing — even just a website link — that's leverage if anything goes wrong later.

How to Pay for All of This

Adaptive driving is expensive. The numbers below are realistic 2025/2026 ranges:

- CDRS clinical evaluation: \$300–\$800
- CDRS behind-the-wheel evaluation/training: \$100–\$200/hour, often 4–10 hours total
- Portable hand controls: \$200–\$500 (you install)
- Professional hand controls (push-rock, push-pull): \$1,500–\$3,500 installed
- Electronic hand controls (e.g., MPS/EMC systems): \$4,000–\$10,000+ installed
- Wheelchair-accessible van conversion: \$25,000–\$45,000 for the conversion alone, on top of vehicle cost

Funding sources, ranked by accessibility

1. Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) — the most overlooked, most powerful resource

VR eligibility is not means-tested — you do not have to be low-income to qualify. The door opens based on having a disability that is a barrier to employment and needing VR services to reach a work goal, including future employment for students still in school. What VR will pay toward services, however, can depend on income — see the callout below. VR can pay for: CDRS clinical and behind-the-wheel evaluation, behind-the-wheel training hours, hand-controls equipment, professional installation (in many cases), and sometimes vehicle modification toward a van conversion (less common, varies by state). VR phone numbers are listed in each state's entry. The application process can take weeks to months — start early.

IMPORTANT — VR and income (the financial needs test)

Federal rule 34 CFR §361.54 lets each state decide whether clients contribute to the cost of services based on income. Many states, including Missouri, do. Two things to know:

1) Certain services can NEVER be charged based on income — the assessment/evaluation, counseling and guidance, and referral. So the driver evaluation is typically covered for everyone, regardless of household income.

2) Other services — equipment, hand controls, modifications, and training hours — CAN be subject to your state's income test. For a minor, that test is based on the parents' income, which is why a teen from a higher-earning household may be told VR will cover the evaluation but not the equipment.

BUT: if the individual receives SSI or SSDI, federal law prohibits the state from applying any financial needs test at all — equipment and modifications should be covered regardless of income. Bottom line: apply even if you think you earn too much (the evaluation is usually free either way), and if you are on SSI/SSDI you are protected from the income test entirely. Ask your VR counselor exactly which services your state's needs test applies to, and get the answer in writing.

2. Workers' Compensation

If your disability is the result of a workplace injury, workers' comp typically covers driver evaluation, equipment, and vehicle modification — and at higher amounts than VR. If this applies to you, your workers' comp adjuster should be your first call.

3. Auto Insurance

If your disability is the result of a motor vehicle crash, the at-fault driver's auto insurance (or your own UM/UIM coverage) typically covers driver evaluation, equipment, and vehicle modification as part of your bodily injury settlement. Work with a personal injury attorney experienced in catastrophic injury cases.

4. Veterans Affairs

Eligible veterans with a qualifying service-connected disability can receive funding for adaptive equipment and vehicle modification through the VA's Automobile Allowance and Adaptive Equipment program (38 U.S.C. §§ 3901–3902). The automobile grant (a lump-sum payment) is a one-time benefit; the adaptive-equipment benefit is separate and can be provided more than once — generally on up to two vehicles per four-year period. Apply using VA Form 21-4502 through your VA regional office or a VSO.

5. Manufacturer Mobility Rebates

Most major automakers (Toyota, Ford, GM, Honda, Subaru, Stellantis/Chrysler-Dodge-Jeep-Ram, Nissan, Volvo, BMW, and others) offer reimbursement toward adaptive equipment installed on a new vehicle, usually applied for through the dealer within a set window after purchase. Amounts and rules change frequently, so rather than relying on a specific dollar figure: before you buy a new car, ask the dealer whether the manufacturer has a current mobility / adaptive-equipment reimbursement program and what it covers — and, most importantly, actually test getting yourself and your wheelchair in and out of that specific vehicle before you commit. A rebate is no help if the car doesn't fit your transfer. Confirm current program details directly with the automaker, since these programs change without notice.

6. Health Insurance and HSA/FSA

Most private health insurance does NOT cover driver rehabilitation evaluation, but it sometimes covers the OT clinical evaluation portion if billed correctly. HSA and FSA accounts can sometimes be used for adaptive equipment with a physician's letter of medical necessity — check with your plan administrator.

7. State sales tax exemption

Many states waive sales tax on adaptive equipment when you have a physician's prescription. Ask your mobility dealer about this.

State-by-State Detailed Entries

Listed alphabetically. Each entry includes a quick-reference table, what we know about the state's process, published sources where available, and the key contacts. See the box below for how the seven questions and community reports work across all states.

Reminder before you read these entries: What's written below is based on publicly available sources as of the date on the cover page. Policies change. Personnel change. Examiner discretion is real. Always call before you spend money. The phone number in each entry is the answer to most of your questions.

How to use each entry

For every state, ask the same seven questions when you call — they are listed once, with why each matters, in 'The Seven Questions to Ask Your State DMV' earlier in this guide. A 'What we've heard' note appears under a state only when someone has shared their real experience; most are still blank. To add yours, email roll@wheelchairwellness.com with your state, the year, whether a CDRS was required, your restriction code, and what you wish you'd known.

ALABAMA

Licensing Agency	Alabama Law Enforcement Agency (ALEA), Driver License Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(334) 242-4400 (Driver License Division)
Website	https://www.alea.gov/dps/driver-license
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	F = Hand Controls
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Alabama publishes restriction codes that include 'F - Hand Controls.' Alabama Administrative Code Chapter 760-X-20 governs medical standards for driver licensing.

Per published guidance from Alabama mobility dealers, new users of hand controls are generally expected to train with a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist who provides a written prescription, then test at the local DMV to have the restriction added. Existing drivers who already have the restriction code can have like equipment installed without re-evaluation.

Alabama's Medical Review Board can require a driving evaluation when a physician or vision specialist recommends one.

Important: Alabama does not appear to have a public statute that explicitly mandates a CDRS program for first-time hand-controls users — but in practice, MRB review and examiner discretion mean most adaptive-equipment drivers go through one. Note that the 'required' framing comes primarily from mobility dealer websites, not published state law.

Details and process

Form DL17 (Driver Condition or Behavior Report) is used to flag drivers for medical review.

Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services may help cover evaluation and equipment costs (vocational rehabilitation): <https://www.rehab.alabama.gov/>

ALASKA

Licensing Agency	Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(907) 269-5551 (Driver Services / Medical)
Website	https://doa.alaska.gov/dmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Not publicly published; restrictions imposed case by case
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Alaska's DMV operates under the Department of Administration. Alaska does not have a standing Medical Advisory Board in the same model as larger states; medical review is handled by Driver Services staff who consult with physicians as needed.

Restrictions for adaptive equipment are added based on the road-test vehicle and any physician recommendation submitted to DMV.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program. Whether you'll need one depends on your situation, your physician, and the medical review unit's discretion. Call and ask.

Note: Alaska has unique geography. Some rural communities have limited access to CDRS programs, and examiners have some flexibility in how road tests are administered.

Details and process

Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation: (907) 465-2814 — may cover driver evaluation costs for clients with employment goals.

ARIZONA

Licensing Agency	Arizona Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicle Division (ADOT/MVD)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(602) 255-0072 (Customer Service); Medical Review Program via website
Website	https://azdot.gov/motor-vehicles
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned per medical review; not in a public single-letter table
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Arizona's MVD has a Medical Review Program. Drivers with medical conditions affecting driving can be referred (by physician, law enforcement, family, or self) and may be required to submit a Medical Examination Report.

Arizona examiners can administer road tests in adapted vehicles. Restrictions, including hand-controls restrictions, are added based on the equipment used during the test.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program. Whether one is required depends on the Medical Review Program's determination in each case.

Details and process

Arizona Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA): (602) 542-3332 — vocational rehabilitation services that may pay for driver evaluation and equipment.

ARKANSAS

Licensing Agency	Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration, Driver Services Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(501) 682-7059 (Driver Control / Medical)
Website	https://www.dfa.arkansas.gov/services/category/driver-services/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Not publicly published in a single-letter table
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Arkansas Driver Control handles medical reviews. Decisions about whether a driver rehabilitation evaluation is required come from medical case-review staff, often after a physician's report.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program. In practice, drivers with significant new disability are often referred.

Details and process

Arkansas Rehabilitation Services: (501) 296-1600 — for VR-funded driver evaluation and equipment.

CALIFORNIA

Licensing Agency	California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) – Driver Safety
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(800) 777-0133 (DMV); Driver Safety branches handle medical review locally
Website	https://www.dmv.ca.gov/portal/driver-education-and-safety/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions imposed via Driver Safety; codes vary
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

California DMV's Driver Safety branches conduct reexaminations and impose restrictions including hand controls. The DMV explicitly lists requiring special mechanical devices such as hand controls as a type of restriction that can be added based on examiner findings.

Drivers can be referred to Driver Safety by a physician, law enforcement, or family member using form DS 699. The DMV may then request medical info, conduct a reexamination, or require a road test.

California does not have a single statute requiring a CDRS program for all hand-controls drivers, but Driver Safety can require evaluation by an Occupational Therapist / driver rehabilitation specialist as part of a reexamination.

California requires a road test in the vehicle you intend to drive — so if you're testing with hand controls, the controls must be installed at test time. Examiner discretion applies to whether portable controls are acceptable.

Details and process

California DMV's 'Maintaining Driving Independence and Safety' page acknowledges that Occupational Therapists provide driver evaluations and recommend adaptive equipment.

California Department of Rehabilitation: (916) 558-5800 — for VR services.

COLORADO

Licensing Agency	Colorado Department of Revenue, Division of Motor Vehicles
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(303) 205-5600 (DMV); Driver Control handles medical
Website	https://dmv.colorado.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions imposed by Driver Control
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Colorado has an active Driver Control / Medical Review process. Drivers with disabilities are often referred to Craig Hospital (Denver) for a formal driving program — Craig is one of the most well-known SCI rehab hospitals in the country.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program. Whether a Craig (or equivalent) program is legally required vs. practically recommended varies by case and physician.

Details and process

Craig Hospital Driving Program: (720) 441-6200

Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (844) 265-2387

CONNECTICUT

Licensing Agency	Connecticut Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(860) 263-5700 (DMV); Driver Services handles medical
Website	https://portal.ct.gov/dmv
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions imposed via Medical Review Unit
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Connecticut has a Medical Review Unit and a formal Medical Advisory Board, and tends toward stricter medical review than some neighboring states.

Drivers with significant physical disabilities are often required by the Medical Review Unit to obtain a driver rehabilitation evaluation before a license with adaptive equipment will be issued.

Details and process

Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (vocational rehab) can assist with evaluation and equipment costs for clients with employment goals.

DELAWARE

Licensing Agency	Delaware Division of Motor Vehicles
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(302) 744-2500 (DMV)
Website	https://www.dmv.de.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions imposed via DMV medical case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Delaware DMV reviews medical conditions on a case-by-case basis. Adaptive equipment restrictions are added when a road test is completed in an equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (302) 761-8275

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Licensing Agency	DC Department of Motor Vehicles (DC DMV)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(202) 737-4404 (DC DMV)
Website	https://dmv.dc.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Adaptive equipment restrictions added per Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	YES (published process)

What we know

Washington DC has a formal multi-step process for adaptive-equipment licensing. Per published guidance from area driver-rehab providers (MedStar Health), the DC DMV requires: (1) client and physician complete a Medical/Eye Report Form and submit it to DC DMV; (2) the driver completes a comprehensive assessment with an OT / Driver Rehabilitation Specialist; (3) the driver completes training with adaptive controls in a clinic vehicle; (4) the driver completes final training in their modified vehicle, including a road test at the DMV in that vehicle.

This is required to be legally endorsed in DC to use adaptive equipment. Note: the step-by-step is documented by the provider describing the DMV-administered process rather than by a single quotable DC regulation — call DC DMV to confirm specifics for your case.

Details and process

MedStar Health National Rehabilitation Network — Driving Program: a primary CDRS provider for DC and the surrounding region.

DC Rehabilitation Services Administration: (202) 730-1700

FLORIDA

Licensing Agency	Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (FLHSMV)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(850) 617-2000; Medical Review through local Driver License office
Website	https://www.flhsmv.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restriction codes assigned per Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Florida has a Medical Advisory Board and a formal Medical Review process. Drivers can be referred by physicians, law enforcement, or family.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program. Whether a formal program is required typically depends on the Medical Review Board's case-by-case determination. Florida has many private CDRS programs and the process is generally well-supported.

Important: Florida mobility dealer websites state that 'new users require training with a Driving Rehabilitation Specialist.' This is NMEDA industry guidance — not published Florida state law. Call FLHSMV before assuming a program is legally required.

Details and process

Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (850) 245-3399

GEORGIA

Licensing Agency	Georgia Department of Driver Services (DDS)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(678) 413-8400; Medical Affairs Section
Website	https://dds.georgia.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned per case
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Georgia DDS handles medical and disability-related licensing. The agency can require a road test in an adapted vehicle and add a restriction.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program. Whether one is required is generally a case-by-case medical-review determination.

Details and process

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: (844) 367-4872

HAWAII

Licensing Agency	Hawaii Department of Transportation, Motor Vehicle Safety Office (county-administered DMVs)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	Honolulu DMV: (808) 768-9100; other counties vary
Website	https://hidot.hawaii.gov/highways/safety/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions per DMV examiner
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Hawaii's driver licensing is administered at the county level; each county DMV has its own process. Medical review is handled at the state highway safety office level.

Adaptive equipment endorsement is added when the road test is performed in an equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Hawaii Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (808) 586-5366

IDAHO

Licensing Agency	Idaho Transportation Department, Division of Motor Vehicles
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(208) 584-4343 (Driver Services / Medical Records Unit)
Website	https://itd.idaho.gov/itddmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Assigned via Medical Records Unit
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Idaho ITD has a Medical/Driver Records Unit that handles medical case review. Disabled drivers can be referred by their physician.

Restrictions for adaptive equipment are added based on the Medical Unit's review and the road-test outcome.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (208) 334-3390

ILLINOIS

Licensing Agency	Illinois Secretary of State, Driver Services Department
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(217) 785-3013 (Medical Review Unit)
Website	https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/drivers/medical_review/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restriction codes per case (multi-letter restriction system)
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Illinois has a strong Medical Review Unit. Drivers with significant medical conditions are typically required to undergo medical review before licensing.

Illinois has a published Medical Review process and tends to refer adaptive-equipment drivers to a CDRS for evaluation. Whether this is statutory or practical varies by case.

Details and process

Illinois Department of Human Services – Division of Rehabilitation Services: (800) 843-6154

Schwab Rehabilitation, Marianjoy, and Shirley Ryan AbilityLab run CDRS programs in the Chicago area.

INDIANA

Licensing Agency	Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(888) 692-6841 (BMV); Driver Programs / Medical Unit
Website	https://www.in.gov/bmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Indiana BMV handles medical review through its Driver Programs section. Restrictions are added per case based on physician input and a road test in an equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation: (800) 545-7763

IOWA

Licensing Agency	Iowa Department of Transportation, Driver and Identification Services
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(515) 244-9124 (Office of Driver Services)
Website	https://iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Iowa DOT's Office of Driver Services handles medical case review. Iowa has a Medical Review Process whereby a driver's physician submits forms and the DOT determines whether further testing or evaluation is needed.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services: (515) 281-4211

KANSAS

Licensing Agency	Kansas Department of Revenue, Division of Vehicles – Medical/Vision Unit
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(785) 296-3671; Fax (785) 296-5857; KDOR_Medical.VisionUnit@ks.gov
Website	https://www.ksrevenue.gov/dovmedvision.html
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned by Medical/Vision Unit
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Kansas does NOT have a blanket statutory rule that all SCI/disabled drivers must complete a CDRS program. However, in practice the Kansas Medical Advisory Board (MAB) and Medical/Vision Unit frequently require a 'driving rehabilitation assessment' before a license will be granted with adaptive equipment.

Per the Kansas Department of Revenue: a driving rehabilitation assessment may be required as a result of a drive test with a Kansas examiner, after an accident or illness by your doctor, or by the Kansas Medical Advisory Board during a case review.

When a rehab assessment is scheduled, the provider must fax the appointment date/time to the Medical/Vision Unit so the patient's driving privileges can be verified or temporarily granted for the testing window. It is not legal to participate in a driving rehabilitation assessment when driving privileges are revoked.

If you were born with a disability and never had a license, you will most likely be referred to a CDRS program by the MAB before being permitted to test.

Details and process

Approved KS rehabilitation providers include Strowmatt Rehabilitation Services and Ability KC. KDOR maintains a current list at: <https://www.ksrevenue.gov/pdf/dovrehab.pdf>

Kansas Rehabilitation Services (vocational rehab): (785) 368-7471

KENTUCKY

Licensing Agency	Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, Division of Driver Licensing
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(502) 564-1257 (Driver Licensing)
Website	https://drive.ky.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Kentucky has a Medical Review Board process. Drivers can be referred by physicians, and a road test in adapted equipment is the typical mechanism for adding restrictions.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation: (800) 372-7172

LOUISIANA

Licensing Agency	Louisiana Office of Motor Vehicles (OMV)
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(225) 925-6146 (OMV)
Website	https://www.expresslane.org/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Louisiana OMV handles medical case review. Restrictions are added based on physician input and road-test results.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Louisiana Rehabilitation Services: (800) 737-2958

MAINE

Licensing Agency	Maine Bureau of Motor Vehicles
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(207) 624-9000 ext. 52119 (Medical Review Coordinator)
Website	https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Maine BMV has a dedicated Medical Review Coordinator. Drivers with disabilities go through medical review for adaptive equipment endorsements.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Maine Bureau of Rehabilitation Services: (207) 623-6799

MARYLAND

Licensing Agency	Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) – Medical Advisory Board
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(410) 768-7513 (MVA Medical Advisory Board)
Website	https://mva.maryland.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	'J' restriction = adaptive equipment training authorization
Driving Program Required?	YES (published process)

What we know

Maryland has a formal multi-step process. Per published guidance from MedStar Health (a major MD driver-rehab provider): the doctor sends a report to the MVA Medical Advisory Board for review. Once medically cleared, the MVA contacts the client and issues a 'J' license restriction, which allows the client to complete training using equipment with a driver rehab specialist.

After training in a clinic vehicle and then in the client's own modified vehicle, the client completes a road test at the MVA in their modified vehicle to obtain final adaptive equipment restrictions. This is required to be legally endorsed by the state of MD to use adaptive equipment.

Details and process

Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS): (410) 554-9442 — funds driver evaluation and equipment for VR clients.

Major CDRS providers in MD: MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital, Kennedy Krieger Institute.

MASSACHUSETTS

Licensing Agency	Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) – Medical Affairs
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(857) 368-8020 (Medical Affairs Branch)
Website	https://www.mass.gov/info-details/medical-affairs-and-the-rmv
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Affairs
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

The Massachusetts RMV Medical Affairs Branch handles all medical case review. Disabled drivers must typically be cleared through Medical Affairs before being road-tested with adaptive equipment.

MA tends toward referring adaptive-equipment drivers to a CDRS for evaluation; whether this is strictly required depends on the case.

Details and process

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission: (617) 204-3600

Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital runs a major CDRS program in Boston.

MICHIGAN

Licensing Agency	Michigan Department of State (Secretary of State) – Driver Assessment Section
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(517) 335-0651 (Driver Assessment)
Website	https://www.michigan.gov/sos/services/driver-license/medical
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Assessment
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Michigan Secretary of State's Driver Assessment Section handles medical case review. Per published guidance from Michigan driver-rehab providers, drivers with significant medical conditions are required to complete training and pass a road test administered by the State of Michigan, often after CDRS-led evaluation.

Details and process

Michigan Rehabilitation Services: (800) 605-6722

Major CDRS programs include those at the University of Michigan and various private providers.

MINNESOTA

Licensing Agency	Minnesota Department of Public Safety, Driver and Vehicle Services – Driver Evaluation Unit
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(651) 296-2025 (DVS); Driver Evaluation Unit
Website	https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/Pages/default.aspx
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Evaluation Unit
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Minnesota's Driver Evaluation Unit handles medical case review and adaptive equipment licensing. Restrictions are added based on physician input and road-test outcome.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Minnesota Vocational Rehabilitation Services: (651) 259-7366

Courage Kenny Rehabilitation Institute runs a major CDRS program in the Twin Cities.

MISSISSIPPI

Licensing Agency	Mississippi Department of Public Safety – Driver Service Bureau
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(601) 987-1224 (Driver Records)
Website	https://www.driverservicebureau.dps.ms.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Mississippi DPS Driver Records handles medical case review. The process is similar to other states: physician's report, possible MAB review, road test in adapted vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services: (601) 853-5100

MISSOURI

Licensing Agency	Missouri Department of Revenue, Driver License Bureau
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(573) 751-4600 (Driver License Bureau)
Website	https://dor.mo.gov/driver-license/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	DOR uses lettered restriction codes; hand-controls assigned via medical review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Missouri does not have a published statute requiring all SCI / disabled drivers to complete a CDRS program. Missouri DOR's Driver License Bureau handles restrictions, and the Missouri State Highway Patrol (MSHP) administers the actual road test.

Based on the author's own experience and conversations with other Missouri drivers, it is often possible to: (1) get a physician's clearance, (2) install hand controls (portable or professional), (3) take the standard MSHP road test in the equipped vehicle, and (4) receive a restriction added to the license — without a formal CDRS-led program.

However, if a driver was previously licensed and then injured, they may be flagged for medical review by the DOR if a Driver Condition Report (Form 4319) is filed. The DOR can also require additional examinations if it 'has reason to believe' a medical condition affects driving, and examiners have discretion about whether to administer a road test in a vehicle with portable vs. professional controls.

Note for teen drivers: Missouri's graduated license law requires 40 hours of supervised driving (including 10 at night) for the instruction-permit phase — but those hours can legally be supervised by a parent or other qualified driver, not necessarily a CDRS. The 40-hour requirement is real; the idea that all 40 must be billed at CDRS rates is a program's pitch, not a state rule.

Bottom line: Missouri appears to be a state where the path can be straightforward for some drivers, but it ultimately depends on case-by-case factors. Call the Driver License Bureau before paying for a CDRS program.

Details and process

Missouri Driver Condition Report (Form 4319): used to flag drivers for medical review.

Missouri Vocational Rehabilitation: (877) 222-8963 — covers driver evaluation and equipment for clients with employment goals (subject to the financial needs test; see 'How to Pay').

Ability KC (Kansas City) is the major CDRS program serving the western half of the state and is a member of ADED.

What we've heard (community reports)

Author (C7/T1 SCI, 22 years post-injury, Kansas City): I have driven with hand controls in Missouri for 22 years. I later learned that portable hand controls may have been a legal option the entire time — I was never told this. I was always told I needed to complete a driving program and get professionally installed hand controls. I could have gotten clearance from my doctor, installed portable hand controls myself, and been driving legally. Call the Driver License Bureau at (573) 751-4600 before spending money on a program.

MONTANA

Licensing Agency	Montana Motor Vehicle Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(406) 444-3933 (MVD)
Website	https://dojmt.gov/driving/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Records and Driver Control Bureau
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Montana MVD's Records and Driver Control Bureau handles medical case review. Adaptive equipment endorsement comes from the road test in an equipped vehicle plus medical case review where applicable.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Montana Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services: (406) 444-2590

NEBRASKA

Licensing Agency	Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(402) 471-3861 (DMV)
Website	https://dmv.nebraska.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Nebraska DMV handles medical case review. Restrictions are added per case based on physician input and a road test in an equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation: (402) 471-3644

NEVADA

Licensing Agency	Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(775) 684-4368 (Driver License Division)
Website	https://dmv.nv.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review Section
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Nevada DMV's Medical Review Section handles disability-related licensing. Restrictions are assigned based on case review and road-test outcome.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Nevada Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation: (775) 684-4040

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Licensing Agency	New Hampshire Division of Motor Vehicles – Driver Licensing Bureau
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(603) 227-4030 (DMV)
Website	https://www.dmv.nh.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

NH DMV handles medical case review through its Driver Licensing Bureau. Adaptive equipment licensing is handled through a combination of medical review and road test.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

NH Vocational Rehabilitation: (603) 271-3471

NEW JERSEY

Licensing Agency	New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission – Driver Review Bureau
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(609) 292-7500 (MVC); Driver Review Unit
Website	https://www.state.nj.us/mvc/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Review Bureau
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

New Jersey MVC has a Driver Review Bureau and a formal Compliance & Safety Division. NJ tends toward stricter medical review, and adaptive-equipment drivers are commonly required to be evaluated by a CDRS.

Details and process

NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services: (609) 292-5987

Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation runs a major CDRS program in NJ.

NEW MEXICO

Licensing Agency	New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(888) 683-4636 (NM MVD)
Website	https://www.mvd.newmexico.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via case review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

New Mexico MVD handles medical case review for disabled-driver licensing. Restrictions are added based on physician input and road-test outcome.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

NM Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (505) 954-8500

NEW YORK

Licensing Agency	New York State Department of Motor Vehicles – Driver Improvement Bureau
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(518) 474-0774 (DMV)
Website	https://dmv.ny.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	2-character restriction codes; adaptive-equipment codes assigned by Medical Review Unit
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

New York DMV's Medical Review Unit handles disability-related licensing. NY has one of the more formalized processes — adaptive equipment endorsement is typically preceded by a CDRS evaluation, and the DMV maintains specific restriction codes applied based on the equipment used.

NY has a long-standing Medical Review Unit and tends toward requiring formal evaluation.

Details and process

NY ACCES-VR (Vocational Rehabilitation): (800) 222-5627

Major CDRS programs include Helen Hayes Hospital, Burke Rehabilitation, and Mount Sinai.

NORTH CAROLINA

Licensing Agency	North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles – Medical Review Unit
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(919) 861-3809 (Medical Review)
Website	https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

NC DMV has a dedicated Medical Review Unit. Disabled drivers seeking adaptive equipment licensing typically go through medical review, and NC has a strong network of CDRS programs that the DMV often refers people to.

Details and process

NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services: (919) 855-3500

NORTH DAKOTA

Licensing Agency	North Dakota Department of Transportation – Driver License Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(701) 328-2600 (Driver License); Medical Coordinator
Website	https://www.dot.nd.gov/divisions/driverslicense/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Coordinator
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

North Dakota DOT has a Medical Coordinator who handles medical case review. The process is similar to other rural states: physician's report, possible MAB review, road test in equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

ND Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (701) 328-8950

OHIO

Licensing Agency	Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles – Driver Licensing
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(844) 644-6268 (BMV)
Website	https://www.bmv.ohio.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Adaptive/special equipment restriction added per BMV (specific code assigned per case)
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Ohio's official BMV process for a license holder is triggered by a physician/medical concern: the BMV requests a Statement of Physician (form BMV 2310), and its next steps are determined by that statement. A licensed driver adding adaptive equipment is re-tested at a state exam station in the equipped vehicle, and the restriction is added to the license.

Published guidance from Ohio CDRS providers (e.g., MobilityWorks) describes the typical path as: get a doctor's prescription, complete a CDRS evaluation, complete behind-the-wheel training (providers cite roughly 3–4 hours), then bring the CDRS clearance to the BMV. Note: the 'CDRS required' and specific training-hours framing comes from provider documentation, not from a directly-quotable BMV regulation. That is why Ohio is listed as LIKELY rather than as a state that publishes a CDRS mandate.

Whether a CDRS program is strictly required vs. strongly recommended in your case is worth confirming directly with the BMV.

Details and process

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) vocational rehab: (800) 282-4536 — funds driver eval and equipment.

Major CDRS programs include the Cleveland Clinic, Ohio State Wexner Medical Center, and various private providers.

OKLAHOMA

Licensing Agency	Oklahoma Department of Public Safety – Driver Compliance Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(405) 425-2196 (Senior Medical Officer / Medical Review)
Website	https://oklahoma.gov/dps/dl.html
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Oklahoma DPS has a Senior Medical Officer in the Driver Compliance Division who handles medical case review. Disabled drivers go through medical review for adaptive equipment endorsements.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services: (800) 845-8476

OREGON

Licensing Agency	Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (Oregon DMV) – Medical Programs
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(503) 945-5000 (DMV); At-Risk Driver Program / Medical Programs
Website	https://www.oregon.gov/odot/dmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions per Medical Programs
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Oregon has a Medical Programs Coordinator and an At-Risk Driver Program. Oregon tends toward more comprehensive medical review than many states, and adaptive-equipment drivers are typically referred to a CDRS for evaluation.

Details and process

Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation: (877) 277-0513

OHSU and Legacy Rehabilitation Institute of Oregon run major CDRS programs.

PENNSYLVANIA

Licensing Agency	Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) – Bureau of Driver Licensing
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(800) 932-4600 (PennDOT Customer Service); Medical Unit
Website	https://www.dmv.pa.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Code '4' = Special Equipment (per PA driver-rehab guidance)
Driving Program Required?	YES (published process)

What we know

Pennsylvania has a documented, state-administered process. PennDOT publishes a Dual Control Learner's Permit pathway that allows individuals with limb absence or impairment to train with and be evaluated by a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist/CDRS, and a medical road test (plus paperwork via form DL-180) is required before a license with adaptive equipment is issued.

Per published guidance from PA driver-rehab providers, a CDRS conducts a comprehensive evaluation, trains the driver, and accompanies them for the PA State Driving Exam in the training vehicle; after passing, the license is updated with code '#4 — Special Equipment,' and the CDRS writes the equipment prescription for an NMEDA-certified vendor to install.

Note: the published PennDOT material clearly establishes the medical-road-test and Dual Control Permit pathway; the specific CDRS-hour details and the 'always required' framing come largely from provider documentation. Confirm your specific requirements with PennDOT's Medical Unit.

Details and process

PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR): (800) 442-6351 — covers both the CDRS and equipment install costs for clients with employment goals.

Major CDRS providers include Magee Rehabilitation and Bryn Mawr Rehab, among others.

RHODE ISLAND

Licensing Agency	Rhode Island Division of Motor Vehicles – Operator Control
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(401) 462-4368 (DMV Operator Control)
Website	https://dmv.ri.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Operator Control
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

RI DMV's Chief of Operator Control handles medical case review. Adaptive equipment endorsement is based on case review and road test.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

RI Office of Rehabilitation Services: (401) 421-7005

SOUTH CAROLINA

Licensing Agency	South Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles – Driver Improvement
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(803) 896-5000 (SCDMV)
Website	https://www.scdmvonline.com/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Improvement
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

SCDMV's Driver Improvement section handles medical case review. Adaptive equipment endorsement is based on physician input and road-test outcome.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

SC Vocational Rehabilitation Department: (800) 832-7526

SOUTH DAKOTA

Licensing Agency	South Dakota Department of Public Safety – Driver Licensing Program
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(605) 773-6883 (Driver Licensing)
Website	https://dps.sd.gov/driver-licensing
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Licensing Program
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

South Dakota DPS Driver Licensing handles medical case review. Adaptive equipment licensing follows the typical pattern: physician's report, road test in equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

SD Division of Rehabilitation Services: (605) 773-3195

TENNESSEE

Licensing Agency	Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security – Driver Improvement
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(615) 251-5219 (Driver Improvement)
Website	https://www.tn.gov/safety/driver-services.html
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Improvement
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Tennessee Department of Safety handles medical case review through Driver Improvement. The adaptive equipment licensing process is case-by-case.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

TN Vocational Rehabilitation Services: (615) 313-4700

TEXAS

Licensing Agency	Texas Department of Public Safety – Driver License Division; Medical Advisory Board via Texas DSHS
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(512) 424-2600 (Texas DPS Customer Service)
Website	https://www.dps.texas.gov/section/driver-license
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Per Texas Transportation Code §521.221, restrictions can include a special mechanical control device required on a vehicle the holder may operate
Driving Program Required?	NO formal CDRS requirement in published administrative code

What we know

Texas does not have a published statute or administrative code section requiring a CDRS program for hand-controls licensing. Texas Administrative Code §15.57 establishes that restrictions are based on performance on the skills examination and what equipment was necessary to pass.

The MAB referral criteria in §15.58 do not include stable SCI as a trigger for mandatory referral. A person with a stable SCI, physician clearance, and the ability to pass the skills exam with hand controls should be able to receive a hand-controls restriction without a formal CDRS program under published Texas rules.

In practice, drivers with significant new disability are sometimes referred to a CDRS by physicians, and the MAB can require further evaluation if a case is referred to it. But this is discretionary, not a blanket requirement.

Important: Many Texas mobility dealer websites state that a CDRS evaluation is 'required.' This is NMEDA industry guidance, not published Texas state law. The published administrative code says otherwise. Always verify with DPS directly.

Details and process

Published source: Texas Administrative Code, Title 37, Part 1, Chapter 15, Subchapter C, §15.57 — Restrictions, Physical. Key language: 'Performance on the skills examination generally establishes what effect physical limitations may have on an applicant's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle,' and 'Only special equipment necessary to qualify on the skills exam will be required in the restriction(s) placed on an applicant's license.' The separate MAB referral criteria (§15.58) list seizures, cardiovascular issues, vision problems, diabetes, and neurological conditions — but not stable SCI without cognitive or seizure involvement.

Texas Workforce Commission – Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR): (800) 628-5115 — funds vehicle modifications and driver evaluation through Vehicle Modification Services for clients with employment goals.

Major CDRS programs: TIRR Memorial Hermann (Houston), St. David's Adaptive Driving (Austin), Baylor Rehabilitation (Dallas).

UTAH

Licensing Agency	Utah Driver License Division
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(801) 965-4437 (DLD)
Website	https://dld.utah.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Utah DLD handles medical case review for disabled drivers. Adaptive equipment endorsement is based on case review and road test.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

Utah State Office of Rehabilitation: (800) 473-7530

VERMONT

Licensing Agency	Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles – Driver Improvement
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(802) 828-2000 (DMV)
Website	https://dmv.vermont.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Improvement
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Vermont DMV handles medical case review through its Driver Improvement section. Adaptive equipment licensing is case-by-case.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

VT Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (866) 879-6757

VIRGINIA

Licensing Agency	Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles – Driver Services
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(804) 497-7100 (Medical Review Services)
Website	https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	'3W' for adaptive equipment training authorization (per published rehab provider info)
Driving Program Required?	YES (published DMV policy)

What we know

Virginia has a formal multi-step process published on the Virginia DMV website. The DMV policy, based on Medical Advisory Board advice, requires that drivers newly in need of adaptive equipment be referred for a CDRS evaluation.

Per published provider guidance: a Driver Rehabilitation Specialist sends a report to the DMV Medical Review Board for decision. Once medically cleared, the DMV contacts the client and issues a '3W' license restriction, which allows the client to complete training with a driver rehab specialist. After clinic training, the client completes final training and a road test in their modified vehicle for the final endorsement.

Drivers who have used adaptive equipment for a long-term disability may take a DMV road skills examination without a new CDRS evaluation, per the published DMV policy.

This is one of the few states where the DMV itself publishes a clear CDRS requirement on its own website. Published key language: 'It is the policy of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) based on advice of the Medical Advisory Board that drivers who are newly in need of adaptive equipment requiring fitting by a specialist or a prescription from a medical provider of any type, should be referred for a Certified Driving Rehabilitation Specialist (CDRS) evaluation. This equipment includes, but is not limited to, left foot accelerators, spinner knobs, hand controls, and signal adaptors.'

Details and process

Published source: Virginia DMV, <https://www.dmv.virginia.gov/licenses-ids/license/medical/adaptive>

Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS): (800) 552-5019

Major VA CDRS programs include Sheltering Arms Institute and various private providers.

WASHINGTON

Licensing Agency	Washington Department of Licensing – Driver Records
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(360) 902-3900 (DOL)
Website	https://dol.wa.gov/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Records
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Washington DOL handles medical case review through Driver Records. Adaptive equipment endorsement is based on physician input and road-test outcome.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

WA Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (800) 637-5627

Major CDRS programs include Harborview Medical Center and Pushing Boundaries.

WEST VIRGINIA

Licensing Agency	West Virginia Division of Motor Vehicles – Medical Review
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(304) 558-3900 (DMV); Medical Coordinator
Website	https://transportation.wv.gov/dmv/
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

West Virginia DMV has a Medical Coordinator who handles disability cases. Restrictions are added based on physician input and case review.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

WV Division of Rehabilitation Services: (800) 642-8207

WISCONSIN

Licensing Agency	Wisconsin Department of Transportation – Medical Review & Fitness Unit
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(608) 266-2327 (Medical Review & Fitness)
Website	https://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/medical-review/medical-review.aspx
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Medical Review & Fitness Unit
Driving Program Required?	LIKELY

What we know

Wisconsin has a dedicated Medical Review & Fitness Unit. Wisconsin tends toward more thorough medical review and often refers adaptive-equipment drivers to a CDRS for evaluation before issuing a hand-controls restriction.

Details and process

WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (800) 442-3477

Major CDRS programs include Froedtert / Medical College of Wisconsin and Aurora Rehabilitation.

WYOMING

Licensing Agency	Wyoming Department of Transportation – Driver Services
Medical / Driver Review Phone	(307) 777-4810 (Driver Services)
Website	https://www.dot.state.wy.us/home/driver_license_records.html
Hand-Controls Restriction Code	Restrictions assigned via Driver Services
Driving Program Required?	CASE-BY-CASE

What we know

Wyoming DOT Driver Services handles medical case review. As with other rural states, the process is typically: physician's report, possible review, road test in equipped vehicle.

No published state statute or administrative code was found that explicitly requires or prohibits a CDRS program.

Details and process

WY Division of Vocational Rehabilitation: (307) 777-7385

If you're a teen aging into driving

This section was inspired by the gap that exists for young people born with disabilities, whose peers all start driving at 16 while they are still trying to figure out who pays for the evaluation, who pays for the equipment, and what their state actually requires.

If you are 14–17 and have any disability that affects driving:

1. Apply for Vocational Rehabilitation NOW. Most states allow VR transition services starting at age 14. Even if you're not sure what you want to do for work, apply. The 'employment goal' can be 'become independent and able to attend college / work in the future.' That's a real goal VR funds. (Note: VR may still apply an income-based needs test to equipment and modifications — but the evaluation is usually covered for everyone. See 'How to Pay'.)
2. Talk to your high school transition coordinator. Every IEP team should include transition planning by age 16. Driving is a transition goal.
3. Ask your physician for a letter stating you are medically able to drive with adaptive equipment. This is needed for almost every other step.
4. Call your state DMV's medical unit (number in this document) and ask the seven questions. Do this BEFORE paying for any program. This step is not optional — it is how you find out what your state actually requires, and it can save your family thousands of dollars.
5. If your state DOES require a CDRS program (Maryland, Virginia, DC, Pennsylvania, and others), get VR set up to pay for it. Don't pay out of pocket if you don't have to.

In some states, the path may be as simple as: your high school driver's-ed instructor + a portable hand control + a road test in your parent's car — at near-zero cost. In other states, a full CDRS program is required. The only way to know which applies to you is step 4: calling your state DMV's medical unit. Do not skip this step.

Resources, Programs, and Where to Go Next

National organizations

- ADED (Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists): <https://www.aded.net/> — find a CDRS in your area; the official directory.
- NMEDA (National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association): <https://www.nmeda.com/> — find a Quality Assurance Program (QAP) certified mobility dealer for installation.
- Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation: <https://www.christopherreeve.org/> — comprehensive SCI resources, including the Paralysis Resource Center and grants.
- United Spinal Association: <https://unitedspinal.org/> — peer support, advocacy, and resource navigator.
- MSKTC (Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center): <https://msktc.org/sci> — free factsheets and videos on driving after SCI.
- NHTSA Adapted Vehicles page: <https://www.nhtsa.gov/vehicle-safety/adapted-vehicles> — federal information on adaptive equipment safety standards and registered vehicle modifiers.

Sources and citations behind this guide

- NHTSA, 'Adapting Motor Vehicles for People with Disabilities' (publication HS 810 732) — federal overview of licensing, evaluation, and equipment.
- NHTSA hand-controls research report — documents that a federal effort to gather state data on adaptive-equipment license restrictions did not produce enough information to estimate national usage. This is the federal basis for the statement that this information is not centrally tracked.
- 34 CFR §361.54 — Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need. Establishes that states may apply a financial needs test to most VR services, that assessment/evaluation, counseling, and referral are exempt, and that SSI/SSDI recipients cannot be subjected to a financial needs test.
- Texas Administrative Code §15.57 (and §15.58, MAB referrals) — example of a state where restrictions are based on the skills exam, with no CDRS mandate in code.
- Virginia DMV adaptive-equipment policy (dmv.virginia.gov/licenses-ids/license/medical/adaptive) — example of a state DMV that publishes its CDRS requirement.
- 38 U.S.C. §§ 3901–3902 and VA Form 21-4502 — VA Automobile Allowance and Adaptive Equipment benefit.

Common adaptive equipment manufacturers

- MPS Corporation (Mobility Products & Services) — mechanical hand controls.
- Sure Grip — mechanical hand controls and steering aids.
- Drive-Master — hand controls, joystick driving systems.
- EMC (Electronic Mobility Controls) — electronic driving systems.
- Veigel — high-end mechanical hand controls.
- BraunAbility / VMI — wheelchair-accessible vehicle conversions.
- Bruno — wheelchair lifts and turning seats.

How to contribute corrections to this document

If you live in a particular state, went through this process recently, and what's in this document does not match your experience — please tell me. Include: your state; the year you went through the process; whether you needed a CDRS program; what restriction code is on your license; and anything you wish you had known before you started. roll@wheelchairwellness.com

Final Disclaimer

This guide is informational only — not legal or medical advice, and it creates no professional relationship. It was assembled from public sources, and policies, phone numbers, restriction codes, and requirements change. Verify anything here with your state's DMV / Driver License Bureau before relying on it. The author and Wheelchair Wellness are not liable for any decision, expense, or licensing outcome based on this document. Found an error? Please report it so the next reader benefits: roll@wheelchairwellness.com