

What diagnosis is considered a “Communication Impediment” for the Texas Driving with Disability Program?

Medically, each disorder lends itself to its own category. However, for law enforcement coding and training purposes, the term “Communication Impediment” is divided into two groups.

GROUP 1

Think of this group as having a slower processing speed. Allow time for them to respond. Diagnosis in this group include (but may not be limited to):

- 1 Autism (including Asperger Syndrome)
- 2 Mild Intellectual Disability
- 3 Down Syndrome
- 4 Parkinson’s Disease
- 5 Cerebral palsy
- 6 Speech and Language Disorders (mutism, stuttering, speech delay Aphasia and Spasmodic Dysphonia)
- 7 Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- 8 Brain Injury

GROUP 2

Think of this group as using a different language. Mental impairment is not present, but communication is different (e.g., uses sign language). Diagnosis in this group include (but may not be limited to):

- 1 Deaf
- 2 Hard of Hearing

"The passage of the communication impediment program has allowed law enforcement to readily know if someone may have difficulty communicating with an officer due to a medical condition. Through a designation on a person’s driver license or ID card, officers are now aware of a person’s communications difficulty without that person having to explain it. This has allowed for safer interactions between the public and law enforcement."

Steven McCraw
Director, Texas Department of Public Safety

"In circumstances such as a traffic stop, an individual with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or other diagnoses that affect communication is at risk for being misunderstood by law enforcement officers."

Dr. Berenice de la Cruz
Assistant Professor, Texas A&M University-San Antonio

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DISABILITY IS NOT ALWAYS OBVIOUS



COMMUNICATION IMPEDIMENT

Communication Impediment includes: Autism, Deaf, PTSD, Down Syndrome, Parkinson's, Speech & Language Disorders, Brain Injury & more

MINIMIZE POTENTIAL COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

Alert Peace Officers with:

COMMUNICATION IMPEDIMENT



Add Communication Impediment to your vehicle when registering through the Department of Motor Vehicles. This option will remain private and alert an officer prior to approaching your vehicle in a pull over. This might not only save lives, it will keep the diagnosis hidden from potential public scrutiny.

- 1 Fill out **Form VTR-216** and have your health care provider certify that you have a health condition or disability that may impede effective communication. The form is available at www.TxDMV.gov/forms OR www.texasdrivingwithdisability.com
- 2 Bring signed VTR-216 form to your county tax assessor collector office. The county tax assessor collector office will add the indicator to your motor vehicle record and return the form VTR-216 to you.

Note: You may keep your signed VTR-216 form for future use if you purchase a new vehicle. Legal Form VTR-216 was released January 1, 2020 by the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles as a result of the passage of Senate Bill 976, The Samuel Allen Law.

For all forms and full information go to:

www.TexasDrivingwithDisability.com



Texas Transportation Code 5521.125 allows the Texas Department of Public Safety to include a notice on the driver license or identification card of those who indicate they have a health condition that may impact their ability to communicate with a law enforcement officer.

Adding Communication Impediment to your Texas Driver License or State ID through the Texas Department of Public Safety is voluntary and visible to law enforcement on Driver License and registration queries in the Texas Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (TCOLE).

- 1 Have your physician complete and sign Physician & Statement Form (DL101) affirming your diagnosis.
- 2 Visit your local driver license office for a driver license application (DL14A or 14B).

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TEXAS DRIVING WITH DISABILITY

This Texas trail-blazing program is improving the interaction between law enforcement and drivers diagnosed with a communication challenge or a hearing impairment.



The Texas Driving with Disability program was created by Jennifer Allen. Her son Samuel, diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, has difficulty with social interaction. When Samuel reached driving age, she recognized the need to improve the support for people with a communication challenge or deafness, while interacting with law enforcement. Partnering with the Texas Governors Committee on People with Disabilities, together they worked with Texas DPS to improve upon and create public awareness of the Communication Impediment option offered on a state driver license, or ID. They forged passage of The Samuel Allen Law (SB976), allowing citizens the additional option to privately disclose Communication Impediment when registering their vehicle through Texas DMV, thus alerting an officer prior to approaching the vehicle in a pullover. Coupled with law enforcement training on interaction & better understanding citizens who opt for the disclosure of Communication Impediment, the Texas Driving with Disability program is now a viable option for those wanting to disclose.

"The Texas Driving with Disability initiative is very good for the transportation independence and public safety of thousands of Texans with disabilities. It has the potential for saving lives by bettering communication between law enforcement and drivers with disabilities and those who are deaf."

Ron Lucey
Executive Director, Texas Governors Committee on People with Disabilities