



The following excerpt has been taken from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation Paralysis Resource Center website.

http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.mtKZKgMWKwG/b.4453469/k.8F9D/Cars_and_Driving.htm

Cars and Driving

Driving a car can become a reality for many people who are paralyzed, even people with very limited hand and arm function. There is a wide range of driving equipment and vehicle modifications on the market today.

The first step in the process of learning to drive with paralysis is to get a thorough evaluation from a qualified driver trainer to determine your basic driving set-up, specific modifications, and driving equipment. An evaluation includes vision screening and assesses muscle strength, flexibility and range of motion; coordination and reaction time; judgment and decision making; and ability to drive with adaptive equipment

To find a qualified evaluator, contact a local rehabilitation center or contact the Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED – see below), which maintains a list of certified specialists throughout the country.

As for getting a drivers license, states require a valid learner's permit or driver's license to receive an on-the-road evaluation. You cannot be denied the opportunity to apply for a permit or license because you have a disability, but you may receive a restricted license, based on the use of adaptive devices.

Once you get the go-ahead from the evaluation, it's time to think about the kinds of vehicles that suit your abilities and needs. Selecting a vehicle for modification requires collaboration with the evaluator and a qualified vehicle modification dealer. The following questions can help with vehicle selection and whether you can adapt a car you already own.

Does the necessary adaptive equipment require a van, or will a passenger car suffice (will you be driving from a wheelchair or can you transfer to the car seat? If you can transfer in and drive a car your choices are much wider.

Can the vehicle accommodate the equipment that needs to be installed?

Will there be enough space to accommodate other passengers once the vehicle is modified?

Is there adequate parking space at home and at work for the vehicle and for loading/unloading a wheelchair or walker?

If a third party is paying for the vehicle, adaptive devices, or modification costs, find out if there are any limitations or restrictions on what is covered. Always get a written statement on what a funding agency will pay before making your purchase.

The cost of modifying a vehicle varies greatly. A new vehicle modified with adaptive equipment can cost from \$20,000 to \$80,000. Therefore, it pays to investigate public and private opportunities for financial assistance.

There are programs that help pay part or all of the cost of vehicle modification, depending on the cause and nature of the disability. Contact your state's department of Vocational Rehabilitation or another agency that provides vocational services, and, if appropriate, the Department of Veterans Affairs. Also, consider the following:

- Many nonprofit associations that advocate for individuals with disabilities have grant programs that help pay for adaptive devices.
- If you have private health insurance or workers' compensation, you may be covered for adaptive devices and vehicle modification. Check with your insurance carrier.
- Many manufacturers have rebate or reimbursement plans for modified vehicles.
- Some states waive the sales tax for adaptive devices if you have a doctor's prescription for their use.

You may be eligible for savings when submitting your federal income tax return. Check with a qualified tax consultant to find out if the cost of your adaptive devices will help you qualify for a medical deduction.

Find a qualified dealer to modify your vehicle. Ask questions, check credentials and references. Do they work with evaluators? Will they look at your vehicle before you purchase it? Do they require a prescription from a physician or other driver evaluation specialist? Do they provide training on how to use the equipment? Do they provide service? What is the cost? How long will it take to do the work? What is the warranty?

Sources: U.S. Department of Transportation, Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists

Web Sites

<http://www.adamobility.com>

Adaptive Driving Alliance

A nationwide group of vehicle modification dealers. Members modify and sell adaptive automotive equipment including car hand controls and other driving aids, wheelchair vans, wheelchair lifts, and scooter lifts.

<http://www.driver-ed.org/>

The Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists (ADED)

ADED supports professionals working in the field of driver education/training and transportation equipment modifications for persons with disabilities. The site includes a directory that allows people to search for driver rehabilitation specialists and mobility equipment dealers by location.

<http://www.craighospital.org/SCI/METS/readyForAVan.asp>

Craig Hospital: Am I Ready for a Van?

Educational brochure that addresses the concerns many spinal cord injury survivors who are used to driving a car have about switching to modified vans.

<http://www.disableddealer.com/>

Disabled Dealer Magazine

Disabled Dealer runs classified ads for adaptive equipment, including vehicle access items such as lifts and hand controls. The site also lists mobility equipment dealers by geographic area.

<http://www.disabledriders.com>

Disabled Riders of America (DRA)

DRA promotes the interests of motorcyclists with disabilities by providing an internet "clubhouse" where members can share ideas and experiences. The site includes a forum (open to registered members) and a resource list of companies and individuals selling products that may be helpful to motorcyclists with disabilities.

<http://infinitec.org/live/driving/drivingintro.htm>

Infinitec: Adaptive Driving

Infinitec provides information on all types of assistive technology. The section on adaptive driving has information on driving assessments, vehicle modifications, equipment dealers and ideas for funding vehicle modifications.

<http://www.kempf-usa.com>

KEMPF

1245 Lakeside Drive #3005

Sunnyvale, CA 94085

Phone: 408-773-0129, 888-453-6738 (Toll-free)

Email: info@kempf-usa.com

KEMPF manufactures adaptive driving products that can be installed in cars with automatic transmission.

<http://www.ThePumpGuide.com>

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America: Pump Guide

An online directory of gas stations in Michigan that offer full pump services to drivers with disabilities at self-serve prices.

An online directory of gas stations serving drivers with disabilities in Michigan.

<http://www.vpgautos.com/>

Vehicle Production Group (VPG)

VPG makes vehicles specifically for people with disabilities and those who help service them. Its MV-1 is the only vehicle designed from the ground up for wheelchair accessibility.

<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/adaptive/index.html>

National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration: Automotive Safety Issues for Persons With Disabilities

This page lists links to resources for consumers, including regulations and research reports. The site includes a brochure, Adapting Motor Vehicles for People with Disabilities, which can be downloaded as a PDF.

<http://www.nmeda.org/>

National Mobility Equipment Dealers Association (NMEDA)

NMEDA is a trade association of mobility equipment dealers, manufacturers, driver rehabilitation specialists and other professionals. All members work together to improve transportation options for people with disabilities. The organization sets annual guidelines for equipment installation and modifications and has a Quality Assurance Program (QAP) developed to promote quality, safety, and reliability within the industry. The site has a dealer locator for people to find QAP certified dealers of wheelchair accessible vehicles and adaptive equipment.

<http://www.project-track-champion.com>

Project Track Champion: Wishes on Wheels

PO Box 232

Durham, ON, N0G 1R0

Canada

Phone: 519-369-6349

Project Track Champion is dedicated to the promotion of accessibility for persons with a disability in the racing environment. Project Track Champion is committed to creating, promoting and securing measures to remove barriers that would normally restrict a person with a disability from having an interactive roll within the racing community and other non-related venues.

<http://www.shopautoweek.com/index.html>

Shop Auto Week

This site offers unbiased insights, opinions and expertise of *Autoweek* magazine editors to people shopping for new, used or certified pre-owned cars. Consumers can find vehicle specifications, features, reviews and pricing information to help guide their vehicle purchase decision.

<http://www.shopautoweek.com/topics/mobility.html>

Shop Auto Week: Mobility

This section has articles on various topics related to drivers with mobility impairments, including reviews of cars with accessibility features.

http://sci.washington.edu/info/newsletters/articles/02fall_driving.asp

Northwest Regional Spinal Cord Injury System: New Driving Technology for People with SCI

This article from fall 2002 describes the University of Washington's Department of Rehabilitation Medicine acquisition of a full-size van for its Driving Rehabilitation Program that is equipped with adaptive technology advanced enough to enable people with C5 spinal cord injuries to drive.

http://atwiki.assistivetech.net/index.php/Vehicle_lifts_and_ramps

ATWiki: Vehicle Lifts and Ramps

This wiki, which anyone can edit, includes answers to frequently asked questions about vehicle lifts and ramps as well as links to other information resources.

http://www1.va.gov/vhapublications/ViewPublication.asp?pub_ID=2148

Veterans Health Administration: Driver Rehabilitation for Veterans with Disabilities Program

This January 2010 handbook, which can be downloaded as a PDF, provides information on the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) comprehensive driver rehabilitation program for veterans with disabilities.

Rental/Sale Companies:

<http://www.accessiblevans.com>

Accessible Vans of American (AVA)

Phone: 866-224-1750 (Toll-free)

AVA is a member owned organization made up of independent mobility dealers across the United States who rent, sell and service wheelchair accessible vehicles. The organization focuses primarily on the rental of wheelchair accessible vehicles through a nationwide network of dealers.

<http://www.braunability.com/>

BraunAbility

Phone: 800-843-5438 (Toll-free)

Braun manufactures a full line of mobility products, including wheelchair vans and wheelchair lift systems.

<http://www.rollxvans.com>

Rollx Vans

6591 Highway 13 W

Savage, MN 55378

Phone: 952-890-7851, 800-956-6668 (Toll-free)

E-mail: questions@rollxvans.com

Rollx Vans sells new and used mini and full-size wheelchair vans direct to consumers.

<http://www.vcimobility.com>

VCI Mobility

Phone: 888-463-5715

Based in Pennsylvania, VCI is able to assist individuals in that state as well as parts of New Jersey, Delaware, and Maryland with the sale or rental of accessible vans, as well as adaptive driving aids, adaptive seating, lifts/ramps, and vehicle servicing.

<http://www.wheelersvanrentals.com>

Wheelers Accessible Van Rentals

Phone 800-456-1371 (Toll-free)

Email: info@wheelersvanrentals.com

Wheelers offers wheelchair and scooter accessible transportation by the day, week, month and longer. Rental facilities are located in more than fifteen states nationwide.

<http://www.wheelchairgetaways.com/>

Wheelchair Getaways

Phone 800-642-2042 (Toll-free)

Email: info@wheelchairgetaways.com

Wheelchair Getaways offers daily, weekly, monthly and long-term wheelchair and scooter accessible van rentals in all 50 states and some parts of Canada. Delivery is available in some areas.

Funding

Funding for the purchase or modification of an automobile is difficult to obtain. Here are some resources for obtaining financial assistance.

<http://www.harmarmobility.com/reimburse/>

Harmar Mobility: Mobility Reimbursement Program

This site has information on mobility programs from Chrysler, Ford, GM, Saturn, Toyota, Lexus, Volkswagen, Honda, Hyundai and Acura that provide rebates to disabled drivers for the installation of adaptive equipment in new vehicles.

[http://www.massmatch.org/documents/AUTO MANUFACTURERS MOBILITY PROGRAMS.pdf](http://www.massmatch.org/documents/AUTO_MANUFACTURERS_MOBILITY_PROGRAMS.pdf)

MassMATCH: Auto Manufacturers Mobility Programs

This site has information on mobility programs from Chrysler, Ford, GM, Saturn, Toyota, Volkswagen, Honda, Hyundai, Subaru and Volvo that provide rebates to disabled drivers for the installation of adaptive equipment in new vehicles.

<http://www.travisroyfoundation.org>

Travis Roy Foundation

Hemenway & Barnes LLP

60 State Street, 8th Floor

Boston, MA 02109

Phone: 617-619-8257

Email: info@travisroyfoundation.org

The Travis Roy Foundation is dedicated to enhancing the life of individuals with spinal cord injuries and their families by providing adaptive equipment and to finding a cure through increased funding of research, resulting in self-reliance and the ability to be as independent as possible.

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/index.html>

U.S. Department of Education: Rehabilitation Services Administration

Your home state Department of Vocational Rehabilitation Services may provide assistance with vehicle adaptation when the person with the disability is trying to maintain employment, or continue their education.

http://www.ucp.org/ucp_channel.cfm/1/19

United Cerebral Palsy: Transportation

This site provides information on accessible transportation, wheeled mobility and funding.

Articles

- “Funding Your Van”. *New Mobility*. August 2003 pp. 29-31, 62.
- “When Your Plan is a Van”. *Quest*. March-April 2004 pp. 20-21, 24, 26-27.
- “As the Wheel Turns: Safety in Your Chair Means Safety on the Road.” *Quest*. March-April 2004. pp. 30-32.
This article discusses the importance of tie-down and lockdown systems for those who drive or travel in their chair.
- “After the Stroke, Behind the Wheel.” *Stroke Connection*. January-February 2005 pp. 24-25.

The following books are available for free loan from the PRC library. For more information, please see www.paralysis.org and click *Borrow from Our Lending Library* under PRC Quick Links.

Books

- **Disabled Driver's Mobility Guide.** Heathrow, FL: American Automobile Association, 1995.
Includes sources for adapted controls, etc.
- Edds, James. **Driver Rehabilitation: Gateway to Independence.** St. Louis, MO: Gateway Publishing, 2002.
- Pellerito, Joseph Michael, Jr. **Driver Rehabilitation and Community Mobility: Principles and Practice.** St. Louis, MO: Mosby, 2006.

The following streaming videos from the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation can be viewed for free at www.paralysis.org. To view, click *See All Videos* on the top, then click the *Paralysis Resource Center* tab and scroll through the videos listed on the right.

Videos

- **Advanced Driving Controls: Funding & Evaluation**
Learn about the wide variety of hand controls and modifications that are available.
- **Advanced Driving Controls 2: Control Options**
Part two in our series featuring the variety of control options available.
- **Hot Rides**
Part 1 features unique vehicles.
- **Hot Rides 2**
Part two in our series featuring unique and unusual modified vehicles.
- **Stop & Go**
Do you miss your manual transmission? Ever want to fly a plane? See these and more unique hand controls available for your vehicle.

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should not be used in place of the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider. Should you have any health care related questions, please call or see your physician or other qualified health care provider promptly. Always consult with your physician or other qualified health care provider before embarking on a new treatment, diet or fitness program. You should never disregard medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this message.