**PROFESSIONAL SUITABILITY AND DRIVING SKILL**

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**Abstract:** *This section examines the fundamental aspects of professional suitability and driving mastery. It highlights the physical, psychological, and emotional factors that determine a driver's competence and readiness to perform their professional duties safely and effectively. Special attention is given to the development of professional driving skills, including emotional, cognitive, and motor abilities, and the stages of their formation. The study also discusses the organization of drivers' work, medical and psychological requirements for professional suitability, and the impact of fatigue and alcohol consumption on driving performance and road safety. The analysis emphasizes that professional mastery is achieved through continuous training, strict adherence to safety regulations, and systematic monitoring of drivers' psychophysiological conditions.*

**Key words:** *professional suitability, driving skills, psychophysiological abilities, emotional stability, cognitive processes, motor skills, driver training, work organization, road safety, alcohol influence.*

1. Professional competence and driving skills

Professional suitability is, in general, the compliance of a person with the requirements of a certain professional activity; a conclusion about suitability for a given profession is provided by a labor expertise.

Professional suitability is a set of physical and psychological abilities required for a specific profession.

Professional mastery is the driver's ability to quickly assess a traffic situation, predict its development, and correctly and promptly use the technical capabilities of the vehicle in the most difficult and unexpected circumstances.

Skills are automated methods of work that form the elements of complex conscious activity.

2. Compliance of an individual with the driving profession

Currently, there is no unified standard for all individuals regarding the conditions and requirements for effective and safe driving. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account differences between statistical and psychological data related to the tendency to be involved in road traffic accidents.

The concept of "driver compatibility" must meet not only the requirements of road traffic safety but also the need to reach the destination safely and quickly, maintaining an optimal driving mode considering speed and traffic density. These requirements reflect the driver's ability to adapt and control the vehicle in accordance with safety and speed standards [8].

The use of experimental psychology methods makes it possible to timely identify drivers who do not meet the required standards. However, an effective assessment of psychophysiological processes through training and practice is only possible with a complete and proper understanding of the nature of these processes and their manifestation in drivers' activities.

3. Emotional and cognitive abilities in driver training

The formation of professional driving skills means developing driving actions to a high level of automation. One of the main causes of high accident rates is self-employment of drivers who have not yet mastered automated driving skills.

In driving activities, three groups of skills can be distinguished: emotional, mental, and motor.

Emotional abilities are perceptual abilities in which feelings play the main role. They allow the driver to quickly and accurately determine the distance between their vehicle and other objects on the road — the basis of dynamic vision. They are crucial in assessing vehicle speed, listening to engine sounds, quickly perceiving minor deviations in driving direction, and evaluating tire contact with the road (visual analyzer, hearing, vestibular system, and muscular or tactile sense).

Thinking or mental abilities are necessary for decision-making when determining the speed and accuracy of timely assessment of the traffic situation.

Driving skills determine the speed and accuracy of a driver's control actions in response to signals from the vehicle, the road, and the environment. The psychophysiological foundation for developing motor skills lies in conditioned reflexes.

Three stages of motor skill formation are distinguished:

Stage 1: Individual movements are combined into a single coordinated action.

Stage 2: With repetition, unnecessary and incorrect movements are eliminated; tension decreases and movements become more precise. Partial automation develops.

Stage 3: Most actions are performed automatically, i.e., without conscious control — consciousness only manages the process.

A trainee improves driving skills under difficult road conditions, in heavy traffic, at night, etc. Attention becomes more focused on external stimuli; nervous tension decreases, and performance improves. The level of automatism is such that an experienced driver no longer consciously thinks about operating the controls — hands and feet move instinctively. However, if an error occurs, the mind immediately intervenes and corrects it. The effectiveness of a skill depends on the learner's abilities and emotional state. Therefore, each student should be approached individually.

4. Organization of the driver's work and determination of professional suitability

Prolonged driving can reduce driver concentration and increase reaction time, which is extremely dangerous for road safety. To prevent such situations, drivers' working hours are regulated.

According to Article 115 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the working time for drivers of transport enterprises must not exceed 40 hours per week — 7 hours per day with a six-day workweek, or 8 hours per day with a five-day workweek (this schedule does not apply to bus, taxi, special-purpose, or night-shift drivers).

Strict compliance with proper use of work and rest time must be monitored. Drivers may not work more than 7 hours per day with a six-day week. Night working hours should be limited to 6 hours between 22:00 and 04:00.

Drivers engaged in intercity transportation must have sleeping berths in vehicles if they plan to be on the road for more than 12 hours, and two drivers must be assigned to the route. During intercity trips, a driver should rest 10 minutes after the first 3 hours and after every subsequent 2 hours of driving. Daily rest (between shifts) must be at least twice as long as the working day. For example, if a shift lasts 8 hours, the rest time should be at least 16 hours.

Proper work organization requires that the driver regularly operates the same vehicle and along a familiar route.

A major deficiency in work organization is that many drivers work overtime, violating rest schedules and creating serious safety risks.

Suitability for the driving profession is primarily determined by a person's training, deep knowledge of traffic rules, psychophysiological readiness to operate a vehicle, willingness to comply with established regulations, and integrity in the interest of public safety.

Individuals wishing to become drivers must undergo a medical examination. During the examination, vision, hearing, reaction to external (traffic) and internal (vehicle) stimuli, and other psychological features are evaluated. All drivers must undergo medical checkups in accordance with the procedures established by the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Uzbekistan. A special commission is formed to conduct these examinations, consisting of a therapist, surgeon, ophthalmologist, neurologist, psychologist, otolaryngologist, and for women, a gynecologist. In case of disputes regarding fitness for driving, the issue is resolved by higher-level medical commissions at the ministry, regional, or district level.

In certain cases, individuals with specific physiological impairments may be allowed to drive. For example, persons with leg injuries may use adapted vehicles with manual controls, or persons with hearing impairments may drive using special hearing devices. Research is currently underway to allow color-blind individuals to drive. Overall, the system for determining driving fitness in our country corresponds to the standards of developed nations.

5. Driving safety and alcohol

A widely used method for detecting alcohol in the human body is measuring its level in blood, urine, or exhaled air. For most people, a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 percent (per mille) has a mildly sedative effect.

When blood alcohol levels reach 0.05 – 0.15 %, noticeable changes occur in balance, coordination, and movement. At first glance, a person may appear more active or talkative, but in fact, brain activity is inhibited, not stimulated. A high alcohol concentration impairs the driver's abilities and judgment, making them believe they are performing better than they actually are. Long-term studies show that 45–57 % of drivers who died in road accidents had a blood alcohol concentration of 0.1 %. Norway was one of the first countries to introduce a legal "per mille" limit for blood alcohol content. If a driver's blood alcohol level exceeds 0.5 per mille (50 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood), the driver is considered intoxicated.

Alcohol affects the central nervous system, slows information processing, increases reaction time, and causes errors in decision-making, often leading to fatal situations. Research shows that about 30 % of drivers involved in accidents were under the influence of alcohol.

The higher the alcohol concentration, the greater the risk of an accident (Table 1).

Table 1

| Indicators | Blood Alcohol Content (‰) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-0,5 (Sober) | 0,51-0,99 | 1,00-1,49 | 1,5 and above |
| | Risk of a drunk driver crash compared to a drunk driver | | | |
| Accident risk compared to sober driver | 1 | 15 | 39 | 104 |
| Drivers killed in accidents | 1 | 13 | 98 | 556 |

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