

DRIVING SAFELY
WHILE AGING

Gracefully



Senior Drivers

Under Involved In Crashes
Over Involved In Fatalities

The Facts

- By 2030 Minnesota's population of persons over age 65 will grow to 1.2 million
- In 2013 according to the Minnesota Department of Public Safety:

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Total Killed</u>	<u>Total Injured</u>
60-69	50	2366



Are Older Drivers at Risk?

Crashes

- By 2030 Minnesota's Studies reveal that Crash Rates go down by age until about 60 years of age.
- They rise dramatically from the age 65 and up.

Fatalities

- The rate of fatality increases slightly after age 65
- The rate of fatality increases significantly after age 75

Why?

Increased inability to withstand physical trauma that occurs with age

Older people are more likely to:

- Break bones
- Sustain injuries at lower speeds
- Have lengthy hospital stays/higher costs
- Need lengthy rehabilitation



Most Cited Contributing Factors

- In multiple-vehicle crashes, for drivers through age 64, driver inattention or distraction is cited most often, and failure to yield right of way is cited second most often.
- After age 65, the pattern reverses: failing to yield is most common, and inattention or distraction is second most common.

Watch for Changes Ahead...

- Vision
- Attention
- Physical abilities
- Sensing
- Deciding
- Cognitive
- Mobility
- Hearing
- Illness or use of medication





Warning Signs and Symptoms

- Forgets to buckle up
- Does not obey stop signs or traffic lights
- Fails to yield the right of way
- Drives too slowly or too quickly
- Often gets lost, even on familiar routes
- Doesn't stay in his/her lane
- Is honked at or passed often
- Reacts slowly to driving situation
- Makes poor driving decisions



Continued

- Failing to recognize dangerous situations
- Becoming more agitated or irritated when driving
- Scrapes or dents on car, garage, or mailbox
- Getting lost more often
- More frequent close calls
- Being warned or ticketed for moving violations
- Vehicle crashes (several “fender benders”)
- Trouble moving foot from gas pedal to brake pedal
- Unpredictable stopping in traffic

What Signs?



Vision



- Have regular eye exams
- If you have trouble with night vision, limit driving to daytime hours
- Turn your head frequently to compensate for potential diminished peripheral vision
- Keep headlights, mirror and windshields clean
- Add a larger rearview mirror to increase the range of visibility
- Keep your eyes up – look at the road ahead

Cognition

- Leave more room in front of the car
- Allow greater distance between you and the vehicle ahead
- Avoid left turns if they are uncomfortable
- Make sure you have enough time and space to safely cross oncoming traffic before turning left
- Prepare your route ahead of time



Fitness

- Stay physically fit
 - Increase the strength, flexibility and coordination that is needed to operate a vehicle safely.
- Stay mentally active
 - Using your problem-solving skills in a non-driving way can help mental flexibility to prepare for the driving task.

Medications

- Read the fine print to be sure you can drive
- Inform your doctor about what no-prescription medications you are taking
- Be certain you are aware of medication side effects
- Always check with your doctor if you stop taking a medication
- If any medications makes you feel sleepy or disoriented DON'T drive

Fit Your Car To You

- Adjust the steering wheel, seat and headrest
- Check on special adaptive equipment
 - Steering
 - Foot-pedal
 - Seatbelts

I am concerned about a
loved ones driving...What
should I do?



Talk to Them...

- Don't bring up your concerns in the car.
- Realize that your loved one may become upset or defensive.
- If they don't want to talk about it, bring it up again soon.
- Explain why you are concerned. Give specific reasons:
 - Recent fender benders getting lost, or running stop signs

Be a Good Listener!



Help Make Transportation Plans

- Make a formal agreement about driving
- Help create a transportation plan
- Provide other transportation options so they don't feel isolated or stranded

Encourage a Visit to the Doctor

- Check medical history
- List of medications
- Are current health issues affecting his/her driving safety



Suggest a Driving Assessment



Resources

- AAA
- AARP
- Central MN Council on Aging
- Courage Center
- DARTS
- Emergency Services
- Federal Highway Administration
- Governors Office of Traffic Safety
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety
- Minnesota Safety Council
- Minnesota State Patrol
- National Safety Council
- The Hartford



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