

Should I Stop Driving?

Do other drivers often honk at you? Have you had some accidents or traffic tickets? Are you getting lost even on well-known roads? Have family members or friends said they were worried about your driving? Do you drive less because you are not as confident as you once were? If you answered yes to any of these, you probably should think seriously about whether or not you are still a safe driver. If you have questions about your driving ability, talk to your doctor.

What Happens When Someone Gives Up Driving?

If you choose to give up driving, Driver and Motor Vehicle Services (DMV) will exchange your current license for an identification card.

What Happens When Someone Reports Me?

Family doctors are required to report an unsafe driver to DMV when a driver's medical impairment is severe and uncontrollable. DMV will usually suspend driving privileges until it can be determined that the driver is able to safely operate a motor vehicle.

Anyone can report concerns about a driver's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle including; healthcare professionals, social workers, friends, and family. These reports usually result in DMV requiring the driver to pass DMV vision, knowledge, and drive tests.

How Will I Get Around?

Family members and friends can help. Most communities offer taxi services and reduced bus fares for older people, and some offer special transportation services on request. Senior centers may offer shuttle services. For information on transportation in your area, contact the **Area Agencies on Aging** at (800) 282-8096.

For more information:

Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Driver Safety Unit

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Salem, OR 97314
(503) 945-5083
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www.oregondmv.com

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How's My Driving?

Staying Safe Behind The Wheel



Oregon Driver and Motor
Vehicle Services

Staying Safe Behind The Wheel

Older drivers are some of the safest drivers because they rarely speed or drive after drinking. Knowing how age and certain medical conditions may affect driving can help you stay safe behind the wheel as long as possible.

How Does Age Affect Driving?

Physical Changes

As people age, joints may stiffen, muscles weaken, and vision may deteriorate. Turning your head to look back, steering, or braking the car may become difficult.

Mental Changes

Reflexes may be slower, and it may be more difficult to focus your attention. You may have a hard time doing two things at once — something you have to do to drive safely.

Health Problems

Dementia causes serious memory, personality and behavioral problems that can impair driving.

Other illnesses common among older adults can affect driving — such as arthritis, Parkinson's disease, depression, or stroke.

Diabetes may cause nerve damage in your hands, legs, or eyes and it may put you at risk of losing consciousness.

Medications

Older adults often have one or more long-term illnesses and may be taking several different drugs. A combination of medicines can increase the effects

of each drug on the body. Drugs that might interfere with driving include sleep aids, medicine to treat depression, antihistamines, strong pain-killers, diabetes medications, tranquilizers, cough medicines, and decongestants. If you are taking one or more of these medications, talk to your doctor and/or pharmacist.

How Do Medications Affect My Driving?

Roadwise Rx, developed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety, allows drivers to use a free online tool to see how any prescription and/or over-the-counter medications used can affect the ability to safely operate a motor vehicle. Visit: www.SeniorDriving.AAA.com



Steps to Better Driving

Older drivers are most at risk while yielding right of way, turning — especially left turns — changing lanes, passing, and using freeway ramps. Pay extra attention at those times. If there is not a left-turn arrow, look for alternate routes that do provide such lights.

Avoid difficult situations such as driving at night, on highways, during rush hour, and in bad weather. Limit your trips to lower the chances of a crash. Stick to streets you know. Leave a big space between your car and the car in front of you. Don't drive when you are tired.

Take a driving refresher class. Some car insurance companies reduce your payment if you pass such a class. Contact the **American Association of Retired Persons** (AARP) Driver Safety Program at **(888) 227-7669** for details about courses in your area. An online version of the course is available at: www.aarp.org/drive/online

The **American Automobile Association** (AAA) has a similar class, Safe Driving for Mature Operators, available in classroom and online formats. Contact the AAA at **(800) 448-7916**, or your local AAA office for class information, or visit: www.SeniorDriving.AAA.com