



With age comes wisdom. But the older we get, the more conditions arise that may affect our ability to drive safely. Whether it's you, a loved one or someone in your care, it's important to keep track of changes, including vision, medications, physical limitations and reaction time.

Everyone is different, but there are some signs to look for and guidelines to keep. Having these discussions and making these decisions can be difficult, but they also keep people – including the people we care about most – safe.



Resources

Many organizations and government agencies have resources available for family members, caregivers and aging drivers. For everything from finding driving assessment programs to starting the conversation and planning trips without a car, help is available.

Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon

adrcoforegon.org

Oregon Department of Transportation

oregon.gov/odot/dmv/50plus

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/older_adult_drivers

AARP

aarp.org/auto/driver-safety

Drive Safely. The Way to Go.
Transportation Safety – ODOT

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Let's talk about aging and driving.

Tips for recognizing changes and providing options.





Know the Signs

Driving abilities can change slowly over time or suddenly after an injury or illness. Because these changes may not be immediately evident, recognizing them is an important first step.

Things to look for are:

- Getting lost on familiar routes
- Feeling nervous or fearful while driving
- Trouble paying attention to signals or road signs
- Slower response times to unexpected situations
- Frequent close calls, or near crashes
- A change in medical conditions or medications



- Hearing loss or changes in peripheral vision
- Increased traffic tickets or warnings for infractions, such as driving too slowly or erratically



Start the Conversation

The ability to drive can be closely associated with a sense of independence. No matter who raises the issue or has concerns, these conversations can be difficult. However, they are crucial to have.

To prepare for the conversation:

- Consult with experts such as law enforcement officers, elder-care professionals and healthcare providers. They can offer advice.
- Ride along with the driver at different times of day. Keep track of your thoughts and observations.
- Look into refresher courses, driver assessment and retraining programs. The American Occupational Therapy Association can help. Find them online: aota.org



It helps to frame the conversation as a safety issue. Don't just talk about taking away the keys or limiting driving.



Make a Plan

Driving isn't the only way to get around. Understanding how to meet transportation needs can help loved ones plan how to get where they're going, when they need to be there.

Alternative transportation options include:

- Ride hailing services/apps
- Carpooling
- Public transportation
- Walking
- Local ride services



Try some of these options and services so you know how they work, how much they cost and whether or not they will be a practical replacement for driving.

Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon provides searchable resources for many services, including transportation. Remember, if someone is no longer able to provide their own transportation, they may need assistance with other tasks.



Fatality rates of drivers 65+ are 17 times higher than those of 25- to 64-year-olds.