

DRIVING TIPS FOR SENIORS

CARVER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



- ▶ “Between 2013 and 2020, the population of Minnesotans aged 65 and older will increase over 28 percent. Age alone does not determine a person’s ability to drive safely, each of us ages differently.”
- ▶ “National research suggest that crash rates for older drivers are actually decreasing due to better health, vehicles with helpful technologies, more driving experience and safer roadways”.

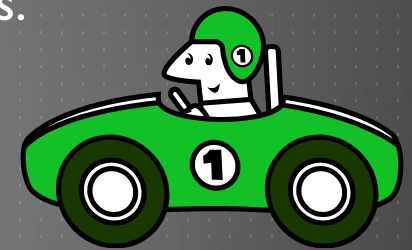
(Source: MN Dept. of Public Safety, Office of Traffic Safety)



BASIC FUNDAMENTALS OF DRIVING

- ▶ Always wear your seatbelt
- ▶ Be rested.
- ▶ Always wear corrective lenses as required.
- ▶ Don't drink and drive.
- ▶ Don't wear sunglasses in dim or dark conditions.
- ▶ Avoid distraction such as using a phone or map.

These are basic fundamentals of driving for ALL age groups.



HEALTH FACTORS AND DRIVING

- ▶ **Visual Decline:** Vision declines with age, which means depth perception and judging the speed of oncoming traffic become more difficult.
- ▶ **Hearing Loss:** Hearing loss happens gradually. You may miss important cues such as a honking horn or emergency sirens.
- ▶ **Limited Mobility:** Flexibility may decrease, making reaction times increase.
- ▶ **Medications:** Know the side-effects of current medication.

Make sure to get an annual eye exam and physical.
Increased exercise and improved nutrition may help
physical changes.



CARFIT

- ▶ “CarFit” is a community based program developed by AARP, AAA and The American Occupational Therapy Association (AOTA) to help aging drivers improve the fit of their vehicle for safety and comfort.
- ▶ A CarFit check-up includes items such as: proper seatbelt use and fit, proper positioning of seat, adequate distance from the front airbag and more.
- ▶ For more information on CarFit and finding a CarFit event, visit www.car-fit.org or contact Carver County Public Health, Office of Aging at (952) 361-1329.



CHANGING HABITS

Minimize or prevent high-stress situations by avoiding difficult traffic situations.

- ▶ Drive in well lit conditions.
- ▶ Drive in clear, non-hazardous conditions.
- ▶ Avoid rush hour.
- ▶ Limit highway driving.

Map out the safest ways to destinations before leaving for appointments or events.

BENEFITS OF NOT DRIVING

- ▶ Save money!
 - ▶ This includes: insurance, maintenance, registration and gas.
- ▶ Improve health!
 - ▶ Giving up driving often means more physical activities. Regular exercise can help boost energy, help you sleep better, manage symptoms of illness/pain, maintain independence and for some, reverse the signs of aging! Exercise is good for the body, mind, mood and memory!
- ▶ A growing social life!
 - ▶ Reach out and connect to new people through church or other local groups for rides.
- ▶ Slower change of pace!
 - ▶ Slowing down improves mental health by placing less stress on the nervous system.

ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

- ▶ Know the transportation alternatives, such as:
 - ▶ Public transportation
 - ▶ Ride sharing
 - ▶ Community shuttles/senior transit
 - ▶ Taxis or private drivers
 - ▶ Walking/cycling
 - ▶ Motorized wheelchairs

LOCAL ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION

▶ SmartLink

- ▶ Reservations can be made 7 days in advance by calling (952) 496-8341, Mon.-Fri. 7:00 am – 3:30 pm.

▶ Transit Link

- ▶ Call (651) 602-5465 to reserve a ride. Operates Monday through Friday, 6:00 am – 7:00 pm.

▶ WeCAB

- ▶ Call (844) RideWeCAB. Operates seven days a week.

▶ Taxi's

- ▶ Suburban Green and White Taxi - Call (952) 884-8888
- ▶ NYA Taxi (Norwood/Young America) – (952) 466-3829



WARNING SIGNS OF UNSAFE DRIVING

- ▶ A friend or family member has expressed concern about your driving.
- ▶ You sometimes get lost while driving on routes that were once familiar.
- ▶ You have been pulled over by a police officer and warned about poor driving behavior.
- ▶ You have had several moving violations, warnings, close calls or actual crashes in the last three years.
- ▶ Your doctor or other health caregiver has advised you to restrict or stop driving.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ▶ Be aware of your physical limitations and how they may affect your driving.
- ▶ Listen to what people tell you who know you best and care about you most.
- ▶ Discuss driving with your doctor – they can evaluate you physically and also the interactions and side effects of all the medications you may be taking.
- ▶ Refresh your knowledge of safe driving practices and learn about new traffic control and roadway design features through a mature driver class.
 - ▶ Minnesota Safety Council offers Seasoned Driver Training Programs, and if you're 55 or older, you can get a discount on your personal auto insurance. It's taught by experienced, professional traffic safety instructors, including officers of the MN State Patrol. The class consists of lectures, films and discussions. There is no behind-the-wheel driving or tests. Contact your insurance agent or visit www.minnesotasafetycouncil.org/traffic/mature.cfm for more information.

TALKING TO LOVED ONES ABOUT DRIVING

- ▶ Be respectful.
 - ▶ Being supportive and understanding will make the discussion easier.
- ▶ Specific examples.
 - ▶ Specify incidents that you have noticed, such as, “You brake suddenly at stop signs” or “You didn’t see the bicyclist in the crosswalk and almost hit him.”
- ▶ Strength in numbers.
 - ▶ If more than one person has noticed and shows concern, it’s less likely to be taken negatively. Also, impartial parties, such as doctors could be more influential.
- ▶ Focus on alternatives.
 - ▶ Help research other options or offer rides when possible.
 - ▶ You may also contact the Carver County Sheriff’s Office for advice and assistance.

If all else fails, it may be necessary to physically take the keys or car away. However, this can cause confrontations and should only be used as a last resort.

For more information or questions,
please contact the Carver County
Sheriff's Office at (952) 361-1212 or
Carver County Public Health – Office of
Aging at (952) 361-1329.