

## Mature Drivers and Safe Mobility

In the United States, driving is the primary means of mobility, accounting for more than 90 percent of all person-miles traveled daily. Nationally, by 2030, 18.9 percent of all vehicle-miles driven will be by persons over age 65, three times the amount since 1990. The ability of mature adults to drive a vehicle is a significant predictor of their quality of life, including functional dependence and both physical and mental health.

Mature drivers are reluctant to stop driving, especially rural residents who do not have access to convenient alternatives for travel. As the boomer generation ages, an increasing proportion of the population is at risk of becoming isolated and immobile, because of where they live and the lack of transportation alternatives.

## Demographics

By 2030, Minnesota's population of persons over age 65 will grow to 1.2 million and the proportion that drives will grow rapidly as well. In 2006, 14.7 percent of licensed Minnesota drivers are over age 65 with the number of licensed drivers 85+ increasing by 28.7 percent since 2001.

Motor vehicle injuries are the leading cause of injury-related deaths among 65-74 year olds and the second leading cause among 75-84 year olds. Mature drivers also have a higher fatality rate per mile driven than other age groups, except drivers under age 25.

## Resources

### Minnesota Partnership for Safe Mobility

- AAA Minnesota/Iowa
- American Occupational Therapy Association
- Courage Center
- DARTS
- Federal Highway Administration, MN Division
- Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
- Minneapolis VA MC–GRECC
- Minnesota Board on Aging
- Minnesota Department of Public Safety
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Safety Council
- University of Minnesota:
  - Center for Transportation Studies
  - HumanFIRST Program
  - Program in Occupational Therapy

### Additional Resources for Mature Drivers and Their Families

There are programs and services specifically designed for mature drivers. To find out how to help you arrive safely, visit the MPSM Web site:

[www.tzd.state.mn.us/mpsm](http://www.tzd.state.mn.us/mpsm)

Mature Drivers



*Keeping the freedom...  
as long as safely possible*

Created by:

**Minnesota Partnership  
for Safe Mobility**

# Mature Drivers and Safe Mobility in Minnesota

## Know the Fundamentals

Basic rules for safe driving apply to any age group:

- Always wear corrective lenses as required.
- Be rested. Don't drive when you are physically tired, emotionally upset or sleep deprived.
- Don't wear sunglasses in dim or dark conditions.
- Don't drink and drive.
- Ask your doctor or pharmacist how your medications affect driving.
- Always wear your seat belt.

## Drive a Safe Car

Look beyond the conventional safety features and consider these:

- Height-adjustable seats.
- Tilt steering wheel.
- Height-adjustable safety belt anchors.
- Legible instruments.
- Large mirrors.
- Push-button controls.
- Power windows, steering and door locks.
- Equipment such as pedal extenders and hand controls.

## Find A Safe Way

Consider driving with a friend or map out and practice the safest ways to routine destinations: grocery stores, churches, doctors' offices, shopping centers, etc. Look for well-lit streets, clear signs, well-marked lanes, easy parking and intersections where stop lights have left turn arrows. All of these things make your drive safer.

## Avoid Risky Drive Times

Minimize or prevent high-stress situations by avoiding difficult traffic situations. Mature drivers may continue to drive safely for many years by adjusting their habits:

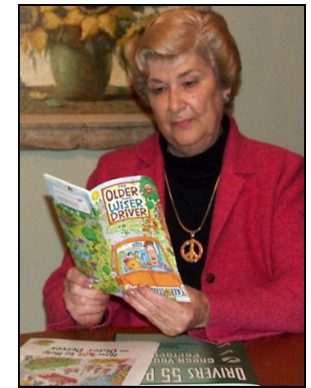
- Drive during daylight.
- Drive in good weather.
- Avoid rush-hour traffic.
- Limit fast-paced highway driving.

## Go Back To School

A driving course for mature adults can update drivers on traffic laws and suggest useful ways to adapt driving habits to accommodate aging. Some courses qualify mature drivers for a reduction in auto insurance costs. For a complete list of driving courses offered in Minnesota, visit [www.tzd.state.mn.us/mpsm](http://www.tzd.state.mn.us/mpsm).

## How to Help a Mature Driver

It's not easy to think about aging, much less to talk about it. Bringing up the subject of safe driving may be awkward, but if you can talk now, you and your family can have a plan for the coming years.



Tips for making the conversation a little easier:

- Recognize that a mature driver is not necessarily an unsafe driver. Decisions will be made based on the specific needs of the person and the situation.
- Acknowledge that giving up driving is a big deal for most drivers.
- Emphasize that safety is most important.
- Review specific transportation needs and develop a way to accommodate them.

Agree together on a plan of action. It may begin with avoiding risky driving situations, seeking education, rehabilitation or adaptive equipment and eventually lead to retiring from driving.

Retiring from driving doesn't mean retiring from life. Plan ahead and learn about the options for getting around when driving isn't a safe option.

Keeping the freedom... as long as *safely* possible