

Guide for Aging Drivers



Introduction

We all want to maintain our independence as we get older. For many people, their independence is connected to their car. Drivers who review and manage their driving skills can retain their independence longer, while limiting risks to themselves and others.

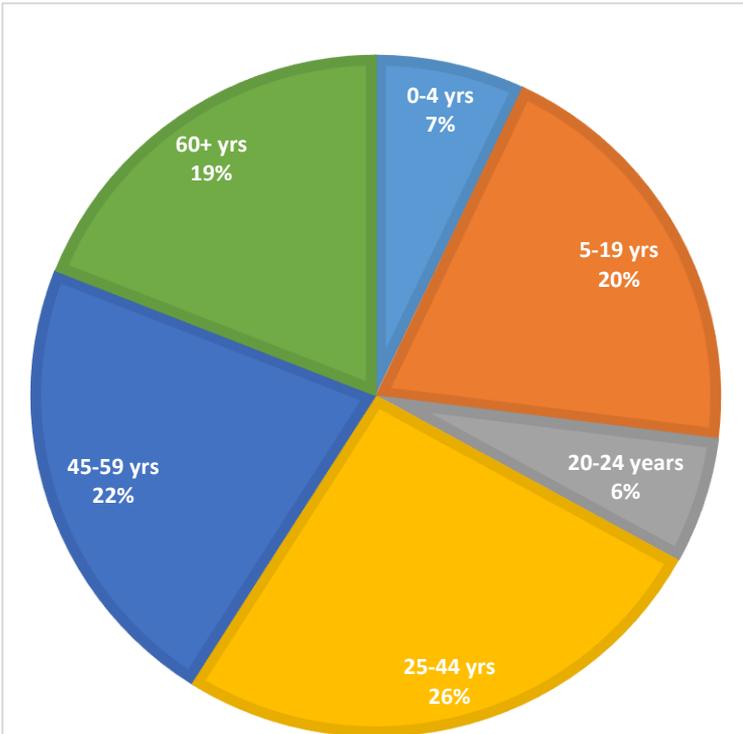
This is a guide for Logan County's aging drivers and their family members. It is important to understand how aging and changes in health status affect the ability to drive safely.

Population Facts

Just like the rest of the United States, the population of Ohio is getting older. One of the fastest growing age groups is the 60+ group with 19% of the total population.

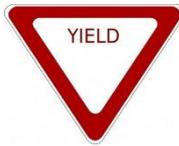
Ohio Population by Age Group

11.2 Million Total



Are you safe to drive?

Many of us see our cars as an extension of ourselves that take us wherever we want, whenever we want. However, a time may come when driving is no longer a safe option. The decision to stop driving is never an easy one. The key to a positive and painless transition is planning.



Our driving skills may deteriorate slowly as we age and often we are unaware of the changes taking place. The checklist on the following page is taken from the *Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers*, published by the AMA.

Checklist

Check the box if the statement applies to you.

- I get lost while driving.
- My friends and family say they are worried about my driving.
- Other cars seem to appear from nowhere.
- I have trouble finding and reading signs in time to respond to them.
- Other drivers drive too fast.
- Other drivers often honk at me.
- I feel uncomfortable or fearful while driving.
- After driving, I feel tired.
- I feel sleepy when I drive.
- I have had some “near misses” lately.
- Busy intersections bother me.
- Left hand turns make me nervous.
- The glare from oncoming headlights bother me.

- My medication makes me dizzy or drowsy.
- I have trouble turning the steering wheel.
- I have trouble pushing the foot pedal.
- I have been stopped by the police for my driving.
- I have difficulty backing up.
- I have had crashes that were my fault in the past year.
- I am too cautious when driving.
- I sometimes forget to use my mirrors or signals.
- I sometimes forget to check for oncoming traffic.
- I have more trouble parking lately.

If you checked any of the boxes, your safety could be at risk when you drive. Talk to your doctor about ways to improve your safety if you are experiencing any of the conditions or symptoms that may be affecting your ability to drive.

Self-Regulation Tips

Many older drivers self-restrict their driving to avoid uncomfortable or risky situations.

Some of these include:

- Drive only during the daytime if you are having difficulty seeing at night.
- Avoid heavy traffic.
- Don't drive in unfamiliar areas.
- Drive only during good weather.
- Avoid freeways with fast paced driving.

Also,

- Map out safe routes with easy parking
- Drive with a friend that can assist.
- If left turns make you nervous, make 3 right turns.
- Let someone else drive.

Factors that can affect your driving....

VISION

90% of driving decisions are based on what we see, making good vision important to safe driving.

- Increase following & braking distance
- Properly adjust mirrors and seat
- Clean mirrors and windows
- Have regular eye exams and wear prescribed eyewear
- Avoid driving at night

PHYSICAL FITNESS

We can lose strength as we age and reduced flexibility of muscles and joints. Can you easily turn the steering wheel and press the brake pedal? Can you look over your shoulder to change lanes or look left & right at intersections?

REFLEXES

Reaction times can increase as we age. Driving requires attention to multiple areas and we must be able to react quickly to changes.

- Increase following & braking distance
- Limit distractions
- Avoid driving at night, during rush hour or in bad weather

OVERALL HEALTH

Heart disease, medications that affect balance or conditions that affect memory or cause confusion can drastically reduce your ability to drive safely.

- Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your medications
- Read all warning labels for your prescriptions
- Do not drive if you feel disoriented

Did you know?

According to a report by the Erie Insurance Company, twenty percent of all accidents occur in parking lots.

There are four major causes of parking lot accidents involving older drivers.

- Pedal Error
- Driver inattention
- Backing Errors caused by flexibility decline
- Decline in vision

On the following page you will find tips for older drivers to help in preventing parking lot accidents.

A valuable resource for families dealing with this complex and sensitive issue is Keeping Us Safe's "*Beyond Driving With Dignity*" The workbook for older drivers and their families.

<https://keepingussafe.wordpress.com>

What can the older driver do to lessen the likelihood of being involved in a parking lot accident?

1. Use only pull-through parking spots; don't park in a spot that you will need to back out of!
2. Talk to your doctor about exercises to maintain flexibility and strength.
3. Expect the unexpected (child running in front of your car, etc.)
4. Correctly set the outside mirrors and consider adding blind spot mirrors.
5. Park away from other cars and don't park in a spot that you will need to back out of!
6. Shop on less busy days like Monday and Tuesday.
7. Do not drive if you are taking medications that might impair your judgment.
8. Don't park in a spot where you will have to back out of!

Resources

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety –
www.SeniorDriving.AAA.com – This website provides expert advice, resources and interactive tools to help older drivers assess their skills and keep them driving as long as safely possible.

AARP Driver Safety Program –
www.aarpdriversafety.org – This refresher course can help you learn the effects of aging on driving and how you can adjust your driving.

Fitness-to-Drive Screening Measure –
<http://finesstodrive.php.ufl.edu> – This is a free tool developed by the University of Florida to help caregivers or loved ones assess an older adult's driving fitness.

Transportation for Logan County –

[\(937\)593-0039](tel:(937)593-0039). Provides general public transportation service. Reduced fares are available through the Ohio Elderly & Disabled Transit Fare Program (E&D) for persons 65 years of age and above or disabled. Medical trips may be provided at no cost through Title XX or TIII programs for those 60 years and older. Please call for more details.

Superior Delivery & Transit – Specializes in non-emergency medical transport and more. (937)935-1267

Robinaugh EMS – An emergency medical service and patient transportation service. They offer basic & advanced life support ambulance service, wheelchair transport and are a Passport provider. (937)599-2340.

Integrity Ambulance Service – Transports patients on an emergency and non-emergency basis. (800)704-7846

Clymer Medical Transport – Transports patients on a non-emergency basis within 7 counties including Logan. (419)222-3786.

Blue Jacket Taxi- Operate Monday-Friday 8am – 6pm. Saturday 10am-6pm. Closed on Sundays and holidays. (937)593-0800.

Greyhound Bus – There are stops in Kenton, Lima, Springfield and Findlay. (800)231-2222.

This booklet was provided to you by:



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