

Michigan's Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families



Great Lakes Great Years

safety from shore to shore



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Introduction

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

Michigan's Senior Mobility Work Group understands the concerns older drivers face when it comes to driving, and is committed to keeping all drivers licensed for as long as it is safe for them to drive.

This guide is a resource for Michigan's aging drivers, their family members, and caregivers. It is important to understand how aging and aging-related changes in health status affect the ability to drive safely. This guide is intended to help with that understanding. It also provides references to where more information and services may be obtained.

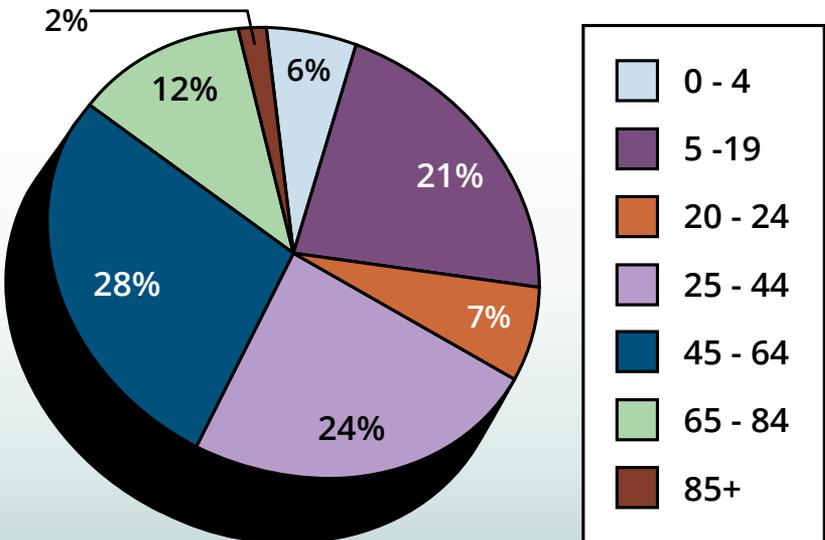


Population Facts

Like the rest of the United States, the population in Michigan is getting older. Michigan has one of the oldest populations in the country, with 14 percent of the residents being age 65 or older, according to the 2010 census. This age group is the fastest growing segment of the population in Michigan.

2010 Michigan Population by Age Group

9.88 Million



Today's older adults continue to drive into their later years and for more miles than in the past. Research suggests that older adults can expect to outlive their ability to drive safely by seven to 10 years.

Michigan's Senior Mobility Work Group

The Senior Mobility Work Group is a statewide group of traffic safety partners organized under the direction of the Governor's Traffic Safety Advisory Commission.

The group has been working to meet the challenges of Michigan's aging population since 1997.

The goals and objectives of the Senior Mobility Work Group are to:

- Improve the safety and mobility of aging Michigan residents even when driving is no longer a safe option.
- Reduce traffic crashes involving older drivers resulting in fatalities and serious injuries.

This guide has been developed to assist with meeting those goals.

Michigan's Senior Mobility and Safety Action Plan

The Senior Mobility Work Group has developed an action plan that focuses on:

- Promoting and sponsoring research on senior mobility issues.
- Planning for an aging mobility and transportation-dependent population.
- Promoting the design and operation of Michigan roadways with features that better accommodate the special needs of older drivers and pedestrians.
- Developing and/or enhancing programs to identify older drivers at increased risk of crashing and taking appropriate action.
- Encouraging senior-friendly transportation options.
- Improving communication and coordination among partners at the state, regional, and local levels to enhance senior mobility.
- Providing recommendations related to senior mobility and safety legislation.

With this action plan, the Senior Mobility Work Group is trying to strike a balance between safety and mobility to make sure that Michigan residents are able to maintain independence and remain active in the community even when driving may no longer be a safe option. For more information visit www.michigan.gov/gtsac.

Roadway Improvements

Transportation agencies and private agencies in Michigan, such as the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), county road associations, local communities, and the American Automobile Association (AAA), have made roadway changes to help residents with visual and physical issues associated with aging, including:

- Improved intersection safety with roundabouts, protected left-turn phases, and box span signal installation.
- Increased visibility by:
 - Using larger lettering and Clearview font on guide signs that makes signs easier to read.
 - Using new materials to make signs more visible and easier to read at night.
 - Using larger 12-inch signal heads at intersections and railroad signals.
- Improved pedestrian features at intersections, including the use of:
 - Countdown pedestrian signals.
 - Refuge islands.
 - Longer walk times.
- Advance notification through the use of:
 - Advance street name signs.
 - Advance warning signs (Stop, Yield, Signal Ahead).



Licensing Requirements

A Michigan driver's license is usually valid for four years and expires on your birthday in the year shown in the upper right corner of the license.



To remind you to renew your driver's license, the Michigan Department of State sends a renewal notice about 45 days before expiration. Plan to renew at least two weeks before your current license expires. You are eligible to renew your driver's license by mail or online if:

- Your last renewal was completed at a Secretary of State office,
- The Department of State has your verified Social Security number,
- You do not hold a commercial driver's license (CDL), and
- You are not listed on the sex offender registry.

You must renew your license in person at a Secretary of State office in two instances:

- 1) Your renewal notice states, "You **cannot** renew your license by mail," and/or
- 2) Your physical or mental condition has changed since you last renewed and it may affect your ability to drive.

When you renew your driver's license at a Secretary of State office, you are asked a few general health questions as part of the screening process. If there is any question about your physical condition and your ability to operate a motor vehicle safely, you will be required to have your physician complete a Physician's Statement of Examination (DI-4P) form for department review. The *Physical and Mental Standards for Drivers* contains rules that outline the physical and mental requirements for driving in Michigan.

You will be given a vision test to determine if your vision meets minimum standards. If corrective lenses (such as glasses or contact lenses) are needed to pass the test, your driver's license will show that you must wear them while driving. If you fail the vision test, your eye care specialist will be required to complete a Vision Specialist's Statement of Examination (DI-4V) form for department review. A favorable vision statement means a driver's license may be issued. Your driver's license application will be denied if the vision statement confirms that you do not meet the standards. Sometimes, special driving limitations (such as "daylight driving only") will be required based on the vision statement and other information acquired by the Department of State. The *Visual Standards for Motor Vehicle Drivers' Licenses* contains rules that outline the visual requirements for driving in Michigan.

The administrative rules are available online at www.michigan.gov/sos or by calling 888-767-6424.

No-Fee Identification Cards

Under Michigan law, a state identification card is as valid as a driver's license for identification and must be accepted by all businesses. You may return your driver's license to a Secretary of State office and obtain a state identification card. This identification card is free if:

- You are legally blind.
- You are age 65 or older.
- You have lost your privilege to drive due to a physical or mental disability.



Am I Safe to Drive?

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For most adults, the driver's license is the most important document that offers mobility and independence. Many of us see cars as physical extensions of ourselves that take us wherever we want, whenever we want. However, the time may come when driving is no longer a safe option. The decision to stop driving is never an easy one. However, the key for a positive transition from driving is *planning*.



Warning Signs/Self-Assessment

Our driving skills may deteriorate slowly so that we are unaware of what is happening. Self-awareness is the key to safe driving. The self-assessment below, taken from the *Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers* (published by the American Medical Association) can help you decide if you should have your driving abilities evaluated.

Check the box if the statement applies to you:

- I get lost while driving.
- My friends or family members 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, nervous, 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 bothers me.
- My medication makes me dizzy or drowsy.

- I have trouble turning the steering wheel.
- I have trouble pushing down the foot pedal.
- I have trouble looking over my shoulder when I back up.
- I have been stopped by the police for my driving.
- People no longer will accept rides from me.
- 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 have checked any of the boxes, your safety may be at risk when you drive. Talk with 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 safely.

If you notice one or more of these warning signs you may want to have your driving assessed by a driver rehabilitation specialist (page 34), request a driver reexamination with the Michigan Department of State (page 20), or attend a driver refresher class (page 33).

Family and Caregiver Involvement

Families, friends, or caregivers can be effective in helping you with the issues of aging and safe driving. It is important for everyone involved to prepare to start this conversation by knowing and understanding:

- Signs and symptoms indicating driving problems (page 13 - 14).
- Tips on observing the older adult's driving abilities.
- How to understand the meaning of driving from the loved one's perspective.
- Suggestions on how to begin the driving discussion.
- How best to talk about appropriate driving choices and ways to travel around the community.
- Community resources for driving evaluation and remediation.
- Strategies for driving reduction or retirement.
- Local transportation options.

This conversation can be difficult for everyone involved but do not let these reasons stop you from having it:

- Apprehension about the older driver's response.
- Fear of being disrespectful.
- Isolation of the older driver if they live alone.
- Burden on others for rides.
- A crisis has not yet occurred.

Developing a transportation plan early can be a solution for everyone to maintain quality of life and independence when driving may no longer be a safe option.

Most older drivers alter their driving habits as they age. However, it is not always obvious when their actions behind the wheel are cause for concern. That's when the actions of family, friends, a physician or law enforcement become important.

There are many organizations that have developed resources to help older drivers and their caregivers make driving decisions. One example, the Hartford Advance 50 Team, together with the MIT AgeLab, created free publications to help families address sensitive subjects and foster meaningful family conversations about older driver safety. For more information, visit

www.thehartford.com/mature-market-excellence.

AARP offers a free online seminar called "*We Need to Talk*." The course teaches how to assess a loved one's driving skills and provides tools to have this important conversation. For more information, visit

www.aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety.

Changes in Driving Behavior

Family members or caregivers need to be aware of potential problems affecting safe driving when the older adult:

- Is forgetful or confused.
- Uses bad judgment when driving.
- Fails to follow the rules of the road.
- Cannot see where they are going.
- Exhibits aggressive driving.
- Drives well below the speed limit.
- Experiences multiple traffic crashes (dents or dings on the car).
- Neighbors, friends, or others indicate there is a problem.

Doctors and the Medical Community

Doctors and health care providers are also important partners for you in planning your safe driving needs.

They can help you be more aware of how medical conditions may affect your physical or mental function that can impact your safe driving fitness. When the effects of a medical condition are progressive, periodic evaluations are required. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) *Driver Fitness Medical Guidelines*, medical conditions that affect safe driving can fall into these three categories:

- Conditions that create functional limitations.
- Conditions that involve a possible loss of consciousness.
- Use of substances (alcohol, drugs, and medications) judged to be incompatible with safe driving.

We can all expect to be confronted by mobility problems as we age. This does not mean that the medical community can withdraw or suspend your driving privileges; only the Department of State has the authority to make that decision. The health professional's role is to provide the Department of State with the information it needs to help determine your ability to drive safely as it relates to your state of health.

Reporting Unsafe Drivers

Some older drivers do not realize their driving skills have deteriorated and discussing the problem with them may be difficult. Reporting an unsafe driver may seem drastic, but in some cases it may be the only way to handle a serious situation.

The Department of State receives referrals for driver reexaminations from medical professionals, law enforcement, family members and friends, or concerned citizens. All information provided remains confidential to the extent permitted by law. Anonymous tips cannot be accepted.

Physicians and optometrists are not required but may report to the Secretary of State a patient's mental and physical qualifications to operate a motor vehicle. If they do report, and want to be immune from criminal or civil liability, the report must be based on a medical episode; they must recommend a period of license suspension of at least six months in the case of an operator's license; and document the episode in the patient's record.

The Secretary of State will keep the report and recommendation confidential to the extent permitted by law (2012 PA 354 and PA 355).

To refer an unsafe driver either:

- Submit a Request for Driver Evaluation form (OC-88) that is available at any Secretary of State office or online at www.michigan.gov/sos or
- Send a written letter requesting a reexamination.

The following information must be included whether you submit an OC-88 form or a written letter:

- The driver's full name, date of birth, current address and/or driver's license number.
- Your full name, address, telephone number and signature.
- An explanation as to why the driver is being referred for a driver reexamination.

Submit your request to:

Michigan Department of State

Traffic Safety Division

P.O. Box 30810

Lansing, MI 48909-9832

Fax: 517-335-2189

Email: medicalforms@michigan.gov

Form OC-88 Sample

REQUEST FOR DRIVER EVALUATION



Michigan Department of State
Traffic Safety Division
P.O. Box 30810, Lansing, Michigan 48909-9832
Email: medicalforms@Michigan.gov
Phone: 517-335-7051 Fax: 517-335-2189

As provided by Section 257.320 of the Michigan Vehicle Code, the Department of State may conduct a reexamination of a person if there is reason to believe that the person is incompetent to drive a motor vehicle or is afflicted with a mental or physical infirmity or disability rendering it unsafe for that person to drive a motor vehicle. Please provide a description of a medical episode, incident, pattern of behavior or other evidence that you believe justifies an evaluation of an individual as it relates to their ability to drive safely. **All sections of this form must be completed.**

Section 1: Driver's Information				
Today's Date:	Driver's Full Name (as it appears on license if known)	Driver's License Number (if known):		Date of Birth:
Street Address:		City:	State:	ZIP Code

Section 2: Why the Driver Should be Evaluated
Explain why this driver should be scheduled for an evaluation. **The Department of State cannot process a request for an evaluation unless specific information is provided indicating that an unsafe driving condition may exist.** Additional space is provided on the back of this form and additional documents may be attached.

Section 3: Requestor's Information			
Requestor's Name		Agency name, if applicable:	
Street Address:	City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Telephone Number:		Date:	
I certify that the information provided in this request is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.			
Requestor's Signature:			

Driver Reexamination Process

Under Michigan law, the Department of State may require a reexamination if the driver (regardless of age):

- May have a physical or mental condition that impairs his or her ability to drive safely.
- Has been involved in three or more negligent crashes resulting in injury or property damage during the last two years.
- Has been involved in a fatal crash.
- Has 12 or more points on his or her driving record within two years.
- Has been convicted of violating the terms, restrictions or conditions of his or her driver's license.

The purpose of the driver reexamination is to review an individual's driving abilities, behaviors and habits to determine what actions may be required to ensure safety for the driver and other road users. A reexamination does not result in an automatic loss of a driver's license. Recommendations can often be made that allow the driver to continue driving safely.

Drivers may be required to have their physician complete a Physician's Statement of Examination (DI-4P) form or their eye care specialist to complete a Vision Specialist's Statement of Examination (DI-4V) form. These completed forms are reviewed and considered along with the other segments of the reexamination, such as one or more of the following tests being administered: vision, road sign identification, written knowledge, cognitive, and on-the-road driving tests.

A driver assessment analyst will conduct the driver reexamination and evaluate the driver's ability to drive safely based on their performance on any tests that were administered and the information provided by their physician and/or vision specialist. The analyst will determine if any driving restrictions are necessary, such as requiring special equipment or restricting the times and/or locations that may be driven. Subsequent driver reexaminations may be required. A decision may also be made to suspend or revoke the driver's license.

Failure to report for a reexamination will result in a suspended driver's license, and the driver must contact the department to reschedule an appointment.

Safety Tips for Road Users

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We all want to maintain our ability to go where we want, when we want, especially as we grow older and enjoy more leisure time. Self-awareness is the key. People who can accurately assess their fitness to drive can adjust their driving habits and stay safe on the road. With smart self-management, you can retain the independence that comes with driving, while limiting the risks to yourself and others.



Self-Regulation Tips

Many older drivers self-restrict their driving to avoid risky situations. Some common strategies are to:

- Drive only during the daylight if you are having trouble seeing at night.
- Drive only during good weather conditions.
- Avoid rush hour and heavy traffic.
- Avoid fast-paced highway driving.
- Avoid driving in unfamiliar areas.

A few additional strategies older drivers should consider are:

- If left turns are a problem or make you nervous, make three right turns, make left turns at traffic lights with a turn arrow, or pick a less busy intersection for your turn.
- Map out safe routes, such as those with well-lit streets, less traffic, left turns with left-turn arrows, clear signs, and easy parking.
- Drive with a friend.
- Let someone else drive when you are uncomfortable with it.

Not all road users are drivers. Many people walk, ride bicycles or motorcycles. It is important that everyone learn how to safely share the road with all road users.

Safety Tips for Drivers

All drivers should:

- Not drink alcohol and drive.
- Always wear your eyeglasses, if applicable, and make sure they are a current prescription.
- Avoid distractions while driving, such as mobile phones, eating, pets, etc.
- Wear a seat belt.
- Avoid driving while taking medications that make you drowsy or dizzy.
- Drive when rested and avoid driving for long periods.
- Choose a vehicle that has a comfortable fit, provides maximum visibility and minimal physical strain.
- Take care of your car by making sure there is plenty of gas, tuning it up regularly, and keeping lights, windshields and mirrors clean.
- Make sure all objects and occupants are secured so they do not become airborne during a crash.

- Look twice before turning. Most crashes occur at intersections.
- Make sure to always signal when changing lanes.
- Increase following distance during inclement weather.
- Drive slowly when approaching a crosswalk and be prepared to stop for pedestrians.
- Stop far enough in advance so drivers in other lanes can also see the pedestrian in time to stop.
- Do not pass other vehicles that are stopped for pedestrians.
- Keep at least three feet between your vehicle and a bicyclist when passing.
- Be aware that pedestrians and bicyclists may cross your intended path if you are waiting for a gap in traffic to safely make a turn.
- Check your blind spots before changing lanes or merging, especially in heavy traffic.
- Give yourself extra time to respond by leaving at least a four-second distance between your car and a motorcycle in front of you.
- Be aware of pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists. They can be very hard to see, especially in bad weather or at night.
- Give a full lane to a motorcycle when passing. Do not share lanes!

Safety Tips for Winter Driving

- Keep tires at the car manufacturer's recommended pressure and routinely check tire pressure during cold weather.
- Make sure the windshield wiper fluid tank is full and keep new wiper blades on front and rear wipers, if so equipped.
- Wash your car for better visibility to other drivers, and remove ice and snow from all lights, windows and the license plate before driving.
- Periodically check all lights and replace when necessary.
- Prepare a winter driving survival kit with items such as an extra winter coat, pants, hat, boots and gloves; blanket; nonperishable food; flashlight with batteries; dry container of matches; jumper cables; tow strap; first-aid kit; shovel; salt or sand; road reflectors or emergency warning lights; and a spare tire and jack.
- If you become stranded in a winter storm, do not leave your vehicle. Stay with the vehicle and wait for help.
- Keep vehicle fuel tank near full to prevent the fuel line from freezing.



Safety Tips for Pedestrians

Not all road users are drivers. Many people walk or ride bicycles or motorcycles. It is important that everyone learn how to safely share the road with all road users.

- Avoid roads and interstates where pedestrians are restricted or prohibited.
- Use extra caution at intersections.
- Only cross in a marked crosswalk, especially on multi-lane and higher speed streets.
- Use sidewalks when provided. When there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic on the shoulder of the roadway.
- Make it easy for drivers to see you by dressing in light colors and wearing reflective material both in front and back. Use a flashlight at night or in dimly lit locations.
- Do not count on drivers always paying attention.
- Make eye contact with drivers to be sure they see you. Watch where you are going at all times.
- Avoid any alcohol or drugs, which can impair your ability to walk safely.



Safety Tips for Bicyclists

- Always ride with traffic and follow the rules of the road.
- Do not ride on the sidewalk.
- Ride on the trail, paved shoulder, bike lane, or bike route.
- Make it easy for drivers to see you by dressing in bright colors and wearing reflective material both in front and back.
- Watch for debris that might make you fall or swerve.
- Watch for turning traffic.
- Wear appropriate safety gear, including helmet.



Safety Tips for Motorcyclists

- Get properly trained and endorsed.
- Wear appropriate safety gear, including a helmet, gloves, boots, eye protection and a jacket to protect you in a crash. Bright colors and reflective materials will increase your visibility.
- Be extra cautious, paying attention to the signals and brakelights of other vehicles, especially trucks.
- Conduct a safety inspection of your motorcycle before each ride.
- Watch your speed, especially in bad weather or at night.
- Never hang out in another vehicle's blind spot.



Keeping Safe While Driving

To keep you safe while driving, it is important to know the resources that are available in Michigan.

CarFit

CarFit is an educational safety program created by the American Society on Aging and developed jointly with the American Automobile Association AAA, AARP, and the American Occupational Therapy Association. CarFit is designed to keep you safe and comfortable by improving the “fit” between you and your vehicle. CarFit helps promote safe driving conversations while providing you information about transportation safety and mobility resources available in your community.

CarFit checkups are free, fun, and don't take much of your time. Trained volunteers will help you learn things such as:

- What is the clear line of sight over your steering wheel?
- What is the safe distance between you and your air bag?
- What is the proper position of your seat and all mirrors?
- What is the proper use and fit of your seat belt?

To find a CarFit event near you, visit www.car-fit.org.

Driver Safety Courses

Refresh your knowledge of safe driving practices, traffic signs, and roadway features by taking a driver safety class. Classroom and online classes are available. To find a course near you, contact your local AAA branch or AARP Driver Safety Program.

- AAA,
www.seniordriving.aaa.com
- AARP Driver Safety,
www.aarpdriversafety.org

Driver education schools are another resource for refreshing, assessing, or improving your driving skills. A list of certified providers is available through the Department of State online at www.michigan.gov/sos or by calling 888-767-6424.

Driving Skills Assessment

Consider having an evaluation of your driving. A driver rehabilitation specialist can help you determine how a visual, physical, or mental condition may be affecting your ability to drive safely. They will also help you develop and implement a plan for how you may drive safely despite your limitations. In some cases, simple changes in driving habits might make driving safer or simple vehicle adaptive devices can help you continue to drive safely. Some examples of adaptive vehicle equipment available are large side mirrors, seat belt adaptors, pedal extenders, steering wheel turning knobs, braking devices, and seat lifts. Your local rehabilitation hospital's occupational therapy department may be able to help you locate a driver rehabilitation program in your area, as well as the organizations below:

- Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists, www.aded.net or 866-672-9466
- American Occupational Therapy Association, Inc., www.aota.org/older-driver or 301-652-2682
- Michigan Department of State Rehabilitation Agencies and Resource list, www.michigan.gov/sos

The Impact of Aging on Driving

Most people see a steady decline in some of the skills important for driving as they get older. Generally, starting at age 55 there often is a slow decrease in how well we process information, remember and judge driving events, such as the distance of oncoming traffic. However, the changes of aging do not affect all drivers in the same way. Specific skills, such as vision, memory, strength, flexibility, and quick reaction time, decline as we age, but the rate varies from person to person.

Your health is closely connected to your driving. You must be able to see well enough to detect hazards in different types of lighting, judge distances, adjust to the speed of traffic, and read road signs. Your brain must be alert enough to quickly decide the correct course of action in any type of traffic situation, including unexpected ones. Your body must also be able to respond and react quickly.

Driving presents particular challenges to older people because of changes in vision, cognition, and physical function. The increased use of medications as we get older may affect driving as well. It is your responsibility to understand how your limitations affect your driving.

The NHTSA “Older Drivers” web page provides links to a series of pamphlets that address the more common medical conditions that affect an older person’s ability to drive safely, such as Alzheimer’s, arthritis, cataracts, stroke, etc.

You may also contact NHTSA for free traffic safety information at 888-327-4236. The website also provides information for medical professionals, with two noteworthy publications: *Driver Fitness Medical Guidelines* and the *Physician's Guide to Assessing and Counseling Older Drivers*.

- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
www.nhtsa.gov/Driving+Safety/Older+Drivers



Vision

The main sense you use in driving is vision. Visual decline is the most important loss for aging drivers. Aging eyes need:

- More light to help distinguish features along the roadway.
- To be closer to properly read traffic signs and markings.
- More time to recover from the glare of bright headlights at night or the sun.

It is important that you see well to help ensure safe driving. Have your eyes checked as recommended by a vision specialist. If you wear glasses or contact lenses for driving, please remember to:

- Always wear them when you drive, even if you are only traveling a short distance. If your driver's license indicates that you must wear corrective lenses and you are not wearing them, it may result in missing a stop sign, getting involved in a crash, or receiving a ticket.
- Keep an extra pair of glasses in your car in case your regular glasses get broken or lost. This will also help if you only use glasses for activities such as driving and you forget your regular pair when you get in the vehicle.
- Avoid wearing dark glasses or tinted contact lenses when driving at night, even if you think it will help with headlight glare. Dark or tinted glasses/lenses can shut out light. You need as much light as possible to help you see clearly when driving at night.

Hearing

Good hearing is important because it alerts you to the sirens, horns, and other audio cues needed to drive. Hearing often changes as you get older. You should see your audiologist or other hearing specialist regularly because it is important to maintain your hearing, and wear hearing aids if necessary. It is as important to keep a hearing aid up-to-date as it is the prescription for your eye glasses or contacts. Avoid turning your hearing aid down or off even if you think that it reduces distraction.

Medication

Roadwise RX is a free confidential online tool developed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety that adults can use to explore how medications may affect safety behind the wheel. www.seniordriving.aaa.com

Cognition

Cognition is the act of processing information for knowledge and understanding. It includes your ability to think, use your senses, pay attention, learn, read, and problem solve. Driving is a very complex activity that requires you to use many of these skills whether you are driving a short or long distance.

Driving is a complex task that requires you to process and remember several objectives simultaneously, such as how to operate your vehicle in all kinds of conditions, what traffic signs and signals mean, and how to get to your destination safely. You must be able to do all these things while processing any other information you encounter when you are behind the wheel.

Faulty cognition may result in:

- Distraction or disorientation as you are driving.
- Problems maintaining control of your car for long distances.
- Slower response to traffic signs, signals, or markings.
- Trouble recognizing changes in traffic conditions, traffic hazards, and emergencies.
- Delayed reaction to seeing and responding to the position of other cars, trucks, or motorcycles as they change lanes or as you enter the roadway.
- Trouble recognizing and safely responding to pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Problems properly operating the controls in your car, such as confusing the brake and gas pedals.
- Improper use of your turn signal to warn other drivers when your car is turning or changing lanes.
- Trouble planning and safely maneuvering your driving route.
- Frequently becoming lost or confused when driving. This can result in panic and sudden irrational changes while driving, such as losing control of your car.

Dementia

Dementia is a decline of cognition due to loss of or damage to nerve cells in the brain and can affect many of the critical abilities you need to drive safely. These may include perception and visual processing, maintaining attention, responding to multiple stimuli, making correct decisions, and acting appropriately in difficult traffic situations. People in the early stages of dementia may still be able to operate a vehicle under normal circumstances but will have increased difficulty as the disease progresses.

The NHTSA *Driver Fitness Medical Guidelines* lists the following signs to help determine if a person needs evaluation for possible dementia:

- Scores from simple screening tools show possible cognitive issues.
- Has had a recent crash or moving violation.
- Has been prescribed medications for memory problems.
- Uses medications, such as tranquilizers, benzodiazepines, neuroleptics, or antidepressants.
- Is 80 years or older.
- Has a recent history of falls.

Physical Condition

As we age, we usually lose muscle mass and bone strength, which increases your chances of injury or death in a crash. Drivers age 65 or older have four times the odds of sustaining serious injuries compared to drivers under age 24.

Aging can also result in sensory issues in your hands and feet, such as tingling, numbness, and problems telling where they are positioned. These can affect your ability to feel, grasp, manipulate, or release objects. Loss of strength results in trouble keeping a firm grip on your steering wheel or keeping consistent pressure on the pedals with your legs and feet.

Decreased flexibility may cause rigidity or limited range of motion in the neck, torso, arms, legs, or joints. Vertigo, dizziness, or loss of balance can occur, along with muscle spasms or tremors that may cause you to lose control of your vehicle.

Common Driving Errors

Taking into consideration how aging effects your driving, these are the most common problem areas:

- Making left turns.
- Driving at night.
- Merging into traffic.
- Changing lanes.
- Keeping up with the flow of traffic.
- Yielding to traffic.
- Following traffic signals.
- Impaired driving
(including prescription and over-the-counter medication).

Retirement from Driving

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Those of us who drive want to continue driving as long as we can do so safely. However, for many of us, the time will come when we must limit or stop driving for our safety and the safety of others. Consideration should be given to the transportation options available in the area where you plan to retire. You may want to choose a location closer to services or one that has access to alternative transportation options.



Develop a Transportation Plan

Currently, nine out of 10 older adults prefer to grow old in their own homes. However, in order to “age in place” comfortably you need access to transportation when you are no longer able to drive safely. If you have no other transportation options, you may feel forced to continue driving even when it is no longer safe or stop driving altogether and stay home, which can lead to isolation and depression.

Learn about your transportation options now, create a transportation plan, and try them out. Options you may have in your area include bus and trolley services, senior shuttles, walking, friends and family, taxis, community driving services, etc.

- If you are concerned that you do not know how to use public transportation, there are programs available that help people learn how to use them or you can ask a friend to accompany you.
- Ask questions about the services and schedules of each type of transportation available to you, including whether they offer evening or weekend rides.
- The costs associated with taxi cabs and other fee-for-hire transportation services can be offset by the savings you'll realize once you're no longer paying for owning, maintaining, insuring and parking your car.
- Using alternate transportation releases you from the worries of driving and parking your own car.

PLANNING TABLE

Where do I want to go?	How many miles from my home?	How often do I want to go?	Can I take a bus? Y/N	Can I ride with my family/friends? Y/N	Can I walk there? Y/N	Are there other services to get there? Y/N
Grocery Store						
Church						
Doctor's Office						
Shopping						
Entertainment						
Visit Family/Friends						
Other						

Transportation Options

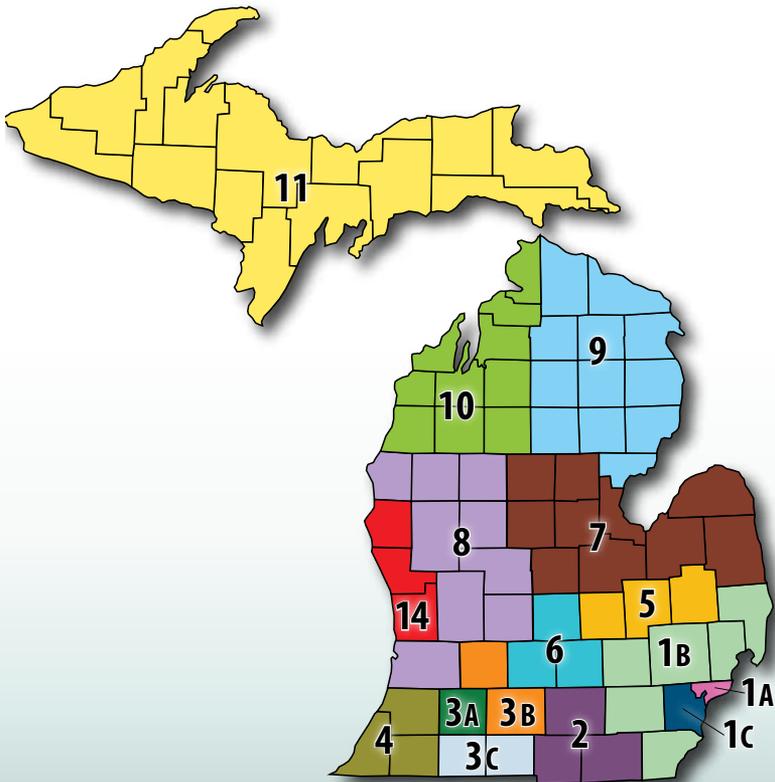
The Michigan Department of Transportation website at www.michigan.gov/mdot (click on “Rail and Public Transit”) provides information about public transportation services.

The Michigan Department of State provides an alternative transportation list which is searchable by county, and includes contact information and a description of services available. Visit www.michigan.gov/sos or call 888-767-6424.

The Eldercare Locator is a nationwide directory assistance service designed to identify local resources for the aging. Call 800-677-1116 toll-free or visit their website at www.eldercare.gov.

Michigan Area Agencies on Aging

Michigan's 16 Area Agencies on Aging are trusted, unbiased, non-profit organizations that provide information, resources, and services to older adults, persons with disabilities, and their family caregivers. Professional resource specialists provide information and assistance on housing options, in-home services, home-delivered meals, care management, caregiver relief services, legal assistance, counseling, training, transportation options, nursing facility transitions, and Medicare and Medicaid assistance.



1-A Detroit Area Agency on Aging

1333 Brewery Park Blvd.,
Suite 200
Detroit, MI 48207

Phone: 313-446-4444

Fax: 313-446-4445

Website: www.daaa1a.org

*Serves cities of Detroit,
Grosse Pointe (GP), GP Farms,
GP Park, GP Shores, GP Woods,
Hamtramck, Harper Woods,
Highland Park*

1-B Area Agency on Aging

29100 Northwestern Hwy.,
Suite 400
Southfield, MI 48034

Phone 248-357-2255

Toll-Free: 800-852-7795

Fax: 248-948-9691

Website: www.aaa1b.com

*Serves counties of Livingston,
Macomb, Monroe, Oakland,
St. Clair, Washtenaw*

1-C The Senior Alliance, Inc.

3850 Second St., Suite 100
Wayne, MI 48184-1755

Phone: 734-722-2830

Toll-Free: 800-815-1112

(SE MI only)

Fax: 734-722-2836

Website: www.aaa1c.org

*Serves all of Wayne County
excluding areas served by
Region 1-A*

2 Area Agency on Aging

102 N. Main St., P.O. Box 189
Brooklyn, MI 49230

Phone: 517-592-1974

Toll-Free: 800-335-7881

Fax: 517-592-1975

Website: www.r2aaa.net

*Serves counties of Hillsdale,
Jackson, Lenawee*

3-A Area Agency on Aging

Kalamazoo County
Human Services Department
3299 Gull Road, P.O. Box 42
Nazareth, MI 49074-0042

Phone: 269-373-5147

Info Line: 269-373-5173

Fax: 269-373-5227

Website: www.kalcounty.com/aaa

Serves Kalamazoo County

3-B Area Agency on Aging

200 W. Michigan Ave., Suite 102
Battle Creek, MI 49017

Phone: 269-966-2450

Toll-Free: 800-626-6719

Fax: 269-966-2479

Website: www.region3b.org

Serves counties of Barry, Calhoun

3-C Area Agency on Aging (III-C)

Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph
Community Health Agency
570 Marshall Road
Coldwater, MI 49036
Phone: 517-278-2538
Toll-Free: 888-615-8009
Fax: 517-278-2494
Website: www.bhsj.org/AAA

*Serves counties of Branch,
St. Joseph*

4 Area Agency on Aging

2900 Lakeview Ave.
St. Joseph, MI 49085
Phone: 269-983-0177
Toll-Free: 800-442-2803
Toll-Free: 800-654-2810
(Senior Info Line)
Fax: 269-983-5218

Website:
www.areaagencyonaging.org

*Serves counties of Berrien, Cass,
Van Buren*

5 Valley Area Agency on Aging

225 E. Fifth St., Suite 200
Flint, MI 48502
Phone: 810-239-7671
Toll-Free: 800-978-6275
(In-state only)

Fax: 810-239-8869
Website: www.valleyaaa.org

*Serves counties of Genesee, Lapeer,
Shiawassee*

6 Tri-County Office on Aging

5303 S. Cedar St., Suite 1
Lansing, MI 48911-3800
Phone: 517-887-1440
Toll-Free: 800-405-9141
Fax: 517-887-8071
Website: www.tcoa.org

*Serves counties of Clinton, Eaton,
Ingham*

7 Area Agency on Aging

1615 S. Euclid Ave.
Bay City, MI 48706
Phone: 989-893-4506
Toll-Free: 800-858-1637
Fax: 989-893-3770
Website: www.region7aaa.org

*Serves counties of Bay, Clare,
Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella,
Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Tuscola*

8 Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan, Inc.

3215 Eaglecrest Drive, N.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49525
Phone: 616-456-5664
Toll-Free: 888-456-5664
Fax: 616-456-5692
Website: www.aaawm.org

*Serves counties of Allegan, Ionia,
Kent, Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Mont-
calm, Newaygo, Osceola*

**9 Area Agency on Aging
Northeast Michigan
Community Service
Agency, Inc.**

2375 Gordon Road
Alpena, MI 49707

Phone: 989-356-3474

Toll-Free: 800-219-2273

Fax: 989-358-6604

Website: www.nemcsa.org

Serves counties of Alcona, Alpena, Arenac, Cheboygan, Crawford, Iosco, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Roscommon

**10 Area Agency on Aging
of Northwest Michigan,
Inc.**

1609 Park Drive, P.O. Box 5946
Traverse City, MI 49696-5946

Phone: 231-947-8920

Toll-Free: 800-442-1713

Fax: 231-947-6401

Website: www.aaanm.org

Serves counties of Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, Wexford

**11 U.P. Area Agency
on Aging
UPCAP Services, Inc.**

P.O. Box 606

2501 14th Ave. South
Escanaba, MI 49829

Phone: 906-786-4701

Toll-Free: 800-338-7227

*(U.P. Senior Helpline for
Information and Referral)*

Fax: 906-786-5853

Website: www.upcap.org

Serves counties of Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft

14 Senior Resources

560 Seminole Road
Muskegon, MI 49444

Phone: 231-739-5858

Toll-Free: 800-442-0054

Fax: 231-739-4452

Website: www.srwmi.org

Serves counties of Muskegon, Oceana, Ottawa

For more information about services to seniors, please contact the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging.

300 E. Michigan, P.O. Box 30676
Lansing, MI 48909-8176
517-373-8230 (Voice)
517-373-4096 (TDD)
517-373-4092 (Fax)
Website: www.michigan.gov/osa

Organizations listed below provided input for the development of this guide.





safety from shore to shore

For more information, an electronic version, or to order more copies of Michigan's Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families visit:
www.michigan.gov/agingdriver

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