

Is it time for your LOVED ONE TO RETIRE FROM DRIVING?

Loved ones play an important role in the safety and well being of the senior driver in their life. If you have concerns about your loved one's driving, it may be time to discuss driving retirement.



If not handled properly, forcing an older driver to give up the keys involuntarily can trigger depression and isolation. This, in turn, can eventually lead to a more rapid deterioration in physical and mental health. It is important to understand when and how the conversation should begin. Do not wait for the older driver to get into an automobile accident or receive a traffic violation. When observing and assessing your loved one's driving, try to differentiate between everyday mistakes and more serious safety risks.

WARNING SIGNS:

- Frequent close calls.
- Finding dents and scrapes on the car.
- Having trouble seeing or following traffic signals, road signs, and pavement markings.
- Slow reactions to unexpected situations, trouble moving foot from gas to brake pedal.
- Gets easily distracted or nervous while driving.
- Having difficulty turning around to check over his or her shoulder while backing up or changing lanes.

WHAT NOW?

Now that you are familiar with the warning signs, what is your next step?

- Together with your loved one, consult with their primary care physician to determine health issues and medications that may impair their driving.
- Start the conversation on a positive note. It is important to maintain the individual's dignity and self-assurance.

- Keep conversations brief and over time. Focus on skills, not age. In the course of the conversation, cite specific examples such as, "I became particularly concerned when you turned left in front of an oncoming car." NEVER say, "Your driving is poor and you're going to get into a bad accident."

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?

Once the older driver recognizes that adjustments need to be made, a plan should be established.

- Exercise has numerous benefits for senior drivers which can add time to driving longevity. Make sure your loved one consults with their doctor before beginning any exercise regimen.
- A mature driver workshop may be the right option. These are offered at community centers, libraries, houses of worship, senior living communities, or AAA.
- Consider a consultation with a certified driving professional. They can perform a hands-on assessment of the individual as well as an assessment of their vehicle. Simple adaptations to driving habits may make all the difference.
- Look for transportation alternatives such as taxis, local government sponsored senior transit buses, senior centers with door to door transportation and private agencies that provide drivers.
- Consider moving your loved one to an area where he or she can walk to stores, or possibly move to an independent senior living community.



This information has been brought to you by the Advocacy Committee of Senior Umbrella Network, an organization of professionals who service the senior communities of Long Island and New York City with chapters in Suffolk, Nassau, Queens, and Brooklyn.

Please visit our websites for additional resources to assist you throughout this process.



Disclaimer: This publication is for informational purposes only. It is not meant to substitute for medical or legal advice. Please seek the appropriate professionals as needed.