

MARYLAND'S
RESOURCE GUIDE
FOR **AGING
DRIVERS**



Maryland Department
of Transportation

MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

No matter your age, driving is one of the most complex everyday things we do. The remarkable human brain allows you to juggle the competing tasks of paying attention to the roadway environment AND controlling your vehicle. Driving decisions need to be made in an instant.

“Driving requires responsibility to operate the vehicle in a safe manner...[to] reduce risk for yourself, your passengers and other roadway users.” (Maryland Driver’s Manual)





- Maryland has more than 4.3 million licensed drivers. People are living longer, remaining active later in life, and many will want to continue driving as long as possible.
- Maryland's largest group of licensed drivers is now 50 – 59 years old – about 815,000 drivers since the year 2000, and many of them are part of the Baby Boomers. This age group has grown by 36% since the year 2000.
- Drivers age 65 and older now make up 17% of all Maryland drivers.
- The group of Maryland drivers age 90 and older is 2-1/2 times larger since the year 2000 – now about 20,000 drivers.

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the Older Driver Safety Forum are working to make sure you have the information and resources you need to continue driving as long as safely possible, and to transition from driving if necessary. This guide contains information to help you drive safely now, identify the risks and warning signs of change, and plan a smooth transition to retiring from driving if and when the time comes.

TYPICAL CRASHES INVOLVING OLDER DRIVERS

- Turning left at an intersection with a stop sign;
- Turning left at an intersection with a green light without a dedicated left turn arrow;
- Turning right at a yield sign to merge with traffic at speeds of 40-45 mph;
- Merging onto a highway from a ramp with a yield sign; and
- Changing lanes on a roadway having four or more lanes.



II. SAFE DRIVING SKILLS FOR LIFE

A. TIPS AND DRIVING SITUATIONS

Understanding the most common crash types can help you avoid high-risk situations and conditions, and to know what to do when you encounter them:

- Always wear a seat belt and make sure all passengers in all seats are belted.
- Judging oncoming traffic can be challenging both at intersections and especially when making left-hand turns. Allow enough time when crossing traffic and pay attention to signs and signals.
- Use caution when merging onto higher speed roads and when changing lanes.
- Be extra careful at intersections. Use turn signals and stay alert for cars and pedestrians entering from the side.
- Always stay in your lane while driving through an intersection.
- Avoid distractions so you can make safe driving decisions.

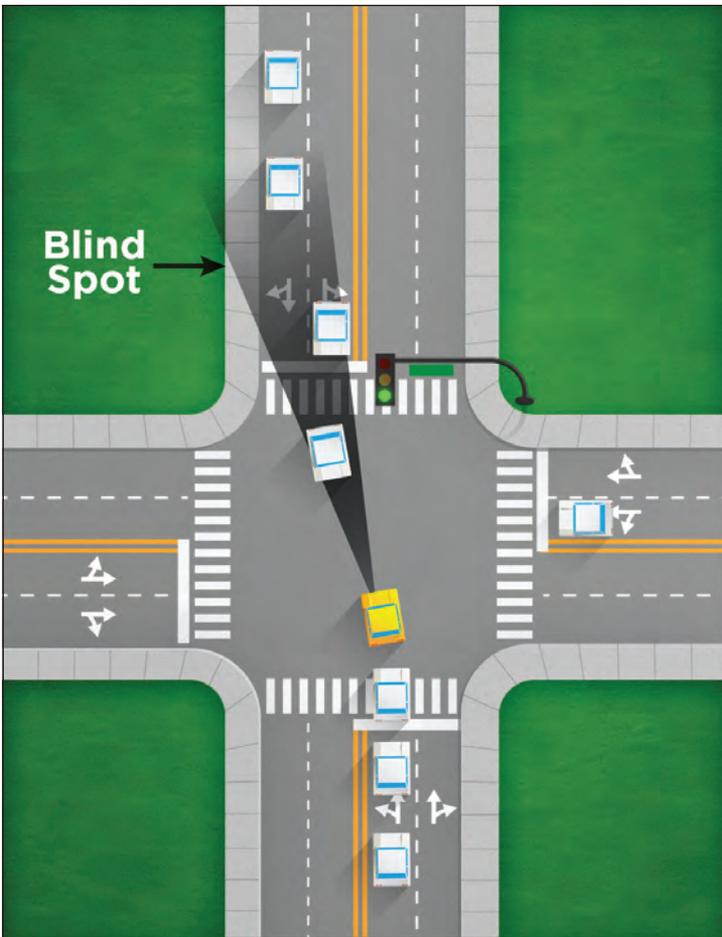
- Drive at or near the speed limit. It's unsafe to drive too fast or too slow.

One common risk among aging drivers – especially those taking medication – is drowsiness. **Drowsy drivers** are just as dangerous as a drunk driver. Drivers become drowsy from exhaustion, changes to medications, or certain medical conditions.

WARNING SIGNS OF A DROWSY DRIVER:

- Your eyes close or go out of focus.
- You have trouble keeping your head up or eyes open.
- You can't stop yawning.
- You have wandering, disconnected thoughts.
- You don't remember driving the last few miles.
- You can't stay in your lane.

Be especially careful at **intersections**. Left turns are one of the most dangerous situations for drivers – because it is often difficult to judge the speed and distance of oncoming traffic. Intersections also create blind spots blocking the view of vehicles coming toward you.



Aging drivers can have trouble at intersections because of slower reaction times. If you have issues judging traffic flow or you notice your reaction time is slower, try using only intersections with a green left-turn arrow. On city streets, you may want to consider going to the next block and then making three right turns instead of making a left turn.

Roundabouts can be challenging, but easy to maneuver if you remember two things: slow down and understand right-of-way. In Maryland, all roundabouts move counterclockwise, drivers already in the circle have the right of way, and you should yield to them.

TIPS AS YOU APPROACH A ROUNDABOUT:

- Reduce your speed.
- Keep to the right of the island.
- Watch for and yield to pedestrians.
- Cautiously approach the yield line and wait for an acceptable gap in traffic.



B. HELP SHARE THE ROAD

Pedestrians have the right-of-way at street crossings but should obey traffic signals. When a traffic signal is not present at intersections, vehicles must stop when a pedestrian is: on the same side of the roadway that the vehicle is traveling; or, if approaching from the nearest lane on the other side of the roadway. Always look out for and stop for pedestrians.

Motorcycles are smaller than cars and trucks, and it can be harder to judge their speed and distance when they are approaching. Drivers should look twice for motorcycles as they can easily hide in blind spots. In crashes, a motorcyclist is six times more likely to be hurt than a car driver.

Bicycles are vehicles with the same rights-of-way and duty to obey all traffic signals as motorists. You can expect to find bicyclists on most roads (except interstate highways and toll facilities), at all times of the day and night. Bicyclists may use the full travel lane for their own safety due to narrow lanes or to avoid road hazards.

TIPS ON PASSING A BICYCLE:

- Pass a bicyclist as you would any slowly moving vehicle.
- Be prepared to slow down, wait until oncoming traffic is clear and then allow at least 3 feet of clearance between your car and the bicyclist when passing.
- The same 3-foot clearance applies if you are passing a bicyclist in a bike lane, on the shoulder, or in the same lane as your car.
- After passing a bicyclist, check your mirror to ensure that you have completely passed the bicyclist with enough room to move safely back to the right.



C. SHARPENING YOUR DRIVING SKILLS

Many driver refresher courses are offered in local communities and online. These courses can update you on changes in traffic laws, signs, signals, markings, and offer tips for driving safely on today's roads. Some also offer behind-the-wheel assessments, which may be especially helpful in identifying any driving skill needs you may have.

AARP provides their *Smart Driver* course – a classroom refresher course for older adults to bring you up to speed on changes to roads and cars, provide tips for handling key focus areas, and covers planning for your transportation as you age. Visit aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety to find a class near you or to sign up for an online class.

AAA and the National Safety Council also offer courses through many of their local offices, and some Maryland driving schools also offer classes for seniors. Insurance companies offer an auto policy discount for drivers who complete these refresher courses, so check with your insurance company to see what courses may qualify.

Visit midatlantic.aaa.com/DrivingPrograms/Overview for local AAA MidAtlantic driver safety resources.

D. YOUR VEHICLE AND YOU

Aging drivers are often more likely to wear their seat belts, and less likely to speed or drink and drive. However, since many older drivers are more fragile than younger drivers, they are more likely to be seriously injured in a crash. Therefore, to improve your safety, ensure your car's safety features are properly adjusted to you. If you are in the market for a new vehicle, follow the recommendations of the experts.

- AAA Smart Features for Older Drivers has online advice on what to look for in a vehicle to optimize comfort and safety. Visit www.seniordriving.aaa.com and click on Maintain Mobility & Independence.
- CarFit: free program, where trained volunteers educate drivers on how they can be the safest in their vehicles. Drivers learn about proper adjustment of seat belts, airbag safety, adjusting mirrors to reduce blind spots, and safe driving habits. For more information, visit www.car-fit.org.



USING YOUR CAR'S SAFETY FEATURES

- Always wear your **seat belt** – properly.
- The lap belt should be low and snug on the hips.
- **Shoulder belts** can be adjusted in most cars so that it does not touch the neck.
- Make sure you are seated at least 10 inches from the **airbag** in the steering wheel.
- Aim the middle of the **steering wheel** at your chest, and not your head, to avoid injury in case of a crash.
- Adjust your **mirrors** to view cars approaching on each side of your vehicle.



III. HOW HEALTH IMPACTS DRIVING

Aging can affect your health, and your health greatly affects your driving! Many older drivers don't face serious medical conditions or functional limitations that affect their driving, but ALL drivers should understand the risks, how to respond appropriately to changes that affect driving, and be familiar with resources to help!

Health issues can affect your driving skills and ability to:

- 1) Recognize hazardous situations.
- 2) Divide your attention on more than one task.
- 3) React quickly to changing traffic conditions.

Impaired vision, physical health, cognitive health, and the medications you take, regardless of your age, can also have an impact on your driving ability.

A. VISION

- A 55-year-old person takes 8x longer to recover from sun glare or bright lights than a 16-year-old person.
- Macular degeneration is the leading cause of severe vision loss in people over age 60.
- Glaucoma and cataracts are common in people with diabetes.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Good vision is essential to good driving health. Vision commonly begins to change after age 40 and it is critical that you maintain healthy vision as you age. Declining vision can impact your ability to detect and respond to road signals, signs, and changing traffic conditions, and can increase your risk of being involved in a crash.

WARNING SIGNS – IMPAIRED VISION:

- Problems reading highway or street signs, or trouble seeing other vehicles and pedestrians, especially at dusk or dawn, at night; or
- Experiencing discomfort from the glare of oncoming headlights.

TIPS FOR VISION CARE:

- See your eye doctor regularly for a full vision screening to check for cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other conditions common with aging.
- Talk to your eye care professional about your driving.
- Keep your windshield and headlights clean.
- Make sure your headlights are properly adjusted with regular maintenance on your vehicle.
- Contact a CarFit technician or driver rehabilitation specialist¹ that can help you identify and reduce blind spots and minimizing glare for the best field of view while driving.

¹ See Section IV on driver rehabilitation specialists

MOST COMMON VISION PROBLEMS WITH AGING



Macular
Degeneration



Glaucoma



Cataract

National Eye Institute

B. PHYSICAL HEALTH

Decreased physical strength and endurance, flexibility, coordination, and reaction time are associated with many age-related medical conditions. These changes may affect your ability to drive safely. Examples are:

- 1) Diabetes can cause loss of feeling in your feet, which can affect your ability to locate and stay on the correct pedal.
- 2) Arthritis can make it more difficult to turn your head to look for traffic, turn the steering wheel, or move your foot between the pedals.
- 3) Any medical problems resulting in falls may affect your driving and should be evaluated by your doctor for medical fitness to drive.

AGE CAN AFFECT RISK OF INJURY

- At crash speeds of 31 mph, the risk of sustaining a serious injury increases dramatically with age.
- A 50-year-old female has about a 10% risk of serious injury in a frontal crash.
- An 80-year-old female has about a 40% risk in the same crash.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Understanding your risks for injury and knowing your options to manage these risks can help you continue driving safely as you age. With age, bodies become more fragile, and aging adults are more likely to be injured, disabled, or killed if involved in a crash. Also with age, it can be much more difficult to recover fully from injuries sustained in a crash.

TIPS:

- Get regular medical check-ups.
- See your health care provider about any pain or changes in strength, flexibility, or coordination.
- An occupational therapist with experience as a driver rehabilitation specialist can evaluate and train you to use special equipment in your car to make it easier to steer, accelerate, and brake.

C. COGNITIVE HEALTH

Safe driving requires the ability to reason, remember and react quickly to any driving hazard, or to avoid a collision. As we age, it can become more difficult to divide attention on the many competing tasks that driving requires, let alone using your cell phone or programming the GPS while driving.

WARNING SIGNS – POSSIBLE COGNITIVE HEALTH ISSUES:

- Feeling overwhelmed by signs, signals, markings, pedestrians, and vehicles at intersections;
- Reacting slower to vehicles coming out of driveways or side streets;
- Failing to realize that another car has slowed or stopped ahead of you; or
- Frequently getting lost or becoming disoriented.

TIPS:

- Plan ahead and avoid driving at night and in heavy traffic.
- When approaching intersections, stay alert for cars and pedestrians entering from any direction unexpectedly.
- Leave enough distance between you and the car ahead of you so you have enough space to react to a sudden stop or turn. Likewise, understand that too large a gap will invite others to cut in front of you in heavy traffic.
- Avoid turning left at intersections without green directional arrows.
- Contact your medical provider with concerns about your cognitive health.

Dementia is a general term for loss of memory and other mental abilities severe enough to interfere with daily life. It is caused by physical changes in the brain.

When a driver has been diagnosed with a type of dementia such as Alzheimer's disease, the issue is not **whether** the person will have to stop driving, but **when** that must happen.



A driver in the early stages of dementia may have sufficient abilities to continue driving. However over time, the driver will not be able to accurately assess their driving skills or determine if they are able to safely operate a vehicle. Anyone diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or any other form of progressive dementia will eventually lose the skills and abilities needed to drive safely.

Therefore, it is a good idea to plan ahead and make a formal agreement about driving soon after being diagnosed with any type of dementia. This agreement allows the patient to choose someone to tell them when it is no longer safe to drive. This person will also agree to help with the transition from driving.

RESOURCES TO CONSIDER:

- A driver rehabilitation specialist can help a driver and their family to develop a plan to transition from driving and use other options for travel to important destinations.
- Sample driver planning agreements are available from the American Occupational Therapy Association at www.aota.org/Practice/Productive-Aging/Driving.aspx and the AAA at www.seniordriving.aaa.com/resources-family-friends/conversations-about-driving.
- Local Alzheimer's Association chapters and support groups have caring people with expertise in helping families and caregivers deal with the transition from driving. Contact the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900 or email at info.maryland@alz.org.

D. DRUGS AND MEDICATIONS

- 78% of drivers use 1+ medications on regular basis.
- 19% of drivers use 5+ medications on regular basis.

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

Many medications and combinations of medications can impact your ability to drive safely. In Maryland, it is illegal to drive while impaired by medications and other drugs. All drivers should avoid driving while impaired.



Just because a drug, such as narcotic pain medications are legal, does not mean that it's safe to use them while operating a motor vehicle. In general, the impairing effects of drugs occur at lower dosages and last longer in older individuals compared with younger individuals.

Talk with your medical provider and your pharmacist to ask how your medications – both prescribed and over-the-counter – can affect your driving ability. It is important to realize many over-the-counter medications can impair a person's ability to drive.

Most people can drive safely if they are taking prescribed and over-the-counter medications, but it depends on the effect those medications

have on your driving. In some cases, you may not be aware of the effects. In many instances, your medical provider can help to minimize the negative impact of your medications on your driving in several ways. Your doctor may be able to:

- Adjust the dose;
- Adjust the timing of doses or when you take the medication;
- Add an exercise or nutrition program to reduce the need for medication; and
- Change your medication to one that causes less drowsiness.

Roadwise Rx is a free online tool developed by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety that can also help you to learn about your medications and their effects on driving. Roadwise Rx records your prescription and over-the-counter medications in one central location, and provides personalized feedback about your medications and how they can impact your ability to drive safely. Visit www.roadwiserx.com/.

E. FALLS AND DRIVING

Falls in older adults are associated with a significantly increased risk of subsequent motor

vehicle crashes. A recent study by AAA *Foundation for Traffic Safety* reports that older adults who had fallen were 40% more likely to experience a crash afterward than older adults who had not fallen.

YOU CAN PREVENT FALLS BY USING THIS CHECKLIST TO REDUCE HOME HAZARDS:

- Remove items and objects on the floor or staircase that you can trip over.
- Place items you use daily in easy to reach cabinets. Avoid step-stools.
- Install lights and handrails on staircases.
- Remove throw rugs.
- Place grab bars in the tub and next to the toilet.
- Use non-slip mats in the tub or shower.
- Keep your home well lit.

Fall prevention programs may help prevent motor vehicle crashes. For more information, visit Maryland's Prevention and Health Promotion Administration at phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/ohpetup/Pages/eip_falls.aspx.



IV. KNOWING IF YOU ARE SAFE TO DRIVE

A driver's age is not a good predictor of driving ability. Changes in functional ability can happen at any age, or as a result of many medical conditions. Therefore, it is important to recognize changes in your driving behavior or abilities, and know where to go for an assessment of your driving skills or other help if needed.



WARNING SIGNS OF DIMINISHED CAPACITY FOR DRIVING SAFELY:

- Having a series of minor accidents or near crashes;
- Difficulty finding the brake pedal or confusing the gas & brake pedals;
- Often drifting out of your lane;
- Driving on the wrong side of the road or in the wrong direction;
- Having wandering thoughts or being unable to concentrate;
- Difficulty making left turns;
- Difficulty merging into highway traffic or entering traffic from a side street;
- Unable to read road signs;
- Getting lost on familiar roads; and
- Family, friends, and others express concern about your driving safety.

A. SELF-ASSESSMENT

A self-assessment or self-screening alone cannot determine whether or not you are a safe driver, but it can provide you with important information to

discuss with family, friends, and your health care provider. It can also identify when a more formal assessment of driving skills may be needed. Several organizations offer free self-assessment guides that you can use to review your own driving performance, including:

- AAA Foundation's *Drivers 65 Plus: Check Your Performance* features a self-rating tool to help you examine your ability to drive safely. It presents 15 statements about driving situations and gives suggestions based on the driver's answers. Visit **www.SeniorDriving.AAA.com**.
- AAA Foundation's *Roadwise Review* is a confidential, online self-assessment screening tool that measures mental and physical abilities important for safe driving. It examines vision, reaction time, and directs users to more information related to driving safety. Visit **www.SeniorDriving.AAA.com**.
- Do a simple self-assessment using the Warning Signs chart on page 34.

B. FAMILY AND FRIENDS INVOLVEMENT

Invite a trusted family member or good friend to drive with you occasionally and ask them to provide honest feedback on your driving. This informal arrangement provides you helpful, candid, and objective information.

Family members and older drivers often prefer to keep these conversations “in the family.” Talk about driving with your family. Limiting driving presents practical challenges and can cause strong emotions for aging drivers. Family members may also feel frustrated or guilty about depriving their loved one the freedom of driving.

You and your family should work together to create a transportation plan – sample worksheets are mentioned ahead in Section V. You may be surprised how, with a plan, you will not need to depend on driving as much as you thought!

C. PROFESSIONAL DRIVING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

If you or a family member recognizes any of the warning signs listed on page 34, what should you do? Is the situation bad enough to stop driving? There are professionals skilled at understanding

medical conditions, aging, and how it affects driving. These professionals are usually occupational therapists with additional training as a driver rehabilitation specialist – someone who can evaluate a driver’s ability and give objective and medical-based information, as well as discuss options to keep you mobile in your community.

Clinical and on-road assessments are provided by **driver rehabilitation specialists**; these are especially important when your driving abilities have been affected by illness or injury. A clinical assessment typically includes evaluation of a person’s arm and leg motion and strength, brake reaction speed, visual acuity, and field of view, attention, concentration, perception, memory and reasoning skills. Adapted driving equipment may be considered if the person has weakness or loss of movement in one or more limbs. An on-road assessment evaluates your ability to drive in traffic safely. The behind-the-wheel assessment will evaluate your ability to drive with adaptive equipment and the amount of training needed to become proficient in controlling the vehicle with the equipment.

Individuals who have had an illness or injury may be referred to a driver rehabilitation specialist to determine if they are safe, able to continue, or ready to return to driving. The driver rehabilitation service may also include driving strategies to compensate for any medical changes. The goal of the service is to assist the individual to drive safely, as much and for as long as possible.

An **occupational therapist** with a specialty certification in driving can assess your driving ability through an office exam and driving test. They also teach strategies, special techniques, or can train a person to use adaptive equipment for safer driving. Some driver rehabilitation specialists have a background in driver education, rehabilitation engineering, or other allied health fields, such as physical therapy or kinesiotherapy.

Visit www.mva.maryland.gov/olderdriversafety and click on **Maryland Driver Rehabilitation Programs** for complete information on Driver Rehabilitation Specialists in the Maryland Area.

Basic listing for Maryland area:

- **Adventist Rehabilitation Hospital of MD**
Rockville, MD | 240-864-6202
- **Beebe Rehabilitation Services**
Rehoboth, DE | 215-886-7706
- **Brant's Driving School, Inc.**
Johnstown, PA | 877-395-7011
- **Doctors Community Hospital**
Lanham, MD | 240-965-8438
- **Focus on Function Occupational
Therapy Services**
Pikesville, MD | 410-484-2761
- **MedStar National Rehabilitation Network**
Washington, DC | 202-877-1035
- **MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital
Outpatient Rehabilitation**
Baltimore, MD | 443-444-4601
- **Rehabilitation of Frederick**
Frederick, MD | 301-682-9110
- **Saint Agnes Hospital Driving Program**
Baltimore, MD | 410-368-8447
- **St. Joseph Medical Center**
Towson, MD | 410-427-2431
- **Sinai Hospital of Baltimore**
Baltimore, MD | 410-601-5830

- **Loch Raven VA Community Living & Rehabilitation Center**
Baltimore, MD | 410-605-7000
- **Washington DC VA Medical Center**
Washington, DC | 202-745-8000, Ext #57623
- **Workforce & Technology Ctr Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)**
Baltimore, MD | 410-554-9365

AAA also offers a driver skills assessment by providing staff who ride with you during a routine drive in your car to evaluate your driving patterns, identify strengths and weaknesses, and offer suggestions to improve your skills. For more information, call 1-800-999-4952, ext. 62722 or 64120 or visit midatlantic.aaa.com/DrivingPrograms/Overview.

D. MEDICAL CARE PROVIDERS

Every person ages differently and there is a great deal of variation in decline. Your health care provider can determine if there are changes in your health that may affect your ability to drive safely.

Talk about driving with your doctor or other health care providers – especially if there is a change in your health, if you have a new symptom, or

have been given a new diagnosis. Also, discuss driving if you are prescribed a new medication or you are taking an over-the-counter medication. Ask about driving if you are going to have a medical procedure.

Procedures include:

- 1) surgery;
- 2) extensive dental work;
- 3) eye surgery; and
- 4) diagnostic or treatment procedures that do not require surgery but usually require some type of sedation and/or anesthesia.

Medical professionals cannot suspend your driving privileges. Only the Maryland Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) has that authority. The health professional's role is to provide health information to consider for your driving – to you, and if necessary, to MVA to determine your fitness to drive safely. Most medical reviews result in drivers being qualified to retain their driver's license.

E. SILVER ALERT

Law enforcement agencies across the state may request that a Maryland Silver Alert be issued if the missing person is at least 60 years of age and suffers a cognitive impairment, including a diagnosis of dementia, and that the person is traveling in a vehicle and there is enough descriptive information about them and their vehicle to issue an alert. Once an alert is issued, the information is sent out across the state, including law enforcement agencies, media outlets, and 911 centers. One visible way the public is notified of Silver Alerts is through the use of dynamic message signs along Maryland's roadways.

To report a cognitively impaired missing person, please call your local law enforcement agency. If you have information on a missing vulnerable adult, you should contact law enforcement – call 911 – as soon as possible and provide them with the location.

SIX SIMPLE ACTIONS TO IMPROVE DRIVING: HOW MANY OF THESE ACTIONS ARE YOU DOING?

- Maintaining strength and endurance
– routine to include:
 - Strengthening & stretching;
 - Endurance; and
 - Balance development.
- Know your medications and how they affect your driving.
- Staying sharp and alert – practice:
 - Exercising your senses;
 - Using numbers; and
 - Developing strategies through games, civic groups, or community projects.
- Have your eyes checked annually.
- Get adequate sleep and rest.
- Visit your doctor regularly.

Drive Well Tool Kit, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and American Society on Aging



V. TRANSITIONING FROM DRIVING

You can meet your transportation needs today and in the event that you are unable to drive in the future. Plan in advance and understand your available options. Some people continue to drive beyond the time they can safely do so, because they feel they have no other transportation choices to get to important destinations. This puts everyone at risk! Understanding your transportation options can help you continue to live your life in the way you desire, meet your needs, and stay connected with friends, family, and social activities.



A. DEVELOPING A TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Safe and accessible transportation options are important to your health and necessary to get you where you need and want to go. Your family and friends may be able to provide rides – talk with them about specific days and times they might be available to help.

In addition, you can explore other options. Your area may have public buses and trains that travel fixed routes, or taxi services. Many communities have options for vans, dial-a-ride services, and volunteer services that provide varying transportation services. All of these may be potential transportation options for you, depending upon your resources and your goals.

Developing your own personalized transportation plan, and being prepared for when and if you cannot drive in the future – is the key to a smooth transition. Use a worksheet to prepare and develop your plan. A range of insurance companies and organizations offer planning tools.

You can start by using the following form.

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						
Place of Worship						
Doctor's Office						
Shopping						
Entertainment						
Visit Family/Friends						
Other						



When considering alternative transportation options, remember to gather specific information. Taking all these items into consideration will be a great start for planning your transition from driving.

TIPS:

- List every place that you like to go and then see how far it is from your home and how often you go there.
- Find out what types of local transportation services are available to help you get there.
- Remember to include buses, family and friends, volunteer driver programs, senior centers, or other resources from this guide.
- Gather all information and consider costs and fees, pick-up and drop-off locations, available schedules, and any eligibility requirements and credentialing.
- See whether it is possible for you to safely walk for some trips: How far is it and how many streets will you need to cross? Are the sidewalks in good repair? Would you feel safe walking to your destination?

B. AGING IN PLACE

A significant concern of many aging adults is that they will have to leave their home. This can mean leaving behind a comfortable setting, familiar community and many memories. In addition, a certain amount of control is lost when one leaves home. Control over our home environment can be the foundation to our sense of dignity, security, quality of life, and independence.

However, in order for people to “age in place” comfortably, they need to have access to transportation when they are no longer able to drive safely. Unfortunately, some will continue to drive even when it is no longer safe. Some might stop being mobile and stay home, which can lead to isolation and depression. You can be prepared for aging in place successfully by knowing your transportation options and having a plan in place in advance.

C. TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Find out now what transportation options are available in your community, so you

know ahead of time how you can get around and transition smoothly to non-driving. To find a complete listing of all transportation options available in your community, please visit www.MarylandAccessPoint.info. You can also contact your local county agency directly to find your best local transportation options.

- **Allegany**

Human Resources Development Commission
125 Virginia Avenue
Cumberland, MD 21502
301-783-1752

- **Anne Arundel**

Anne Arundel Co. Dept. of Aging and Disabilities
2666 Riva Road
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-222-4257, ext. 221

- **Baltimore City**

Office of Aging and CARE Services
417 East Fayette Street
6th Floor
Baltimore, MD 21202
410-396-2273

- **Baltimore County**

Baltimore County Department of Aging
611 Central Avenue
Towson, MD 21204
410-887-4202

- **Calvert**
Calvert County Office of Aging
450 West Dares Beach Road
Prince Frederick, MD 20678
410-538-4606, ext. 132
- **Carroll**
Carroll County Bureau of Aging & Disabilities
125 Stoner Avenue
Westminster, MD 21157
410-386-3800
- **Cecil**
Cecil County Department of Aging
200 Chesapeake Boulevard
Suite 2550
Elkton, MD 21921
410-996-8172
- **Charles**
Charles County Area Agency on Aging,
Aging and Senior Programs Division
8190 Port Tobacco Road
Port Tobacco, MD 20677
301-934-0111
- **Frederick**
Frederick County Department of Aging
1440 Taney Avenue
Frederick, MD 21702
301-600-3520

- **Garrett**
Garrett County Community Action Committee
104 East Central Street, Oakland, MD 21550
301-533-9000
- **Harford**
Harford County Office on Aging
145 North Hickory Avenue, Bel Air, MD 21014
410-638-3025
- **Howard**
Howard County Office on Aging
6751 Columbia Gateway Drive, 2nd Floor
Columbia, MD 21046
410-313-1234
- **Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico**
MAC Inc.
909 Progress Circle, Salisbury, MD 21804
410-742-0505, ext. 109
- **Montgomery**
Montgomery County Division of Aging
and Disability Services
401 Hungerford Drive, 3rd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
240-777-3000
- **Prince George's**
Prince George's County Department
of Community Services, Aging Services Division
6420 Allentown Road, Camp Springs, MD 20748
301-265-8450

- **Queen Anne's**
Queen Anne's County Department
of Community Services
104 Powell Street
Centreville, MD 21617
410-758-1040, ext. 2715
- **St. Mary's**
St. Mary's Department of Aging
41780 Baldrige Street
Leonardtown, MD 20650
301-475-4200
- **Caroline, Kent, Talbot**
Upper Shore Aging, Inc.
100 Schauber Road
Chestertown, MD 21620
410-778-6000
Fax: 410-778-3562
- **Washington**
Washington County Commission
on Aging, Inc.
140 W. Franklin Street, 4th Floor
Hagerstown, MD 21740
301-790-0275
- **Worcester**
Worcester County Commission on Aging
4767 Snow Hill Road
Snow Hill, MD 21863
410-632-1277



VI. APPENDICES

A. MVA'S MEDICAL REVIEW PROCESS

MVA has the responsibility to ensure that Maryland drivers meet the requirements to maintain their driving privileges. Maryland licensed drivers may be referred to MVA's medical review process if there is a question of medical fitness to drive. For every driver referred to MVA, they are provided an individual review of all the necessary information. When a person is referred to the MVA's medical review process, the case is handled by the Driver Wellness and Safety Division. A nurse case manager reviews pertinent medical information from the individual's personal physician or other treatment providers, since those clinicians are most familiar with the individual's medical condition. The MVA nurse may request a consultation on the case from the Medical Advisory Board, comprised of physicians from various medical specialties. During the review process, the driver may be asked for additional information, including medical,

driver knowledge or driving skill evaluations. After a thorough review, a decision is made concerning the individual's medical fitness to drive and licensing status.

The goal of MVA's medical review process is to keep people driving safely as long as possible. Age alone does not make unsafe drivers, and licensing is NOT determined by a diagnosis. If someone questions whether you are medically qualified to drive, MVA focuses on functional ability – not age or disease – and provides an individual review on fitness to drive. The majority of drivers referred to the MVA medical review process result in drivers retaining their driver's license.

B. MEDICAL CONDITIONS TO REPORT TO MVA

Approval by the MVA's Driver Wellness and Safety Division and/or the Medical Advisory Board is required if a person has any of the conditions listed below, which may affect their ability to drive. If someone has one of these medical conditions, they must notify the MVA when the condition is diagnosed or when applying for or renewing a driver's license.

1. Diabetes that has caused a low blood sugar episode requiring assistance from another person in the last 6 months;

2. Epilepsy;
3. Seizure;
4. A heart condition that has caused a loss of consciousness in the past 6 months;
5. Stroke;
6. A condition that causes you to have dizzy spells, fainting, or blackouts;
7. Sleep apnea or narcolepsy;
8. A history of traumatic brain injury (TBI);
9. A condition that causes weakness, shaking, or numbness in the arms, hands, legs, or feet that may affect your ability to drive;
10. A hand, arm, foot, or leg that is absent, amputated, or has a loss of function that may affect your ability to drive;
11. An eye problem which prevents a corrected minimum visual acuity of 20/70 in at least one eye or binocular field of vision of at least 110 degrees;
12. Alcohol use problem;
13. Drug use problem;
14. A mental health condition that may affect your ability to drive;
15. Schizophrenia; or
16. Dementia.

C. REFERRING MEDICALLY AT-RISK DRIVERS TO MVA

Most referrals to MVA's medical review process are made by law enforcement, health care providers, or are self-reported. Family, friends and concerned citizens can also make referrals.

Any referral to MVA for possible medical review should include all the following basic information:

- Full name;
- Date of birth;
- Current mailing address;
- Driver's license number (first letter of last name followed by 12 digits); and
- Nature of reportable condition.

Contact Information:

Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration, Driver
Wellness and Safety Division

6601 Ritchie Highway

Glen Burnie, MD 21062

Phone: 410-768-7511

Fax: 410-768-7627

Email: MVACS@mdot.state.md.us

D. DRIVER LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

The license renewal cycle is the same for all ages in Maryland – every eight years. In fact, Maryland does not have any special licensing requirements based on age, except:

- 1) Proof of adequate vision required at renewal must be done at every renewal at age 40 and older; and
- 2) A first-time driver applying for a new license at age 70 or older is required to submit a report from their primary health care provider.

How to apply for a Maryland license, renew a license, and what documents you will need can be found online at www.mva.maryland.gov/drivers/apply/apply.htm/.

E. IDENTIFICATIONS CARDS

Sometimes people continue to keep and/or renew their driver's license only for proof of identification – which is a vital necessity in today's world. However, there is an alternative. Maryland's Identification Card functions exactly the same as a driver's license for purposes of providing proof of identification.

It can be used in airports, doctors' offices, banks, or anywhere else a photo ID is required.

Of course, you CANNOT drive if you convert your license to an ID card.

If you currently have a valid Maryland driver's license, then you don't need any additional documentation to trade it in for an ID card. Simply take your license with you to an MVA branch office. There is NO COST if you are 65 years of age or older or if you have a disability which limits a major life activity, and you do not need a vision certification when applying for an ID card.

F. VISION REQUIREMENTS FOR LICENSING

To qualify for an unrestricted driver's license, the State of Maryland requires drivers to have:

- Binocular vision;
- Visual acuity (Snellen) of at least 20/40 in each eye; and
- A continuous field of vision of at least 140 degrees.

Restricted licenses may be issued to persons having:

- Visual acuity of at least 20/70 in one or both eyes; and
- A continuous field of vision of at least 110 degrees, with at least 35 degrees lateral to the midline of each side.

Note: Both of these requirements need to be met.

Persons with visual acuity levels less than 20/70, but no worse than 20/100, require special handling by the MVA's Glen Burnie Headquarters. Contact the MVA's Modified Vision Unit at 410-768-7513 for information and special forms.

G. PRIMARY RESOURCES

- AARP www.aarp.org/home-garden/transportation/driver_safety and click on **Driving Resource Center**
- AAA www.seniordriving.aaa.com
- AAA MidAtlantic (Local Resources) midatlantic.aaa.com/DrivingPrograms/Overview

- Maryland Department of Aging
https://www.marylandaccesspoint.info/consumer/explore/home_and_community/transportation.php
- Maryland Department of Transportation's Motor Vehicle Administration
www.mva.maryland.gov/olderdriversafety
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and Federal Highway Administration
www.roadsafeseniors.org/
- Transportation Resource Information Point – statewide alternative transportation directory, schedules, and tools www.mdtrip.org/



THIS BOOKLET WAS DEVELOPED BY
THE MARYLAND OLDER DRIVER SAFETY FORUM,
WITH REPRESENTATIVES FROM:

- AAA MidAtlantic (Foundation)
- AARP
- Americans For Older Driver Safety
- Baltimore Metropolitan Council
- Maryland Department of Aging
- Maryland Department of Health & Mental Hygiene
 - Maryland Department of Transportation
 - Maryland Highway Safety Office
 - Maryland Transit Administration
 - Motor Vehicle Administration
 - State Highway Administration
 - MedStar Good Samaritan Hospital & Outpatient Rehabilitation
- Towson University, Department of Occupational Therapy & Occupational Science

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MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION