How's Your Driving?

Safe Driving for Seniors

Includes Information on the 80 Plus Senior Driver Licence Renewal Program
Staying Safe, Staying Mobile

Staying mobile is important to the lifestyle of today's seniors. Growing older doesn't mean you have to give up driving. No one loses their driver's licence solely because of age.

As we get older, we change. And while the years following the age of 50 can be wonderful, some of us become hard of hearing, others need corrective lenses, and our reflexes may slow down.

Drivers should learn to recognize individual changes and adjust their driving habits accordingly.

This book outlines some warning signs that could lead to unsafe driving and suggests steps that can be taken to keep you and other road users safe while you're behind the wheel.

Ontario's roads are among the safest in North America so it's important that every road user makes road safety a personal responsibility.
How Important is Driving To Me?

Ask yourself these questions:

• Am I experiencing an increasing number of near collisions?

• Have I been involved in minor collisions?

• Do I have difficulty making turns at intersections, judging distance, or seeing pedestrians, road signs, or other vehicles?

• Do I get lost or disoriented on familiar roads?

• Do I have difficulty co-ordinating hand and foot movements or checking my blind spot?

• Am I experiencing vision problems, especially at night?

• Do I get nervous behind the wheel?

• Do other motorists frequently honk at me?

• Do family members express concern about my driving ability?

Your answers to these questions can help you decide whether to continue to drive, reduce your driving or stop driving altogether.

If you have checked one or more of the warning signs and are concerned about your driving ability, talk to your doctor or family and get their opinions.
Healthy Living. Safe Driving.

Your health is a key factor in your ability to drive.

Your doctor can recommend an exercise program to improve flexibility and maintain strength, which can help you stay behind the wheel longer.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist to make sure any current and new medications will not affect your ability to drive safely.

Be careful with over-the-counter medications and combining medications that can also impair your driving.

Report the following symptoms to your doctor:

- vision changes, unexplained dizziness or fainting spells
- frequent, chronic or severe pain
- memory lapses or difficulty thinking or concentrating

Avoid driving if you're experiencing pain, because it can decrease your ability to concentrate and limit your movement behind the wheel.

Have your eyesight checked regularly. Peripheral vision and depth perception tend to decline over the years.
Safe Driving Tips

• Plan your route.

• Always wear your seat belt.

• Drive during daylight hours if possible, especially if your vision at night is limited.

• Avoid driving in bad weather.

• Use familiar roads. Avoid heavily travelled roads and peak traffic periods if these conditions make you nervous.

• Stay alert. Be aware of pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles that share the road and be ready for unexpected actions.

• Pay attention to traffic signals, and other vehicles when approaching intersections.

• Leave enough distance between you and the vehicle ahead that will allow you to stop safely.

• Stay in your lane.

• Avoid medications that make your drowsy, and never drive when you're tired, ill or under stress.

• Consider alternatives to driving such as, public transit, car/van pool, volunteer driver programs, friends or family who drive, taxi or walking.
For Drivers 80 Plus

Senior Driver Licence Renewal Program

Ontario's Senior Driver Licence Renewal Program for drivers 80 years of age and older, helps seniors drive safely and be mobile and independent longer.

What happens to my driver's licence when I reach 80 years old?

Drivers aged 80 years and older must renew their driver's licence every two years. To renew your licence, you must register and attend a group education session.

What is a Group Education Session?

A Group Education Session gives you important information on driver safety. It will also give you the tools to help assess how well you drive, and identify areas where you may be able to improve your driving. It can help reduce the risk of being in a collision.

The session includes a vision test, a review of your driving record, a short safety presentation, and a brief in-class screening component. After successfully completing the session, participants will be directed to ServiceOntario to renew their licence and pay the applicable renewal fee.

Also, depending on their performance during the session and their driving record, some participants may also be required to pass a road test before they will be able to renew their driver's licence, or submit medical information to the Ministry of Transportation.
What are the components of the Group Education Session?

The entire session is 90 minutes long and it consists of:

- a vision test
- a review of your driving record
- a short 45 minute education presentation
- a brief in-class screening component
- a road test if necessary*

There is no need to study for the screening components. The in-class screening component replaces the knowledge/written test and designed to better screen for drivers who may not be fit to drive and require a road test or a medical assessment. They also help to ensure that senior drivers are fairly and objectively assessed of their driving ability. (See examples on next page)

Information about the in-class screening component is available at: ontario.ca/seniordriver

Your driver's licence will not be taken away if you do not meet the renewal requirements.

*Road tests are not part of the Group Education Session. If one is required, it will happen at another time.

Who decides if I need to take a road test?

A trained driver improvement counsellor reviews your driving record and how well you did on the screening component.
The In-Class Screening Component consists of two tests.

Clock Drawing Test
e.g. draw a clock and show ten minutes after 11

Letter Cancellation Test
e.g. look for and cross-out all the letters "H"

H I H B D A H C F B H D E
F H A D K C E H I K G D H
H G H C G D H C B A H G
E B F H C D H F H G E K
H I H E B H G F B K F A H
How will I be notified about my licence renewal?

You will receive a renewal notice by mail up to 90 days before your driver's licence expires. Your notice will tell you the steps to take to renew your licence.

What if I will be out of the province when my licence comes up for renewal?

You can renew your driver's licence up to six months before it expires. If it cannot be arranged for you to attend a group education session or complete a road test before your licence expires, you may be issued a temporary driver's licence.

Where can I get more information on this program?

If you have questions about your driver's licence or to learn more about the Senior Driver's Licence Renewal Program, call the:

- Ministry of Transportation 1.800.396.4233
- In the Greater Toronto Area (416) 235.3579
- TTY Users 1.866.471.8929
- Or go online at: www.ontario.ca/seniordriver
80 Plus

Senior Driver Licence Renewal Program

Remember:

1. When you receive your driver's licence renewal notice in the mail, read the instructions.

   Call the phone number provided in the notice to make an appointment to attend a group education session in your area. Have your driver's licence with you when you call.

   Write down the day, the time and the location of the session.

2. Attend the group education session. Arrive early.

   Bring your renewal notice and eyeglasses if you require them. If you have had an eye examination up to 6 months before the group education session, bring your eye examination certificate from your optometrist.

3. When you have successfully completed the group education session, you will receive an approved form issued by the driver improvement counsellor to renew your driver's licence.

   Take your documents to any ServiceOntario Centre to renew your licence. A licence renewal fee will apply.
Collision Involvement Program

What happens if I am involved in a collision at my age?

The Ministry of Transportation has programs for drivers of all ages who were involved in a motor vehicle collision. These programs require drivers to pass road tests to keep their licence.

There is a specific collision program for older drivers. If you are aged 70 and older and you were in a collision as a driver, and charged with a traffic offence and later convicted for driving improperly, you will have to pass a 3-part driving test.

This includes a:

- Vision test
- Written test, and
- Road test

A letter will be mailed to you informing you about what to do. You do not have to get tested until you receive the letter.

The tests are free and you can take the tests again if you do not pass the first time.
Information sources

Ontario Seniors' Secretariat

Information and programs for Ontario's seniors.

Seniors INFOline: 1 888 910.1999
TTY: 1 800 387.5559
Website: www.seniors.gov.on.ca

Telehealth Ontario

A 24 hour information line to answer questions about your health.

Ph: 1 866 797.0000
TTY: 1 866 797.0007

ServiceOntario

Access to programs and services from the Government of Ontario.

Ph: 1 800 267.8097
TTY: 1 800 268.7095
Website: ontario.ca/serviceontario

ServiceCanada

Access to programs, services and benefits from the Government of Canada.

Ph: 1 800 622.6232
TTY: 1 800 926.9105
Website: servicecanada.gc.ca