

Facts About Senior Drivers

- In 1995, there were 16.5 million licensed drivers over 70 years of age. By 2020, the United States will hold 54 million Americans older than 65, many of them still on the road. (AAA, 2006)
- Older adults wear seat belts more often than any other age group. (CDC, 2002)
- Most older drivers recognize their limitations and avoid driving at risky times. i.e. after dark, during rush hour, and in bad weather. (AAA, 2006)
- Because the human body becomes fragile and heals much slower with age, traffic fatality rates are 17 times higher for drivers over 65. (AAA, 2006)



FREE PRESENTATIONS AVAILABLE ON:

Driving Safety for Seniors
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Emergency Preparedness

Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office
TRIAD Program
Attn: Corporal Kelli Brookshire
201 North Shartel
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
Phone:
405-713-1950
Fax:
405-755-4413
Email:
sokelbro@oklahomacounty.org
Web:
www.oklahomacounty.org/sheriff



Safe Driving and the Older Adult



Stay Informed
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Stay Alive

Sheriff John Whetsel
Oklahoma County Sheriff's Office
201 North Shartel
Oklahoma City, OK 73102
(405) 713-1000
www.oklahomacounty.org/sheriff



Issues Affecting Older Drivers...

Age

Most experts agree that driving skills gradually begin to deteriorate around age 55. But not all drivers are the same.

- As we age, our brain takes longer to process information, affecting our response skills on the roadway.
- At age 65, about 30% of people suffer from some sort of hearing loss, making it easy to miss emergency sirens, horns, and railroad warnings.
- About 80% of people 70+ suffer from arthritis which can make turning, twisting, or flexing difficult; ALL actions that are required to turn the steering wheel, move between the accelerator and brake pedals, shift gears, and open vehicle doors.



(AAA, Foundation for Traffic Safety, 2006)

Medication

Older adults make up 11% of the population, but use 25% of all the prescription drugs in the United States.

- Many medications cause drowsiness, zap energy, and slow reaction time. Read your labels, and plan ahead.
- If you see different physicians for different medical issues, you may be prescribed medications that have negative interactions. Tell each doctor about ALL medications and supplements you are taking.
- Alcohol can multiply the side effects of your medicines. Use caution when having even just one drink, and do NOT get behind the wheel of a car.



Title 47 O.S. § 11-902a3

“It is unlawful and punishable... for any person to drive, operate, or be in actual physical control of a motor vehicle within this state who is under the influence of any intoxicating substance other than alcohol which may render such person incapable of safely driving or operating a motor vehicle.”

Illness

Today, more than 5 million Americans suffer from dementia, Alzheimer's, or some other type of brain disease.

- When we drive, different areas of the brain cooperate, prioritize information, and plan for responses.
- Small changes in behavior will begin to show, and will become worse over time:

- ⇒ Riding the brakes
- ⇒ Hitting curbs
- ⇒ Driving at inappropriate speeds
- ⇒ Difficulty parking in defined spaces
- ⇒ Increased agitation while driving
- ⇒ Delayed responses
- ⇒ Difficulty maintaining lane position
- ⇒ Getting lost in familiar places

Visit www.alz.org for more information on dealing with Alzheimer's Disease, or call the Alzheimer's Association 24-hr helpline:

1-800-272-3900