WHAT ABOUT SAFETY FOR BICYCLISTS AND PEDESTRIANS?

Walking or bike riding is a healthy alternative to driving around town, but there are a few safety issues to be aware of. When crossing the street, make sure you do so only at intersections or marked crosswalks. This is where drivers are expecting to see pedestrians. Crossing mid-block is especially dangerous because drivers are not expecting people to cross in the middle of the street. Also, be sure to make eye contact with drivers and to look over your shoulder for turning vehicles, before crossing the street.

If riding a bike, make sure that both your bike and your helmet are properly sized and fitted. Ride with the flow of traffic, remember to obey all traffic signs and signals, and use arm signals to let motorists know where you plan to go. Both pedestrians and bicyclists should always wear brightly-colored clothing to be more visible.

For more information on driver evaluation, driver education, and other transportation choices, contact:

**Association for Driver Educators for the Disabled:**
1-800-290-2344 (www.driver-ed.org)

**AARP:** 1-800-424-3410 (www.aarp.org)

**Alzheimer’s Association:** 1-800-272-3900 (www.alz.org)

**National Safety Council:** 1-630-685-1121 (www.nsc.org)

**VTA:** 1-408-321-2300 (www.vta.org)

**Paratransit Outreach:** 1-408-436-2865 (www.outreach1.org)

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This publication can be available upon request in alternative formats, such as Braille, large print, audio tape, or computer disk. Request can be made at 1-408-535-3500 (V) or 1-800-735-2929 (CRS).

City of San José
www.GetStreetSmarts.org
Safe Driving For Seniors. People can be great drivers or bad drivers at any age. Generally, young, new drivers tend to have the worst driving records. Experienced, middle-aged drivers are likely to have the best driving records. Overall, older drivers are safe and make appropriate adjustments for their abilities and limitations. In fact, the total number of accidents that involve older drivers is lower than for any other age group. However, the number of accidents per mile driven goes up around age 60, and gets much higher after 75.

Older age doesn’t cause accidents! However, many older adults take certain medicines and have conditions that increase the risk of unsafe driving. Some conditions that might be a factor in unsafe driving include: Alzheimer’s disease, vision problems, stroke, Parkinson’s disease, arthritis, and diabetes.

WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF UNSAFE DRIVING?
- Stopping at a green light
- Stopping when there is no stop sign
- Stopping in the middle of intersections
- Mistaking the gas pedal for the brake pedal
- Finding traffic signs and signals confusing
- Running stop signs or red lights without realizing it
- Hitting or nearly hitting cars, people, or objects without realizing it
- Getting lost in familiar places
- Moving from one lane to another without looking

SAFE DRIVING TIPS FOR SENIORS
- Avoid driving at night, in heavy traffic, and on unfamiliar roads
- Know the rules of the road. They can be found in a state drivers handbook
- Take a driving class from a driving instructor or a rehabilitation specialist; and
- Take a refresher course offered by groups such as:
  - AARP (formally known as the American Association of Retired Persons)
  - The Automobile Association of America (AAA); or
  - The National Safety Council

WHO CAN HELP DETERMINE IF DRIVING SKILLS ARE A PROBLEM?
Although the risk of crashes and serious crash-related injuries usually goes up as people get older, there are many steps that can be taken at any age to drive more safely.

Rehabilitation Centers (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation Centers and Veterans Administration Centers) usually provide the best driving evaluations. Driving schools may help, but remember that they are not trained to recognize or diagnose medical problems. State licensing agencies also give driving evaluations.

The hardest part can be addressing this issue with a loved one whom you feel has become an unfit driver. Driving is a source of independence for many people and admitting to limited capabilities may not be easy. You should be very clear about the problems you have noticed and look to doctors for affirmation. Perhaps a medical condition(s) or medication(s) is at the source and a doctor can help explain why driving is no longer an option, as well as send a report to the DMV indicating that the person should not drive.

HOW CAN A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER HELP ADDRESS CONCERNS ABOUT DRIVING?
It is very important that a doctor or other health care provider cares and listens carefully to concerns about driving ability. Once the issue is discussed, a thorough medical and medication review should be conducted. This will help determine if there are treatable problems that may be contributing to driving difficulties. Vision and memory tests are also important. Finally, the doctor or health care provider may be able to suggest a driver’s education/refresher class. A person may also be referred to a driving evaluation program.