

4. Are loved ones concerned?

Sometimes other people notice things about your driving that you might have missed. Have people who you know and trust said they were concerned about your driving?

If you said “Yes”, you should...

- ⇒ Talk with your doctor. Ask him or her to check the side effects of any medicines you are taking.
- ⇒ Think about taking a mature driving class. The AAA, AARP and driving schools offer these classes.
- ⇒ Try walking, carpooling, public transit, and other forms of transportation.

Indicators that a re-evaluation might be appropriate.

- ⇒ Consistently driving too slow.
- ⇒ Backing up without looking and hoping other drivers will stop.
- ⇒ Changing lanes without looking and/or signaling.
- ⇒ Excessive following too closely.
- ⇒ Utilizing turn lanes for on-coming traffic. (Roadway markings)
- ⇒ Consistently driving over center line, or fog line.
- ⇒ Regular red light, or stop sign violations.
- ⇒ Failure to check for traffic at intersections.

Tips for Safe Driving

All drivers should be aware of safe driving habits, regardless of age. These habits are particularly helpful:

- ⇒ If you want to limit night driving, plan lengthy trips for daytime driving, leaving early in the morning if necessary.
- ⇒ Run errands in the morning when you are fresher and more alert.
- ⇒ Avoid driving on narrow, congested roads, especially at rush hour.
- ⇒ If you wear glasses or use a hearing aid, make sure that you use them when driving.
- ⇒ Sit comfortably in the seat without slouching or leaning, adjusting the seat each time or using a raised seat cushion if necessary.
- ⇒ Always wear your seatbelt, using a shoulder strap cushion if it is more comfortable.
- ⇒ Use extra caution when executing left turns or avoid them altogether.

Coeur d’Alene Police Department
3818 Schreiber Way
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83815
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SAFE DRIVING FOR OLDER ADULTS



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Some of the changes you experience as you get older can affect your ability to drive safely.

The good news is that people who keep track of changes in their eyesight, physical fitness and reflexes may be able to adjust their driving habits so they stay safe on the road.

The following questions will help you decide if physical changes have affected your driving skills. Helpful tips about

1. How is your eyesight?

Do you have trouble...

- ⇒ Reading signs easily?
- ⇒ Recognizing someone you know from across the street?
- ⇒ Seeing street markings, other cars, and people walking - especially at dawn, dusk and at night?
- ⇒ Handling headlight glare at night?

If you said “Yes” to any of these questions, you should...

Make sure you always wear your glasses and that the prescription is current.

- ⇒ Keep your windshield, mirrors and headlights clean.
- ⇒ Make sure that your headlights are working and aimed correctly.
- ⇒ Sit high enough in your seat so you can see the road for at least 10 feet in front of your vehicle.
- ⇒ If you are 60 or older, see an eye doctor every year.

2. Do you have control of your vehicle?

Loss of strength, coordination and flexibility can make it hard to control your vehicle.

Do you have trouble...

- ⇒ Looking over your shoulder to change lanes or to backup?
- ⇒ Moving your foot from the gas to the brake pedal?
- ⇒ Turning the steering wheel?
- ⇒ Walking less than a block a day?
- ⇒ Going up or down stairs because you have pain in your knees, legs or ankles?

If you said “Yes” to any of these questions, you should...

- ⇒ Check with your doctor about physical therapy, medicine, stretching exercises, or a walking or fitness program.
- ⇒ Know that an automatic transmission, power steering and brakes, and other special equipment can make it easier for you to drive your vehicle and use the foot pedals.
- ⇒ Reduce your driver’s side blind spot by moving your mirrors.
- ⇒ Watch for flashing lights of emergency vehicles.
- ⇒ Listen for sounds outside your vehicle.

3. Does driving make you feel nervous, scared or overwhelmed?

Do you...

- ⇒ Feel confused by traffic signs, and people and cars in traffic?
- ⇒ Take medicine that makes you sleepy?
- ⇒ Get dizzy, or have seizures or losses of consciousness?
- ⇒ React slowly to normal driving situations?

If you said “Yes” to any of these questions, you should...

- ⇒ Ask your doctor if your health or side effects from your medicine can affect your driving.
- ⇒ Take routes that you know.
- ⇒ Try to drive during the day (avoid rush hour).
- ⇒ Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you.
- ⇒ Always scan the road while you are driving so that you are ready for any problems and can plan your actions.