## Older Drivers Talking points

Aging impacts everyone differently. When it comes to driving, it is important to understand the impact age-related changes may have on one’s safe driving ability. The U.S. Department of Transportation’s National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) encourages older adults, family members, and caregivers to be proactive about discussing safe mobility and building a transportation plan.

Use the talking points below to start those conversations on safe mobility:

* From 2020 to 2021 there was a 15% increase in the number of people killed in traffic crashes involving older drivers, from 7,135 in 2020 to 8,209 in 2021.
* From 2020 to 2021 there was a 14% increase in the number of people 65 and older killed in traffic crashes.
* In 2021, 70% of traffic fatalities in crashes involving older drivers involved other vehicles.
* In 2021, more older drivers were killed in traffic crashes on rural roadways versus urban roadways (50% versus 49%).
* Among the older population, the traffic fatality rate per 100,000 population in 2021 was highest for the 85-and-older age group.
* Motor vehicle crashes are more harmful for older adults than their younger counterparts because older adults are more likely to have declining functional abilities and frailty which can impact safe driving and recovery time from injuries.
* Decisions about your ability to drive should never be based on age alone. However, changes in vision, physical fitness, and reflexes may cause safety concerns. By accurately assessing age-related changes, you can adjust your driving habits to remain safe on the road or choose other kinds of transportation.
* One way to stay safe while driving is by making sure you understand how medical conditions can impact your ability to drive safely.
* Begin talking about safe driving in general long before you notice difficulties. Open the discussion whenever you encounter tricky intersections or driving scenarios in your travels. Ultimately, it is a person’s driving performance, not age, that should determine fitness to drive.
* Plan trips at times of day when traffic is light, and plan your route to reduce conflict with other traffic.
* Driving at night may become challenging as one ages. During the winter months the sun goes down early. So, it will get dark sooner. Encourage your loved ones to plan their schedule early to be home before the sun goes down. When out in the dark, be sure they know where their headlights are and encourage them to slow down and keep an eye out for all road users.
* Promote awareness and understanding of the impact aging has on driving.
* Encourage older drivers to be proactive about being a safe driver.
* Motivate older drivers to plan for safe mobility even beyond the driver’s seat.

For more information about older drivers, visit [www.nhsta.gov/road-safety/older-drivers](http://www.nhsta.gov/road-safety/older-drivers).