



The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

accidents don't have to happen

Safer for Longer...

A Guide for Mature Drivers

Call our Freephone Helpline:

0808 801 0822

www.olderdrivers.org.uk

Mature drivers...

...tend to be more experienced, and therefore safer, than younger drivers. The ability to drive can contribute to wellbeing, as it can allow us to maintain our independence. As we get older, however, aspects of our health, such as our eyesight and reaction times, begin to decline, which can affect our ability to drive safely.

Fortunately, there are many steps we can take to ensure that we can stay on the road for as long as possible, such as refresher lessons, driving assessments and vehicle adaptations.



Staying safe

Health conditions and medication

We all have a responsibility to keep ourselves and others safe on the road. This includes ensuring that we are fit to drive.

Some health conditions can severely affect the way we drive, and therefore must be reported to the DVLA. Such health conditions include:

- **Epilepsy**
- **Strokes**
- **Parkinson's disease**
- **Dementia**
- **Multiple sclerosis**
- **Sleep apnoea**



Your doctor

Always ask your doctor if you should report your health condition to the DVLA. Failure to report a notifiable condition could result in a £1,000 fine. Some conditions may not need to be reported, but they can still affect your driving, and these should also be discussed with a healthcare professional.

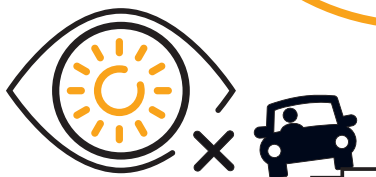
Reporting a health condition to the DVLA does not necessarily mean you will lose your licence. You may be able to continue to drive as long as you can do so safely, and you may be issued with a licence that has to be renewed more regularly.



Eyesight

Good vision is essential for safe driving. **The eyesight requirement for driving is the ability to read a vehicle number plate from a distance of 20 metres (about five car lengths).** If you need glasses or contact lenses to be able to meet this requirement, you must wear them while driving – it is an offence not to do so and may invalidate your driving insurance.

You must also have sufficient visual acuity and field of vision to be able to drive safely. These can be tested by your optician, and you should have an eye test every two years (or more often if recommended by your optician or other healthcare professional).



Driving licence renewals

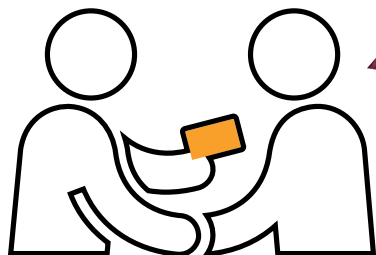
When we reach the age of 70, our driving licences expire and must be renewed if we wish to continue driving, and then renewed every three years afterwards.

Around three months before your 70th birthday, the DVLA will send you a D46P form in the post, which you can fill out and send back to them to renew your licence. If you do not receive a D46P form, you can ask for a D1 form from your local Post Office, which can also be filled out and sent to the DVLA to renew your licence.

You can also renew your licence online using this website:

gov.uk/renew-driving-licence-at-70

It is a good idea to have a health check-up before you renew your licence, and then every time you renew afterwards.



Driving assessments

There are two types of driving assessments:

- **Detailed:** these assessments are for people with a medical condition or disability that affects their driving, and tend to be organised for you if you require one
- **Simple:** these assessments are voluntary and can be taken if you want a bit of help and advice on how to improve your driving. Simple driving assessments, provided by organisations such as RoSPA and IAM RoadSmart, are a great way of monitoring your driving, with the assessor helping you to identify how your driving is changing and what can be done to stay on the road safely for as long as possible.



Simple driving assessments are not a test; they are friendly, informal, and take place in your own vehicle, with any findings from the assessment being kept completely confidential.

More information can be found on this website:

olderdrivers.org.uk/driver-assessment



Vehicle adaptations

Vehicle adaptations can make getting in and out of your vehicle and operating its controls easier, helping you to drive comfortably and safely.

A huge range of adaptations are available, including:

- **Steering aids and hand controls**
- **Steering wheel covers**
- **Swivel seats and hoists**
- **Seat cushions and pads**
- **Pedal extensions**
- **Seat belt extensions.**

More information about vehicle adaptations can be found by visiting:

RoSPA at olderdrivers.org.uk/your-car/car-adaptations

Motability at motability.co.uk

Driving Mobility at drivingmobility.org.uk



Changing how much you drive

For many of us, driving can be an important part of our independence and freedom, and there is not a maximum age for safe driving. Deciding whether to continue driving as normal, reduce our driving, or stop driving completely is dependent on our own individual circumstances.

Keep driving

If you are fit to drive and able to do so, regular driving can help you maintain your driving ability. Your car must be in a legal and roadworthy condition. It must be taxed, have a valid MOT, and you must be insured to drive it.

Between MOTs, you should keep your car in good condition by carrying out frequent safety checks and maintenance.

Adapt your driving

If you recognise that your driving ability is changing, you can change when and where you are driving to compensate for this. Changes you can make include:

- **Avoiding driving at night, during rush hours, through busy junctions and roundabouts, and on roads you find difficult/stressful**
- **Allowing more time for your journeys**
- **Reducing the amount of driving you do by using taxis, buses, trains, or by asking for lifts from friends or family.**



Consider retiring from driving

For some of us, the time may come where it is no longer possible for us to drive safely, and for the sake of ourselves and others, we should stop driving. It may be time for you to stop driving if:

- **You worry more about driving, and you feel less confident than you used to**
- **Your reactions are noticeably slower, and you struggle to judge speed and distance**
- **Your passengers are expressing concern**
- **You have had a number of near misses recently.**



REMEMBER

You must stop driving if you have been told to by your GP or the DVLA.

Giving up driving doesn't have to be a negative experience, and it doesn't have to mean a loss of freedom and mobility. There are great alternatives to driving that could be safer and cheaper, such as trains and buses, and lifts from family and friends.

Want more information?

www.olderdrivers.org.uk

www.gov.uk/browse/driving

If you have a specific question which has not been answered on the RoSPA Older drivers website then please call RoSPA's free lifeline on **0808 801 0822** or email: info@olderdrivers.org.uk