

How to Refer an Unsafe Driver

To report the driver to DMV, you can visit a local DMV office to complete a form or write a letter to DMV describing the person's health problem or unsafe driving behavior. You must include both your name and address and the person's name and address in the letter. You can request that your name be kept confidential.

DMV may require medical information from the person's doctor or may contact the driver for re-testing. Depending on the test results, DMV will determine whether or not the person may continue to drive with or without restrictions, or whether the person should stop driving.

Alternatives to Driving

Many social needs are met through driving. People who live alone and no longer drive may feel isolated. Arrange for frequent visits to the home, and plan outings with friends and family that will help the person remain socially active. Family members, neighbors and caregivers can provide transportation to appointments and errands. Explore options to have groceries or prescriptions delivered. The local senior center may offer a shuttle service. For resources in your community, call the Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) at 1 (800) 282-8096.



For more information

Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Driver Safety Unit

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Retiring from Driving

When someone you know should give up driving



Shifting Gears in Later Years

Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services

When someone you know should give up driving

What do you do about an older family member who is no longer safely driving? This is a problem for a growing number of families. The driver may have a physical or medical condition such as poor vision, restricted movement or dementia. Or, the driver may have had a recent illness or hospitalization. Any of these situations can put a driver and the public at risk. Sometimes the signs are readily apparent, but usually, the signs are gradual and take place over a period of time.



Despite your concerns for the driver's safety, it may be difficult to discuss the problem with the driver or to intervene. One's sense of freedom, control and competence is strongly tied to the ability to drive. It's not always easy to give up the independence that driving provides and to find alternative transportation.

To help an unsafe driver, begin by assessing the individual's ability to drive. Then, consider available alternatives to driving. An open, early and ongoing discussion can help your family develop a plan before the situation becomes a crisis. Having the support of your family physician, local social service agencies, or Driver and Motor Vehicles Services (DMV) can help.



Signs of Unsafe Driving

Family members and caregivers are in the best position to observe signs of declining driving ability. Does the older driver:

- experience other drivers honking at them in traffic;
- move into a wrong lane;
- become easily lost or confused;
- have new dents or scratches on the car;
- drive at inappropriate speeds;
- have an increase in traffic tickets or warnings; or
- experience near misses?

What You Can Do

If you notice any of these warning signs, it is time to assess the situation. Don't wait for an accident to happen. Share your observations with the driver, their physician and other family members. The steps you take depend on the nature and seriousness of the unsafe driving behavior.

In some cases, you can help the driver stay mobile as long as safely possible by suggesting simple changes. These include driving shorter distances, staying on familiar roads, and avoiding night driving, heavy traffic and unprotected left turns.

Someone who is ready to give up driving may choose to exchange a current driver's license for an identification card. A local DMV office can help with this option.

The transition from driving can be emotionally difficult for the driver and for family members. Begin the discussion early. Seek assistance from the family physician to help assess and monitor any medical conditions that can affect driving. Some health care professionals are required to refer a driver to DMV when an individual's impairment becomes severe and uncontrollable.