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## Concerned about a Senior Driver?

### Who is at risk for an accident?

Age alone is not a good predictor of driving ability; however, crash risk increases after age 75 and significantly after 85. Some older drivers change driving habits when abilities decline by driving less, avoiding rush hour traffic, avoiding driving in bad weather, avoiding driving at night or have someone drive them. Some do not.

### What may contribute to decline in driving ability?

Medical conditions that affect functional ability may contribute to decline in driving ability and include: eye diseases, stroke, arthritis, Parkinson's disease, dementia and diabetes. Reduced strength/flexibility, slowed reaction times, medications, alcohol and other factors may also contribute.

### What should I do when I notice a problem?

Ideally, talking about driving and alternatives should begin before problems arise. When they do, some problems may be correctable with the help of a health care professional. The "[We Need to Talk - Family Conversations with Older Drivers](#)" guide provides suggestions on how to approach this sensitive issue and how to craft caring conversations. If problems are minor, collect information, observe patterns over time and make a written record.

### How do I evaluate my parents'/grandparents' driving ability?

[Self-assessment tools](#) are available by visiting the Department on Aging at [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org). Or, try AAA's "[Roadwise Review](#)" - a free online tool to assess seniors' driving skills.

### What are the warning signs?

- Incorrect signaling
- Parking inappropriately
- Hitting curbs
- Scrapes or dents in car, mailbox or garage
- Failing to notice traffic signs
- Difficulty navigating turns, especially left turns
- Driving at inappropriate speeds
- Delayed responses to unexpected situations
- Straddling lanes or drifting into other lanes
- Difficulty merging or confusion at exits
- Failing to yield the right of way
- Getting lost in familiar places
- Driving the wrong way
- Near misses and collisions
- Confusing brake and gas pedals
- Stopping in traffic for no apparent reason

### What should I do when warning signs start becoming more frequent and serious?

Encourage the individual to see a doctor and go with the driver if possible so everyone can determine actions to be taken for safe mobility. More serious warning signs may require immediate intervention by family members and the individual's doctor.

### What can a doctor do?

A doctor may treat a health problem, seek family input, order an in-depth evaluation by a driver rehabilitation specialist, advise restriction or cessation of driving, or report them to the State Department of Revenue - Driver Control (Kansas doctors are not mandated to report unsafe drivers).



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### How does dementia affect the ability to drive?

Those with moderate to severe dementia overestimate driving ability and are unaware when they are unsafe behind the wheel. "[At the Crossroads - A Guide to Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving](#)" can provide information and help to those with these diseases.

### What should I do if a driver is unsafe but continues to drive?

Taking a driver's keys, disabling their car or removing their car should be the last options to consider and should not come as a total surprise to the driver. Anyone may write the Kansas Department of Revenue - Driver Control or the state where the driver lives regarding concerns. In Kansas, call (785) 296-3671 for information about the process.

### I provide transportation for a senior; is assistance available for me?

The "[Transportation Solutions for Caregivers Guide](#)" offers communication tips, how to prevent or deal with agitation, and how to provide physical assistance.

### What is available to help seniors maintain community mobility?

The "[Community Mobility Guide](#)" explores many local options, including public, private and volunteer transportation. Or, contact the Sedgwick County Department on Aging. It is essential that older adults be able to maintain their mobility and stay engaged in the community.

The Department on Aging's Transportation Program also may be used as a supplement when transportation is not an option or not available.

### Where might I find the reports, resources and guides mentioned here?

All resource materials mentioned in this fact sheet (highlighted in blue) are available on the Sedgwick County Department on Aging website at [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org). Choose "Aging" from the "Quick Click and Go" drop down box and then click on "Transportation Services."

**With questions or for more information, contact Valerhy Powers in the Sedgwick County Department on Aging at [vpowers@sedgwick.gov](mailto:vpowers@sedgwick.gov), 316-660-5158 or 660-5150.**