SECTION 3
TRANSPORTATION

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MATURE DRIVING PROGRAMS

As we grow older, many of us find our ability to drive has declined. Much of this loss of driving skill may be attributed to physical and/or medical conditions brought on by aging or disability.

Many communities offer driving classes that may refresh a mature driver’s ability to drive defensively. Such programs are available throughout the state of Florida. Where there are such classes, they can be a worthwhile investment for those who need to renew and refine their driving skills after years of driving by “habit.” These classes not only provide an opportunity to reinvigorate vital skills, but also may further benefit seniors by providing discounts on auto insurance premiums.

Driving Programs

Among the programs available for those wishing to improve their skills and take advantage of auto insurance premium discounts are the following:

AARP Driver Safety Program  The goal of AARP’s Driver Safety Program is to provide you with a greater appreciation of driving challenges and a better understanding of how to avoid potential collisions and injuring yourself or others. This is a two-day, eight-hour course offered by AARP costing $15.00 for AARP members and $20.00 for non-members. Online and refresher classes may be located by calling AARP toll-free at 1-888-227-7660.

Florida Safety Council – Mature Driver Course  This is an approved insurance discount course and is offered either in a classroom or online. The goal of this class is to help mature drivers over the age of 55 within the state of Florida maintain their safe and defensive driving skills, obtain auto insurance discounts, understand their abilities, and learn techniques to compensate for changes. This class also provides defensive driving training for court-ordered seniors. More information on both the classroom and online course can be accessed at floridasafetycouncil.org.

Driver Improvement Courses  The Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles (DHSMV) sponsors many driving improvement courses geared toward seniors. Many of these classes are offered during the day in order to more easily accommodate elders who avoid driving at night. Insurance premium discounts are also offered as a benefit of attending these classes. For more information,
contact DHSMV at 850-617-2000. A complete list of approved courses can be found by accessing the DHSMV website at [flhsmv.gov/ddl/mature_discount.html](http://flhsmv.gov/ddl/mature_discount.html).

**Educational Information**

There are several educational programs available to help you drive safer longer and help you when the time comes for you to stop driving. These programs include:

**CarFit** CarFit is an educational program created by the American Society on Aging and developed in collaboration with the American Automobile Association, AARP, and the American Occupational Therapy Association. CarFit offers older adults the opportunity to check out how well their personal vehicles “fit” them. The program enhances the seniors’ safety as drivers and helps increase their mobility in the community. More information on CarFit is available at [car-fit.org](http://car-fit.org).

**Florida Grand Driver Program** The Florida Grand Driver Program, operated by DHSMV, provides information about aging and driving. Grand Driver urges drivers older than 65 and their adult children to learn more about the effects of aging on the ability to drive. More information is available on the program’s website [flhsmv.gov/FloridaGrandDriver](http://flhsmv.gov/FloridaGrandDriver) or from DHSMV at 850-617-2000.

**Florida’s Guide for Aging Drivers** The Florida Department of Transportation and the Safe Mobility for Life Coalition developed this guide to help you continue to safely drive as long as possible. The Guide also provides information to help prepare for the day when driving is no longer possible. The guide provides information and education about the importance of planning ahead for your transportation needs so that you can remain independent and active in your community as you age in place. This guide is free. To request a copy, contact the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy Safe Mobility for Life Resource Center at 850-644-8115 or request a copy online at [flsams.org](http://flsams.org).

For information about other mature driving programs, contact DHSMV at 850-617-2000.
DRIVING EVALUATIONS

Driving on today’s modern highways can be unnerving for even the most cautious driver. However, as adults age they should pay close attention to their driving habits and reflexes to determine if they should change or even cut back their driving activity. It is not uncommon for functional decline related to aging – such as vision, memory, physical strength, reaction time, and flexibility - to affect your ability to drive safely.

Since driving is such a fundamental part of an individual’s independence, the decision to alter, reduce, or surrender driving privileges can be very difficult for everyone involved, from you the driver to your family, caregivers, and physicians. If you or your loved ones begin to feel uncomfortable with your driving abilities, a formal driving evaluation can be conducted.

Several driving evaluation programs are available and include:

**DriveABLE™ Assessment Program**  The DriveABLE™ Assessment program provides an objective, scientifically based method to determine if an individual should continue to drive. The DriveABLE™ assessment includes in-office and in-car evaluation components. These components measure decision-making, complex judgment, motor speed control, and short-term memory skills. The assessment includes a written report, which details any areas of concern and makes a professional recommendation about the individual’s current driving ability. For additional information about DriveABLE™ or to find a location site near you, visit driveable.com.

**Florida’s Memory Disorder Clinics**  Memory Disorder Clinics offer driving evaluations programs, mobility counseling, and community education regarding senior driving issues. These programs provide an objective assessment of driving safety and assess general strengths and weaknesses in driving performance. Recommendations for driving restrictions may be made, but are separate from any government agency that regulates road safety. See the Resource Directory at the back of this guide to find a Memory Disorder Clinic near you.
Florida Department of Transportation
The Florida Department of Transportation, through the Safe Mobility for Life Program, offers various resources to help you evaluate your driving ability. These resources include driver safety courses, education, and a driver skills assessment to help you drive safer longer and make the transition from driving full-time to cutting back or stopping driving altogether. To view these resources, visit safeandmobileseniors.org/DrivingSkills.htm#Driver Safety Courses.

For additional information on driving safety for seniors, contact the AARP Driver Safety Program at 1-888-227-7669 or call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337).
MEDICAL CONDITIONS AND DRIVER SAFETY

Are you concerned about the driving ability of a family member or friend due to a medical condition? The Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles makes it easy for anyone to report a driver who may be unsafe to operate a motor vehicle as a result of a medical condition. The report is strictly confidential. For additional information on how to report an unsafe driver or to obtain a medical reporting form visit flhsmv.gov/floridagrand-driver/reportUnsafeDriver.html.

After receiving the medical reporting form, DHSMV investigators will advise the driver that he or she is under medical review. The driver may be asked to provide medical information from his or her physician as a part of the investigation. Investigators may also interview family members or neighbors as well. Once the medical information is received and reviewed and the investigation is complete, DHSMV’s investigators and the Medical Advisory Board provide a recommendation regarding the individual’s ability to drive. This recommendation may be to:

- Require additional information from the driver;
- Require the driver to re-take the driving test; or
- Revoke/deny a license.

If a license is denied/revoked, the driver may request an administrative hearing to appeal the decision.

For information on how to report unsafe driving, visit flhsmv.gov, call 850-617-3814 or email medical@flhsmv.gov. You can also get detailed information in the Medical Conditions & Driver Safety Brochure found at flhsmv.gov/ddl/brochures/medical_brochure.pdf.
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES FOR NON-DRIVERS

Many older adults may have difficulty finding transportation to social events, medical appointments, and other daily activities. A decision to stop driving is not an easy one, but it does not have to mean a complete loss of independence. Many cities have public transportation systems, para-transit services, taxis, and Dial-A-Ride programs.

Public Transportation Public transportation frequently offers discounted senior rates and often offers wheelchair accessibility. This may provide a low-cost option for senior non-drivers. Your local transit authority can provide information regarding routes, fares, and schedules. A minimum co-payment may be required.

Para-transit Service Para-transit service is a door-to-door transportation program administered by Florida’s Transportation Disadvantaged program, and is available to seniors in every county. This service includes pick-up and drop-off from your home to medical appointments, stores, and other authorized destinations. Eligibility is determined before pick-up, and trips must be reserved at least one day in advance. Para-transit services vary from county to county. For information, contact your case manager or the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged at 1-800-983-2435.

Ride Sharing Ride sharing consists of two or more people sharing rides in a common vehicle. Ride sharing can be done through carpooling or “vanpooling.” You do not need to own a vehicle to participate. Contact family, friends, and neighbors to explore ride-sharing opportunities if they do not already exist in your community.

Information about driving alternatives in your community may be obtained through the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged at 1-800-983-2435, or you can call the Elder Helpline at 1-800-96-ELDER (1-800-963-5337). You can also contact the Florida Senior Safety Resource Center at the Department of Transportation at fssrc.phhp.ufl.edu.

QUICK FACT: Dial-A-Ride services provide door-to-door services in many communities. Charges for these services are usually assessed on a low per-mile fare basis.
STATEWIDE SERVICES

Florida’s Department of Transportation offers statewide information on travel conditions and provides roadside assistance.

**My Florida 511** The Department of Transportation’s free 511 Travel Information System provides bilingual (English and Spanish) real-time travel reports on all Florida interstate highways; toll roads, including Florida’s Turnpike, Miami-Dade Expressway Authority roads and Orlando-Orange County Expressway Authority roads; and many other metropolitan roadways. The statewide system provides information on roadway conditions such as commuter travel times, congestion, construction, lane closures, severe weather, crashes, and emergency evacuation affecting traffic. Callers can access traffic, transit, travel times, airports, seaports, or request a specific roadway, city, or county. My Florida 511 is available 24 hours a day by dialing 511, or on the Web at FL511.com.

The following types of information are provided statewide for travelers throughout Florida, and are regularly updated by the Florida Department of Transportation:

- Traffic Warnings and Updates,
- Traveler Information,
- Highway Construction Information,
- Traffic Information System, and
- Statewide 511 Travel Information.

**Road Rangers Service Patrol** The Road Rangers Service Patrol is an effective element of the Florida Department of Transportation’s incident management system. Examples of incidents are traffic accidents, stranded motorists, and road debris.

Road Rangers patrol congested areas and high-incident locations of Florida’s urban freeways to spot problems before they can escalate into major traffic issues. The Rangers’ vehicles are equipped to help drivers with such items as booster cables, jacks, sand, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, reflective cones. The vehicles are white and display a Road Rangers logo on the rear and sides.
The program has helped:

- Reduce the number of accidents,
- Reduce incident duration by assisting the Florida Highway Patrol,
- Helped disabled or stranded motorists, and
- Removed road debris.

This program has enhanced safety and provided a service to the motoring public.

The Road Ranger Service Patrol is funded by the Florida Department of Transportation and its partners. This limited service is free. For Road Ranger assistance dial *FHP (347).

Information Available on the 511 Travel Information System

- Traffic reports and drive-time summaries on highways
- Public transportation information
- Information on airports
- Information on ports