

## 10 SIGNS OF HAZARDOUS DRIVING

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## FAIRHAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT

1. Problem with interpreting traffic signs
2. Inappropriate judgment in traffic
3. Difficulty seeing pedestrians and other vehicles
4. Drifting into other lanes of traffic
5. Failure to change lanes when an obstacle appears
6. Failure to use signals when changing lanes or turning
7. Failure to yield to right-of-way
8. Turning from an improper lane or at an improper time – particularly at intersections
9. One or more fender benders or near misses
10. Many moving driving violations



Fairhaven Police Department  
Crime Prevention Division

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*Should Mom and Dad Still  
Be Driving?*



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As our parents age we strive to preserve their independence, their safety and the safety of others. Many adult children find it difficult to ask their parents to give up their car keys and gave up driving permanently. For mature adults in their 80's and 90's, giving up their car keys can signal the end of independence and the beginning of total reliance on others.

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As a caregiver, you have good reason to be concerned about aging drivers. The elderly are more likely than younger adults to be injured in a car crash. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of accidental death for those aged 45 to 74 and the second leading cause for people over 75. Nonetheless, age should not be used as the sole criterion to determine an older person's driving ability.

Often time's mature drivers recognize their own declining physical and perceptual abilities. They voluntarily restrict their driving to daylight hours, avoid rush hour traffic and remain on

familiar roads. Still, the number of older drivers is on the rise.

Statistics show that mature drivers have fewer crashes per driver and their crash rate per mile driven is second only to that of young adults. However, older drivers are more likely to be cited for failure to yield right-of-way.

You don't have to wait for a crash to happen before you can determine that an older loved one is no longer a safe driver. You can objectively look for changes in your older driver's driving performance by focusing on four measurable factors – vision, hearing, response and their ability to process multiple tasks simultaneously.

## VISION

Nine-tenths of the information used in driving is received through the eyes. Age-related changes that may impede driving ability include reduced dynamic acuity or the ability to follow moving objects; declining peripheral or side vision; a decrease in the ability to adjust focus; increased sensitivity to glare – particularly during night driving and in very bright sunlight; and a decrease in the eye's adaptation between light and dark. Age-related diseases of the eye, such as

cataracts and glaucoma, also are factors in crashes among older drivers.

## HEARING LOSS

A decreased in the ability to hear high-pitched sounds can make it difficult for older drivers to sort through the clutter of street noises to discern honking horns, emergency vehicles sirens, or ringing bells at railroad crossings.

## RECOGNITION AND RESPONSE TIME

Elderly drivers need more time to process information about events as they occur and to respond – for example, by braking when another car suddenly pulls in front of them. Decreased motor skills and muscle strength also make it difficult for them to handle quick maneuvers and even to grip and turn the steering wheel.

## DECREASED ABILITY IN DUAL TASK PERFORMANCE

Most crashes involving older drivers occur at intersections and right-of-way or during lane changes. This may occur because the driver has more trouble concentrating on two or more sources of information, with the added pressure of timing a turn or lane changes.

Older adults who take medications that cause sedation or confusion, older alcoholics and those who have been diagnosed in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease are particularly at risk for crashes.