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Special thanks and appreciation is extended to:
NSW Transport Roads and Maritime Services.

If you would like more details on the information in this handbook, please contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81

ACCESSIBILITY

The ACT Government is committed to making its information as accessible as possible.

If you require a translator or interpreter, contact us through the Translating and Interpreter Service (TIS) on 13 14 50.

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service (NRS) on 13 36 77 and ask for 13 22 81.

Speak and Listen users can phone 1300 555 727 and ask for 13 22 81.

If you would like to receive this document in an alternative format such as large print, contact 13 22 81.

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This handbook is intended to assist ACT drivers, however, it is intended as a guideline only. Legislative provisions are contained in the Road Transport (Road Rules) Regulation 2017 and Road Transport (Driver Licensing) Regulation (2000).

For further information please contact Access Canberra on 13 22 81.
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL ON THE AGEING (ACT)

ACT Seniors are very aware that we have become, to a significant degree, a car dependent society and that being able to drive helps us to maintain the style and quality of our lives so that we can continue to participate in the social life of our community. Seniors have considerable driving experience and are generally regarded as good and safe drivers. It is beneficial that many older drivers are likely to modify their driving habits and practices as they become more aware of changes to both the environment and their own circumstances or capacity to operate a vehicle with confidence.

COTA ACT keenly promotes efforts to maintain and improve the driving skills of older drivers in the ACT. We urge all drivers, particularly those of mature age, to evaluate their skills and recognize that there may be factors which inhibit their ability to operate a vehicle as effectively as they may have able to in the past. We recognise that maintaining understanding of road rules, road conditions and the behaviour of other road users plus their own ongoing effectiveness as a driver is likely to make driving more enjoyable and sustainable.

Driving in the ACT can be unnerving with far more novice road users and numerous instances of roadworks and increased traffic congestion. It is important to have up to date knowledge and good skills when driving under these often-challenging circumstances. Knowing and understanding changes to road infrastructure and rules is one aspect of safer driving. As vehicles are becoming more sophisticated with more, often distracting, features an understanding vehicle changes and how to operate them appropriately can also influence safety. Unfortunately, many drivers have access to a greater number of distractions in vehicles and their behaviour can impact other road users. The ACT is currently considering rules to address Drug Driving. COTA ACT recognises that older drivers may be vulnerable because of medications they take. A better comprehension of our changing limitations, including
the possible effects of medication, is also important so we will seek the supply of better information about the effects of medication on older drivers.

Since the combination of increasing age and vehicle complexity tending to make safe driving more of an issue we believe it is important that COTA ACT and the Road Transport Authority continue to work together to enhance the capacity of older drivers and to adopt safe and responsible driving practices.

The Road Transport Authority recognises the number of older drivers in the ACT is growing – an inevitable result of an increasing older population in the ACT. This booklet has been produced as a proactive approach to assist in maintaining the skills of older drivers. COTA ACT strongly supports this effort and hopes that it will benefit you personally as well as the broader community.

Please set aside time to read this booklet. There may be some aspects where you can reaffirm your driving ability and thus to help us to enjoy a safer community, while maintain your capacity to drive and exercise your independence.

**Ewan Brown**

President
COTA ACT
## CONTENTS

A message from the President of the Council On The Ageing (ACT) iii

**Your driving performance** 1
- Changing lanes? 2
- Stay informed of road rules 4

**Physical conditions** 5
- Intersections 6
- Joining traffic on a busy roads 7
- Slower than you used to be in reacting to dangerous driving situations? 7

**Do you wear a seat belt?** 9

**The driver’s health and attitude** 11
- Wandering thoughts 12

**Good health habits** 13
- Sleepy during the day? 13
- Regular eye check 16
- Medication and driving 17
- Health practices 20

**Records and other indicators** 21
- Concerned family and friends 21
- Infringements, cautions 22
- Crashes in the last two years? 24

**More helpful information** 25
- Maintaining your car 25
- Preventative maintenance 25
- Safety systems 25
- Buying a new car: 26
- Seeing out of the car 27

**Road Transport Authority** 27

**Alternative means of transport** 28
- Transport options 29

**Community service contacts** 29

**Other groups and organisations** 29

**What to do after a crash** 30

**Retiring from driving** 31
- Why we love to drive 32
- The older driver 32
Fitness and performance ability 34
Recognising the Signs 34
Feelings about driving 34
Giving up driving is not the end of the world 35
Become familiar with public transport 35
Try to live close to public transport 36
Live near family, social networks and medical services 36
Get some advice 36
Look into available community transport services 36
Share the driving 36
Changing driving patterns 37

Holiday travel 37
Health issues 37

Safe driving 38
Safe practices 38
Safe driving our cars 38
Important signs 38
Regular health checks 38
Driving ability. 39

To drive or not to drive 39
Where can you go for help 39
The role of friends and family 39
A gradual approach 40
Retiring from driving 40
Costs of running a car 40
Alternative services 41
Living without a car 41
Family and friends 42
Community transport 42
Identification cards 42
Walking 42

Counselling services 43

Strategies 43

Home delivery services and the Internet 43
Mobility scooters 43
Suggestions and conclusion 44
Licence classes codes 45
The motor car has had a profound impact on life-style and mobility. The car has played and will continue to play an important part in the independence and life-style of older drivers. Older drivers make up a fast growing part of the Australian population. Freedom to travel by car will continue to be an important part of your independence and quality of life.

Road Transport Authorities want to keep drivers on the road for as long as they can drive safely. Growing older should never be taken as an indicator of reduced driving ability. In fact older drivers represent a wide range of abilities, and no individual should have a licence taken away from them solely because of age. However, there is evidence that for many drivers the skills necessary for safe driving begin to decline at about age 60 and decline quickly after about age 75. There is also evidence that older drivers can cope safely with this decline. While you cannot stop ageing you can try to limit the way any change in function affects your driving.

The purpose of this handbook is to help you drive as long as possible with safety to yourself and others.
Do you check your mirrors, signal intention and perform a head check for cars behind and beside you before changing lanes?

FACT

One of the specific unsafe driving habits of many older drivers is failing to look for cars (perform a head check) behind and beside their vehicle.¹ When under observation some older drivers report that they are not aware of having not looked behind and beside their vehicles before changing lanes or reversing. The fact that some do not realise they have this dangerous habit might be due to gradual changes in driving habits. These changes often result from chronic stiffness and/or pain in the upper body and neck due to arthritis.² As well they may not know how important it is to always perform a head check to the rear because they have driven accident-free for a long time without following this practice. These drivers are indeed fortunate that they have not been involved in a vehicle crash.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Understand that if you do not check for cars behind and beside your vehicle (perform a head check) you can cause a serious crash.
- Examine your lane-changing and reversing behaviour and resolve to improve your driving procedures.


• If you have arthritis or joint stiffness which interferes with turning your head, inquire through your doctor and other sources about medications and exercises which might improve your flexibility.
• If stiffness, arthritic pain or other physical problems keep you from turning your head and looking to the rear as easily as you should and would like to, install a larger rear-view mirror inside your car to ensure that you have complete vision through your rear window.

Most drivers are unaware that a ‘blind spot’ exists between the interior mirror and the left hand or right hand exterior mirrors and often change lanes without checking this blind spot.

If you find that you have problems turning to check these ‘blind spots’, special mirrors can be attached to the exterior mirrors of your vehicle to assist with vision. If you decide to fit these mirrors, ensure they are small and that you still have ample standard viewing.

Many drivers, regardless of age, have the opinion that to change lanes all they need to do is use their indicators and all other traffic will give-way to them. This of course is a dangerous practice as indicators simply warn other traffic that you are about to change direction. Drivers must give-way to traffic in other lanes when making a lane change.

• The correct procedure when making a lane change is to check your interior mirror, check your left or right hand mirror (depending on whether you are changing to a left or right hand lane), indicate, look over the appropriate shoulder to check your blind spot and if the way is clear, make your lane change. Many drivers already use this procedure, however if you are not one of those who do, perhaps now is a good time to start.

• Take a refresher driving course with a driving school that can highlight any problems a driver may have and suggest what can be done to reduce them. Check with the driving schools in your local area.
Many drivers do not have an up to date knowledge of new developments with the road rules.3

Stay informed on changes to the road rules

Interpreting traffic signs and symbols relies on both knowledge of the symbols and the regulations they enforce, as well as the ability to interpret the meaning of the signs, which lessens with age.4

We would recommend separating the two possible causes of failing to identify road signs:

1. Lack of knowledge5
2. Cognitive difficulties with interpreting visual symbols6

Therefore, all drivers must remain aware of the current road rules and associated symbols so they can recognise them in their local driving area. If you are driving in unfamiliar areas, different states or countries, make sure you check the meaning of local traffic signs before setting out. Drivers of all ages can be hesitant in traffic and a danger to themselves and others if they do not know and follow the rules of the road.


5 (Marottoli et al 2007)

SUGGESTIONS:

• Knowledge of current traffic laws, devices, signs and symbols is essential for your safety and that of other road users. Being dependent on your driving experience alone rather than keeping yourself informed on changes to the road rules could be costly and result in injury.

• Read and study the ACT Road Rules Handbook. This book may be purchased at an Access Canberra Service Centre.

• The handbook is also available on the internet at the following web site address: www.act.gov.au/accessCBR.

NOTE

The electronic version of the ACT Road Rules Handbook can be located at: www.act.gov.au/accessCBR

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Driving requires sensing, deciding and acting. Sensing means being alert through all senses to what is happening in traffic. This information reaches you through your eyes, ears and through the senses of touch and smell. After you pick up cues for action through sensing, you then have to decide what to do about them. Deciding refers to all of the thought processes which occur between your impression of events and your response to those events. You must assess actions you might take, and choose those least likely to cause a crash or interfere with traffic.

After deciding what to do, you have to translate your decision into acting: braking or accelerating, steering, signalling, etc. Unfortunately for older drivers, ageing can reduce your ability to sense, decide and act.

Though people age at different rates and in different ways, in general as people become older they do not hear and see as well, they process
information more slowly and do not act as quickly. Adding to driving difficulties for some are such medical conditions as cataracts and arthritis as well as hearing loss.

Do intersections bother you because there is too much to watch in all directions?

Intersections are complicated centres of fast moving traffic and it can be difficult to take everything in at once.

**FACT**

Intersections are one of the more common sites of crashes involving older drivers (particularly when they are turning right), and when there are no traffic-lights to control the traffic. Older drivers often have difficulty judging traffic flow at sign-controlled or uncontrolled intersections, noticing hazards at these intersections, and selecting appropriate gaps to enter the traffic. Stop signs in particular must be obeyed as they are a common location for crashes involving older drivers and because they provide the driver more time to scan a busy or occluded road before entering it.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Take a good look at your driving skills regarding intersections. Do you have the ability to process the information quickly enough? If not, you should discuss this with your doctor.

- Are you unsure how or where to position your car for a left or right turn? You may like to discuss your uncertainties with an Accredited Driving Instructor.

- Do you have difficulty turning the steering wheel because of arthritis or some other physical problem? You may need to discuss this with your doctor and seek advice on making adjustments to your vehicle to help you.

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• Perhaps you simply are uncertain about what you are supposed to do at an intersection and when you should do it. Studying an intersection while you are a passenger in a vehicle may help you negotiate it later when driving.

• Take a driving lesson with a driving school. What you learn may give you the confidence to recognise what you can do, or that you are doing everything correctly at intersections and that intersections are not as dangerous as they once appeared.

• Plan your trips to avoid busy intersections or drive at less busy times. Plan an alternative route which may help you avoid busy intersections.

**Do you find it difficult to decide when to join traffic on a busy road?**

Ageing and the normal decline in sensing, deciding and acting abilities can make an older person uneasy on busy roads. The reason most often expressed is that other people drive too fast. To some older drivers this might be a valid reason for avoiding peak traffic times and busy roads. However, better knowledge of how to drive on busy roads should make it easier when you do need to use them.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

• You may want to take a refresher course with a driving school to build up your confidence and update your driving skills.

• If, regardless of what you learn to do, you are still nervous and have doubts about driving on busy roads, try to avoid them.

**Are you slower than you used to be in reacting to dangerous driving situations?**

Emergencies and dangerous driving situations may be fairly uncommon, but fast and safe reactions are essential. While good sensing, deciding and acting are all necessary for safe driving, these skills come together in acting, what you do, or do not do, quickly enough to avoid an accident. It is acting that some older drivers find difficult.
You are subject to the physical and psychological changes of ageing. Some of these changes can adversely affect your driving capacity unless you adapt to the changes. You may need to develop new ways to help you to continue to drive safely.

Changes in the muscles and bones are part of the reason for the severity of injury of drivers over 70 who are involved in crashes. Reaction time is slowed down by arthritic joints and tight muscles. Joint flexibility and muscle strength also diminish with age. But there are steps that most drivers can take to improve their response to dangerous situations.

**FACT**

Older drivers take more time to integrate information from several sources at once and may respond more slowly in dangerous situations.8

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Keep yourself physically fit and mentally alert and avoid driving if you are tired, ill, or have taken any drugs (including alcohol) that will slow your mental or physical responses. Ask your doctor or chemist if you are not sure about the effects of prescription medicine.

- Speed of processing becomes slower with age and the majority of slowing is attributable to slower perception, decision making and movement initiation rather than executing the movement control in the older adult.

- Check intersections before entering, approaching slower to intersections, scanning the road further ahead - these things will give you extra time to prepare and respond to a potential hazard.

- If joint and muscle impairments are serious, investigate medical and surgical therapies.

• Anti-inflammatory drugs\(^9\) and various procedures, including total joint replacement, will in some cases lessen impairment sufficiently, and will in some cases lessen the pain and impairment which may assist in your safer driving.

• Vehicles fitted with power steering, power brakes, power seats, power mirrors and wide rear-view mirrors can help compensate for loss of flexibility, strength or movement.

• If possible, avoid driving in busy, complex and fast-moving traffic.

**DO YOU WEAR A SEAT BELT?**

Regardless of your age, you are always safer with a seat belt on. Wearing a seat belt is compulsory. This is why the law has no age exemption for seat belt use. Seat belts must be properly worn at all times to give you maximum protection.

Listed below are a few easy steps to wearing a seat belt correctly:

• make sure the belt is correctly clipped in the buckle. Inertia type seat belts automatically adjust to fit your body. Static type seat belts in older vehicles may need to be adjusted.

• make sure the belt sits flat against you. It should not be twisted.

• wear the lap part of the belt across your hips not across your stomach.

• make sure the sash part goes across your chest and over your shoulder. If it rubs your neck or is too low on your arm you can get a sash guide to make it fit better. Modern vehicles usually have a mechanism to adjust the height of the sash part of the belt.

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FACT

Seat belts give you a better chance of surviving a crash without being killed or seriously injured than not wearing one at all.10

When involved in a crash, those 65 and older are more likely to be injured or killed than younger people. Your body may not be as resilient as it was when you were younger and it will not heal as quickly or as well. In a crash, two things happen:

• the vehicle hits another vehicle or object.
• the people inside hit the interior of the vehicle.

The fastened seat belt helps protect you against the second collision.

Properly fastened seat belts are the best available way to reduce injuries and fatalities in a crash.

Seat belts work in conjunction with the vehicle’s SRS air bags however, you still need to wear your seat belt to ensure that you have even greater protection in a crash.

SUGGESTIONS:

• Accept the fact that seat belts save lives and reduce injuries.
• Convince those you care about and who travel with you of this.
• Then make sure that you and all who ride in your car wear them properly fastened, at all times.
• Children travelling in motor vehicles must be restrained in an approved child restraint which is properly fastened and adjusted and is suitable for the child's age and weight.
• Children aged under 7 years must not be in the front row of a motor vehicle that has 2 or more rows of seats.

THE DRIVER’S HEALTH AND ATTITUDE

A driver in ill health, or fatigued and tired will not feel like driving, and will therefore be a danger to himself or herself as well as to other road users.

A driver taking medication of any type should ask a doctor or chemist if their medication can affect their driving ability.

All drivers need to have a safe and sensible attitude to correct and safe driving practices.

Bad temper has a direct effect on driving attitude and should not be allowed to take control of a driver’s behaviour. A driver should never allow another road user’s actions to influence the way in which they drive.

Any driver who reacts to another road user’s poor behaviour by tailgating the offending vehicle, yelling abuse or blasting on the vehicle’s horn, risks further incident and should consider whether or not they are a safe person to be in control of a motor vehicle.

All drivers need to have a “sensible attitude” when driving. A driver who has just had an argument, or has been involved in an incident which will interfere with his or her concentration, should not consider getting behind the wheel of a vehicle until they have calmed down.

SUGGESTIONS:

• Drivers should get plenty of sleep prior to driving long distances.
• A tired and fatigued driver is a dangerous driver.
• Drivers should time their trip to avoid peak traffic periods at their destination.
• Drivers who take medication should check with their doctor to ensure that it will not have any effect on their driving ability.
• If the vehicle becomes too hot or uncomfortable, where possible, cool the cabin down. Alternatively, stop and have a short walk about to freshen up.
Do your thoughts wander when you are driving?

Even the best drivers fail to concentrate on the driving task sometimes. Driving is complicated and demanding. It takes continuous concentration, so even momentary lapses can lead to danger. Not seeing road signs and stop signs, not giving way and so on, are thought to be partly due to inattention to the driving task.

The first rule for all drivers should be undivided and concentrated attention.

Many of us have seen drivers in animated conversation and looking at others in the car with minimum attention to the road. Other drivers will drink coffee, try to glance at a newspaper or talk on a mobile phone while driving. In an emergency they may not be able to return from their diversion in time to avoid a crash.

Getting older may slow down your ability to switch your attention from one thing to another. Many conditions can interfere with your ability to concentrate:

- tiredness
- illness
- medications
- alcohol
- full meals
- pain
- a loud radio
- hot or cold weather
- using a hand held mobile phone while driving is illegal
- If your mind wanders, force yourself to concentrate on the driving task at hand.
SUGGESTIONS:

- Accept that driving is a complex task and requires your full attention.
- If you find that you are day dreaming or otherwise not concentrating on your driving, identify what is diverting you and return your attention to driving.
- Check with your doctor or chemist if any medication you are taking affects your driving.
- Take the necessary steps to remove or reduce distractions, whether they are those over which you have control or those for which you will need help.
- If you are tired or emotional do not drive – take a taxi or bus instead.

GOOD HEALTH HABITS

Your health can be affected by physical fitness and interest in nutrition. Good health habits include regular medical checkups and keeping up-to-date on health issues. This can improve the sensing, deciding and acting skills required for safe driving.

Good vision can help you avoid traffic crashes. Remaining mentally alert can help you decide more quickly. Good nutrition can strengthen your bones against injury.

Do you find that you are sleepy at times during the day?

It is quite possible that you experience day-time sleepiness sometimes when you have been pushing yourself too hard. However, if you find yourself always or almost always sleepy during the day, you may need to look into the causes of this tiredness.

Day-time sleepiness is a common and serious complaint, and is an important cause of road traffic accidents. It occurs more frequently among older people than other age groups. This is due to changes in the sleep cycle with age such as the inability to sustain sleep during the night because of age-associated biological rhythm changes.
However, day-time sleepiness may also indicate that you are suffering from a medical condition. For instance, common causes of persistent day-time sleepiness include: insomnia, tiredness and fatigue resulting from a long-term viral illness (post-viral fatigue syndrome); and types of drugs and medications, such as benzodiazepines, which can induce day-time sleepiness.

**FACT**

Sleep apnoea is a common disorder affecting approximately 10% of males over the age of 40.\(^{11}\)

Sleep apnoea most often affects men who are middle aged or older, heavy snorers, overweight and medium to heavy drinkers of alcohol. People with sleep apnoea stop breathing repeatedly during their sleep. Lapses from breathing can last anywhere between 10 and 60 seconds, sometimes even longer. It is possible for a person to stop breathing 400 times during one night, resulting in having very little sleep.

People with sleep apnoea are often very sleepy during the day. They get very tired while driving, and even fall asleep at traffic lights or while driving. Sleep apnoea is thought to be a significant factor in many traffic crashes. A study conducted in NSW found that 19% of sleep apnoea sufferers had been involved in a crash caused by their sleepiness.\(^{12}\) In adults, being overweight, drinking alcohol, and taking medication such as sleeping tablets can increase the likelihood and severity of the condition.

Sleep apnoea if left untreated can lead to serious life threatening conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease and brain damage due to low blood oxygen levels (hypoxia).

11 Seneratna et al 2016 Sleep apnoea in men BMC Health 16:1029
Unfortunately, not all individuals who suffer from sleep apnoea realise that they have it.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Make yourself aware of your own sleep patterns and feelings of sleepiness during the day and remind yourself of how this can relate to your driving ability. Try to ascertain if you are a snorer or a restless sleeper, or if you sometimes stop breathing whilst sleeping.

- If you think you may have sleep apnoea, speak to your doctor and limit your driving as much as possible. Your doctor may give you a referral to a sleep disorders clinic, where a sleep analysis will be conducted. If the sleep study shows that you have sleep apnoea, there are effective treatments available.

- Regardless of whether you have sleep apnoea or not, make sure that you do not drive a car when you are feeling tired. If you are sleepy, have a nap before you set out on your journey. If you become tired while driving, stop the car at the nearest safe place and rest until you are feeling rested and alert.

However, once drowsiness sets in, you should stop and rest.

**FACT**

It is estimated that nationally 15% of fatal crashes are caused by driver fatigue. Many people are under the impression that they can stay awake if they try hard enough.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^\text{13}\) Filtness AJ et al 2017 Accident Analysis and Prevention 99:440-444
SUGGESTIONS:

• If possible, start your trip early in the day and do not drive late at night. The chances of crashing are much higher at night.

• Take regular breaks, stop in a town on the way or use a roadside rest stop. Getting out of the car and walking around will stretch stiff muscles and joints.

• Driver Reviver Stations make good rest stops.

• Share the driving, if you can.

• Stay somewhere overnight so you can arrive safely even if not until the next day.

• Eat properly when travelling on a journey and ensure you take regular breaks.

Do you get regular eye checks to keep your vision at its sharpest?

The amount of light required to detect an object increases with age. A 45 year old driver must have about four times the light required by a 19 year old to detect the same object. This is only one of the factors that makes night driving especially difficult for older drivers.

Older drivers do not recover from glare as quickly or as fully as younger drivers.

Peripheral vision, the ability to see to the side while looking straight ahead, also lessens with age. This may explain why older drivers have trouble picking up information from the side of the car. Those with poor peripheral vision in both eyes have crash rates twice as high as those with normal peripheral vision. It becomes more difficult to distinguish colour as you age and traffic signals appear dimmer. Red colours do not appear as bright to many older drivers and it may therefore take some older drivers twice as long to detect the flash of brake lights as it used to when younger.
Another visual ability that declines over the years is depth perception: the ability to tell how close or how far you are in relation to a car or object ahead. Depth perception is especially important when trying to judge how fast other cars are coming. Such medical conditions as cataracts, glaucoma, and diabetes are more common with age and can also be dangerous for driving.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Have regular examinations with your eye doctor. Tell the doctor that you want a thorough examination which will help you remain a safe driver.
- Take the corrective steps your doctor recommends. If glasses are prescribed, keep them up-to-date by letting the doctor know at once if they are not working well for you.
- Reduce the amount of driving you do after dark and at twilight (one of the most dangerous times of the day). The chances of having a crash are three times greater at night than during the day-time.
- Be especially careful when you are going into tunnels and undercover parking lots. Be aware that your eyes will need time to adjust to the dimly lit surroundings.
- Always keep your windscreen and headlights clean to reduce glare.

*Do you check with your doctor about the effects of your medication on your driving ability?*

Some of the most innocent sounding medications (including those bought without a prescription) can affect your driving. The drugs that slow you down generally reduce your ability to process information rapidly enough to drive a vehicle safely.
Some people suffer from more than one medical problem and chronic illness requiring not only daily medication, but combinations of medications. Often you can be unaware of the possible effects of these medications on your driving ability. This can happen if there is no communication between you and your doctor about side effects, or if there are no instructions about side effects on the prescription container.

Some people may be under the care of several doctors, all writing prescriptions with little or no knowledge of what others have prescribed. The drug mixtures of several prescriptions can cause unpredictable reactions and side effects. If these drugs have an effect on driving skills, it is likely to be a bad one. All the more so for older people because they are more sensitive to medication and more susceptible to unusual reactions. While you might be wary of the effects of prescription drugs, even those sold over the counter without a prescription can reduce driving ability.

Depressants can affect your driving. Depressants (also known as downers) are drugs which slow down all your body's systems which can make you sleepy, uncoordinated and slow to react. Commonly used depressants are:

• alcohol,
• tranquillisers and sleeping pills (e.g. benzodiazepines),

• some pain killers and headache pills (e.g. codeine),
• some allergy medicines (antihistamines),
• some medications for epilepsy, blood pressure, nausea, inflammation and fungal infections,
• most travel pills, many cough and cold remedies (some of these may contain antihistamines).

Stimulants can affect your driving. Stimulants (also known as uppers) speed up your body's systems and can make you jittery, uncoordinated and anxious. Stimulants or medicines which contain stimulants include:
• some decongestants, such as cough and cold remedies, and
• appetite suppressants.

It is important to avoid alcoholic beverages when you take other medications. Almost always, the combination of alcohol and other drugs affect your driving ability more than either alcohol or drugs alone.

To remain safe, avoid alcohol altogether if there is a chance you may be driving. There is no question that alcohol lessens the ability required for safe driving. Tolerance to alcohol decreases steadily with age, apart from any personal history of drinking. Alcohol has a powerful impact on your total system, both physical and psychological.

Older people are less able to sober up after drinking alcohol. Food, mood, tiredness, medication, general health, weight and size of body can all make a difference in predicting overall effect. It simply makes good sense to avoid drinking when driving.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

• Remind yourself that both prescribed and over-the-counter medications may have a bad effect on your driving skills.
• Check with your doctor or pharmacist to determine what the side effects of a prescribed medication are and how they apply to your driving. If more than one doctor is prescribing drugs for you, make sure all of them know about all of the drugs you are taking, whether prescribed or not.

• Read all labels and instructions on prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs so you know the side effects. Examples of warning labels include the wording:

  This medicine may affect mental alertness and/or coordination. If affected do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery. Avoid taking alcohol with this medication unless advised by the prescriber.

  This medicine may cause drowsiness and may increase the affects of alcohol. If affected do not drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery.

The only safe action is not to drink alcohol at all if you intend to drive. Do not travel with anyone who has been drinking.

**IMPORTANT NOTE**

From the time you reach 75 years of age, the Road Transport Authority will require you to provide an annual medical report from your own doctor prior to the renewal of your driver licence.

**Do you stay up-to-date with current information on health practices and habits?**

The people least likely to change behaviour for the good are the ones most at risk. As you age, inevitably there will be some reduction with driving ability. There is a close link between a healthy lifestyle and driving skills. The attitude that encourages you to remain informed on health matters probably will also help you to feel in control of your future as a driver.
SUGGESTIONS:

• Become more aware of the relationships between good health habits and your driving.
• Take as much control as you can of your life-style, recognising the obvious connection between control of personal health and skill in driving.
• Understand the value of nutrition, exercise, medical check-ups and the effects of medication, drugs and alcohol.

RECORDS AND OTHER INDICATORS

There are many ways you receive feedback on your driving ability. A Traffic Infringement Notice (TIN) issued by the police or received as a result of camera detected offences are placed on your driving record.

Concerned family members and friends may point out to you that disobeying the law is in fact dangerous driving. They may suggest that you take steps to reduce the danger or give up your licence. Few drivers however, voluntarily surrender a licence. It is too important to them.

Are your children, or other family members or friends concerned about your driving ability?

You may have been aware of concern by others about your driving. You might have felt that the critics were worse drivers than you. It is possible that a driver retraining course or such corrective action as treatment for faulty vision or other physical problems will help you.

It might also be appropriate to take more caution in relation to medication and alcohol.

Begin to prepare for the day when driving will no longer be possible for you. With adequate planning, a non driving life may not be as bad as it seems (see the section on alternative transport starting on page 28).
Apart from the 17–25 year age group, drivers in the 80 and over age group have the highest number of fatal crashes per licensed driver.¹⁵

Denying that your driving ability has decreased happens because giving up your licence is something you would rather not consider. Surrendering your licence could effect your life-style. It is understandable then that older drivers resist comments that threaten the continuance of driving. These suggestions can often provide valuable information about how you can improve your driving skills.

**SUGGESTIONS:**

- Listen to the comments of those concerned about your driving and keep an open mind. Try not to dismiss the value of these comments just because you do not want to accept them.
- Look for ways to improve your driving skills.
- Other forms of transport may provide a viable alternative for your particular needs.

*How many traffic infringements, cautions or discussions with Police officers have you had in the last two years?*

One or two might mean that you need to honestly assess your driving ability. Three or more means you should have a serious look at how you are driving. To be stopped many times suggests that you might be driving dangerously a lot of the time. If you find that realistically little can be done to reduce the danger you should make alternate plans for transportation.

SUGGESTIONS:

- If you have received a traffic infringement or caution, examine the details for the probable causes. If you have received a number of traffic infringement notices you may need to update your knowledge of the current road rules. A copy of the *ACT Road Rules Handbook* can be purchased from any Access Canberra Service Centre or it can be accessed free online at: www.act.gov.au/accessCBR

- If the infringement is due to a physical condition (such as poor vision, resulting in missed signs and signals), try to have the condition corrected. If the infringement seems to be caused by a wandering mind, resolve to pay constant attention when behind the wheel of your car.

- It may be worthwhile having a friend accompany you as a passenger on some trips. They can help with the navigation and reading of road signs.

If the problem seems to be information overload (inability to take everything in quickly enough to act properly), enrol in a driver retraining course with a driving school.

FACT

Apart from the 17–25 year age group, drivers in the 80 and over age group have the highest number of fatal crashes per licensed driver.

Although most drivers believe their own driving skills are superior to those of the average driver, most are also able to accurately judge their driving skill level against expected standards for licensing. However, some older drivers with a history of crashes and cognitive changes may overestimate their safety on the road.16

The most frequent problems of older drivers include:

- failure to give way
- failure to observe traffic signs and signals
- careless crossing of intersections
- changing lanes without due regard to other cars
- reversing
- driving too slowly.

Lack of concentration and finding that there is too much information to handle seem to be related to most of these problems.

Keep in mind that corrective action should be taken quickly, as infringements relate directly to safety.

*How many crashes have you had during the past two years?*

One crash can be too many depending on its severity.

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**FACT**

Younger (17-24y) and older (70-79y) drivers are more likely to be at-fault for crashes.\(^{17}\) One crash can often signal that others are likely. Typical older driver crashes occur on clear days, on straight dry roads, and at intersections within a few kilometres of the driver's home. This statistic may be affected by the fact that many older drivers avoid driving in adverse weather conditions, prefer to drive closer to home and during the day. Ninety per cent of these crashes generally involve a lower speed than similar crashes among younger drivers. They involve more than one vehicle, and result in less serious vehicle damage.\(^{18}\) Injury rates are higher for older occupants.\(^{19}\)

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Older drivers with the most recorded crashes often have a higher incidence of medical conditions (e.g. heart and artery problems, arthritis, broken bones, visual and hearing problems, and diabetes). However, most crashes involving older drivers are associated with a lack of attention to driving, and slowness in processing information and taking the required action. If older drivers honestly confront themselves, many may begin to admit that they do not see well at night, have missed signs, are nervous in traffic and are defensive about their own driving skills.

Acceptance of the facts increases the likelihood that they will improve their driving. Failure to address decreased driving ability is probably the older driver's biggest obstacle because it means their driving keeps getting worse without them seeking ways to improve it. If their driving fails to improve, further crashes are likely to occur, with potentially fatal results.

MORE HELPFUL INFORMATION

Maintaining your car
Before you drive you need to make sure that your vehicle is roadworthy.

Preventative maintenance
Drivers should be familiar with the different systems of their cars. It is important to know the condition of the lights, battery, tyres, oil, brakes and transmission fluid.

You should carefully study your owner's manual and follow the recommended maintenance schedules. This will help you keep your vehicle in good repair and ensure trouble-free driving.

Safety systems
The most obvious safety related parts and accessories are the most overlooked.
• Windshield wipers and washers – most cars have two or three-speed wiper motors. The choice of speed depends on the weather. When blades start streaking or smearing, it is time for replacements.

• Lights and bulbs – burned out light bulbs are not always easy to detect from the driver's seat but they can be a serious traffic hazard. At least once a month, operate the various switches while someone else checks to see that all lights are working. Check the turn signals and four-way flashers.

A broken indicator is usually identified by a marked change in the flashing speed of the turn signal indicator visible on the dashboard. No flashing at all may also indicate a defective flasher unit.

If other drivers flash their high beams when you meet them while using your low beams, your headlights are probably aimed too high. Assuming your vehicle is not overloaded, and you are not towing an improperly loaded trailer, your lights should be checked by a vehicle mechanic and properly adjusted.

Useful points to consider when buying a new car:

Most modern cars are equipped with power steering and brakes. These vehicles require less physical effort when driving with car control.
Consider purchasing a vehicle that is:
• comfortable to drive;
• has easy access for the driver and passengers;
• can be fitted with additional modifications such as larger or additional mirrors to aid driving if necessary. Look for a vehicle with:
• easy to operate controls;
• automatic transmission which is easier to drive than a manual transmission vehicle;
• minimal blind spots;
• power seats and windows;
• SRS air bags;
• anti-lock Braking System (ABS)
• and a good safety rating.
If you are thinking about buying a new car, you should think about your safety.

Seeing out of the car
It is obvious that you must sit high enough to see out of all the windows of the car. If this is a problem for you, examine the driver’s seat to see if it can be raised. If not, auto accessory shops have cushions that raise your sitting position. Be sure the cushion is comfortable and stays in place and that you are able to touch the floor with your feet.

THE ROLE OF THE ROAD TRANSPORT AUTHORITY

The Road Transport Authority (RTA) is the licensing authority in the ACT which is required by law to ensure that all drivers are medically fit and able to drive competently and safely.

In carrying out this responsibility, the RTA takes adequate steps to safeguard the public interest. It requires older drivers, reaching a certain
age, to provide a medical certificate signed by their doctor. This ensures that their ability to drive has not been adversely affected by a medical condition placing their safety and that of others in jeopardy.

**Licence options**

Some older drivers know when to stop driving. They feel more and more uncomfortable, physically and emotionally, while driving. Driving has become an ordeal instead of a pleasure. They realise that they may be a hazard to themselves, their passengers and other road users.

*If you no longer wish to continue driving you can return your licence to an Access Canberra Service Centre.*

**ALTERNATIVE MEANS OF TRANSPORT**

Some more hazardous or unfamiliar trips might be better undertaken by alternative transport rather than driving. We should all recognise that a day will eventually come when we can no longer drive safely. It is therefore in your interest to find out as much as you can about other means of transport such as mobility scooters, buses, taxis and any other services which may be operated by volunteer or community groups.

A check with the following organisations will provide you with details about alternative means of transport:

- senior citizens and community centres
- The Council on the Ageing, ACT
- Canberra Elite and Cabxpress taxis
- The Taxi Subsidy Scheme
- Action Buses
- social networks which may exist in your community
- Independent Living Centre
- Community Transport Coordination Centre.

If you decide to contact any of these organisations, you may also wish to enquire about any discounts or concessions which may be available and how to arrange for them.

For further information, you can request a copy of "A Guide to getting around in Canberra" from COTA ACT (02 6282 3777) or view at www.cotaact.org.au.
Transport options

Community services provide general community information and support for older people including home visits and transport services to essential appointments, referral, advocacy, support and volunteer services.

COMMUNITY SERVICE CONTACTS

Community Transport Coordination Centre ...... 6205 3555

OTHER GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS THAT MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST INCLUDE

Transport Canberra .................................................. 13 17 10
ACT Government Taxi Subsidy Scheme ............ 6205 1012
Belconnen Senior Citizens Club ....................... 6251 6354
Cabxpress ................................................................. 6260 6011
Canberra Elite taxis .................................................. 13 22 27
Wheelchair accessible taxi ................................. 13 92 87
Canberra Railway Station ..................................... 13 22 32
Canberra Seniors Centre ........................................... 6248 9509
CONTACT Canberra .................................................. 6248 7988
Council on the Ageing, ACT (COTA ACT) ........... 6282 3777
My Aged Care .............................................................. 1800 200 422
Qcity Transit (Interstate Travel) ......................... 6299 3722
Murrays Coaches (Interstate Travel) .......................... 13 22 51

Public Advocate of the ACT ................................. 6207 0707

The Independent Living Centre ............................ 6205 1900

Tuggeranong Valley Senior Citizens Club .......... 6292 2816
or 6231 5343

Woden Senior Citizens Club ............................... 6282 2573

CONTACTS

To contact any of the Access Canberra Service Centres:
Telephone:
Access Canberra  13 22 81

Postal Address:
GPO Box 158, CANBERRA ACT 2601

Website:
www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au

WHAT TO DO AFTER A CRASH

If you are involved in a crash causing injury or death to any person, or damage to any property, the law requires you to stop your vehicle. If your vehicle is obstructing traffic after a crash, move it to the side of the road, if possible. The law does not require the vehicle to be left where it stopped after a collision. The law requires you to give your name and address, the vehicle owner’s name and address and the vehicle’s registration number to any other driver or injured person involved in the crash and the owner of any property or vehicle damaged in the crash.
If any person is killed or injured or a vehicle involved in the crash is towed away, the driver must provide his or her particulars to a police officer as soon as possible but within 24 hours after the crash. The Police need not be called to attend a crash if damage to vehicles or property is only minor. However, you must report all vehicle crashes to the police as soon as possible. Except in exceptional circumstances, this means within 24 hours after the crash.

Reports can be made via the internet at: www.act.gov.au/reportacrash

**RETIRING FROM DRIVING**

At some time in our lives, everyone must consider the need to retire from driving. Knowing when the time has come, is not easy. From the day we first get our driver licence, driving is in many ways considered our key to flexibility and convenience. For many people, retiring from driving can feel like a loss of independence and mobility. After all, it is important that everyone remain as mobile as possible for as long as possible to make the most of life.

But giving up driving does not have to be stressful. With good planning and a little assistance, the change can be made fairly smoothly, with little loss of freedom. This booklet has been designed to help you to plan and prepare for this change with minimal impact on your lifestyle.

This section of the booklet is written specifically for older drivers in the ACT who are ready to consider retiring from driving.

Alternatively, you may be reading this because you are concerned about a friend or partner’s ability to drive and you need guidelines for encouraging them to retire from driving. This booklet is for you, too. It also provides information on alternative transport options (see page 28) available in the ACT including information on the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, ACTION buses, discounts available for seniors card holders, mobility scooters and other community transport options.
Why we love to drive

Cars and driving play a very important role in today’s society. Cars provide mobility, which is important to our independence, general health, well being and quality of life. Having a car of your own allows you to go where you want, when you want.

It is no surprise that many older adults rely on driving themselves – particularly when today’s older generation is more affluent, healthier and more active than previous generations.

Yet while it is vital that independence and mobility are maintained for as long as possible, there comes a time for all drivers when safety issues around driving must be considered more carefully.

But giving up driving does not have to be stressful. With good planning and a little assistance, the change can be made fairly smoothly, with little loss of independence.

The older driver

As the proportion of older people in the population increases so too does the number of older drivers on our roads.

Living longer doesn’t necessarily mean our physical capabilities are not declining. As an older adult, you may experience problems and difficulties that impact on your ability to drive safely. Not everyone will retain the ability to drive their car indefinitely.

Sometimes there is conflict between the desire to maintain mobility for as long as possible and safety. This can have serious consequences, with incapable drivers putting themselves and other members of the public at risk. It is very important when considering whether or not you think you should stop driving to honestly assess your capabilities. Safety for yourself and others should be the prime consideration.
The safety of yourself and others should always be of foremost importance. Nobody wants to be the cause of a traffic crash.

On the whole, older drivers are experienced, conscientious and responsible, and make appropriate driving decisions, modifying driving habits to fit capabilities. Older drivers tend to drive shorter distances, make more frequent trips and drive more slowly. They also tend to reduce driving under difficult or high-risk conditions such as peak hour and at night. However, the side-effects of ageing mean that your capabilities and physical resilience decline, whether or not you are conscious of it. The reality is that some factors related both to your age and health are beyond your control and can affect the way you drive.

Older driver crashes are currently not a large road safety problem in terms of the number of crashes compared with other age groups. However, older drivers (particularly those over 75 years) are involved in more crashes with serious injury and fatalities per head of population and per distance travelled than younger drivers. This is often the result of being more vulnerable to serious injury as age increases.

Older drivers are often involved in crashes in complex situations such as at traffic signals, turning right and giving way.

The reality is that some factors related both to your age and health are beyond your control and can affect the way you drive.

You probably know someone who is still driving, but shouldn’t be. But how do you know when to give up driving yourself? Answering this is difficult. Driving is a complicated task requiring continuous concentration.

It is ability not age that determines safe driving. No one should stop driving before their ability to do so has diminished.
In the end, you may give up driving for one of many reasons. Everyone is different. It may be a medical condition that makes you decide to stop, or you may feel you cannot drive safely any more. Maybe it’s pressure from friends and family who can see signs that your driving skills are deteriorating. This can be the time to consider the option to retire from driving.

**Fitness and performance ability**

- Medical conditions and medications can affect driving ability. Feeling drowsy or ‘offish’ on new medication affects performance.
- Declining eyesight can make driving dangerous. There may be difficulty in reading signs, seeing in poor light, coping with glare or seeing cars or pedestrians in shadows.
- You should consider retiring from driving if you have a pattern of ‘close calls’ or near misses or are actually in a crash.

**Recognising the Signs**

**In the end, you may give up driving for one of many reasons. Everyone is different.**

- Increasing difficulty in handling driving situations: being surprised by passing cars, braking harder than normal for hazards, going through red lights or stop signs, turning too fast or too slow, backing into or over objects, running over the kerb, difficulty in keeping the car centred in a lane.
- Concern from friends and family members (particularly when your adult children won’t let your grandchildren travel in the car with you).

**Feelings about driving**

- Loss of confidence and nervousness when behind the wheel.
- Constantly feeling tired when driving.
- Intimidation from other aggressive drivers and increasing confrontations with impatient drivers who make you feel threatened.
• Feeling uncomfortable in some traffic conditions – e.g. becoming confused in complex driving situations such as at intersections, or roundabouts; getting lost.

**Medical conditions and medications can affect driving ability.**

These are examples of warning labels:

- **THIS MEDICINE MAY AFFECT MENTAL ALERTNESS AND/OR COORDINATION. IF AFFECTED DO NOT DRIVE A MOTOR VEHICLE OR OPERATE MACHINERY**

- **Avoid taking alcohol with this medication unless advised by the prescriber.**

- **THIS MEDICINE MAY CAUSE DROWSINESS AND MAY INCREASE THE AFFECTS OF ALCOHOL. IF AFFECTED DO NOT DRIVE A MOTOR VEHICLE OR OPERATE MACHINERY**

**Giving up driving is not the end of the world**

Retiring from driving does not have to mean you give up your independence.

If you plan ahead and ease yourself into a life without driving, you can continue to enjoy a similar quality of life and be satisfied you are travelling in a safe and responsible way.

Few of us plan for the time when we are no longer able to drive. Of course, there will be some consequences of not driving, but if you plan ahead you can minimise any loss of self esteem and the transition to not driving can be much easier and less stressful. It’s never too soon to explore the options available to you. There are a number of things you can look into to help you plan for your successful retirement from driving:

**Become familiar with public transport**

A good way to prepare for not driving is to get familiar with public transport options in your local area, including buses and taxis,
community transport and volunteer services. You might be surprised at how easily and conveniently you can get around without a car. Public transport can be more relaxing than driving in busy traffic – and you don’t have the hassle of finding a car park!

Try to live close to public transport
Living close to public transport can make the world of difference in getting around without a car. If you are considering moving, it is a good idea to keep the location of public transport well in mind.

Live near family, social networks and medical services
If your friends and family will be helping you after you stop driving, it might be a good idea to live somewhere close to them. You could also look into trying to live near where you shop and go out, and where you attend medical or health appointments.

Get some advice
Talk to your doctor, or occupational therapist or your pharmacist about tips on driving.
You can obtain advice from an Accredited Driving Instructor about refresher courses.

Look into available community transport services
Community transport services offer a safe, accessible and convenient alternative to public transport. There are many such services available. They are also a great way of meeting new people. It’s just a matter of finding out what is available. A list of alternative transport options and contact details is provided on page 28 of this booklet.

Share the driving
It is also a good idea to think ahead about sharing the driving. With many couples, men often do the majority of driving. However, if you share the driving between partners, then when one has to retire from driving, the other has up to date experience.
Changing driving patterns

If you find that your driving ability has changed, for whatever reason, it’s a good idea to make the appropriate changes to your driving as soon as possible. You can start by avoiding certain driving situations, such as complex traffic areas. Limit your driving to areas and situations where you feel safe, such as familiar areas and during the day. Short trips can help avoid tiredness.

Planning your trip can also help avoid traffic situations that make you feel uncomfortable. Start to explore alternative forms of transport. By changing your driving patterns, you can gradually introduce alternative forms of travel into your routine.

HOLIDAY TRAVEL

Long distance travel is also going to require some rethinking. Maybe towing the caravan is no longer an option. But there are alternatives. There are lots of good deals for budget travel using rail, coach and air services.

There are also specialised travel packages with concessions. Think about holidaying with friends and enjoy concessions for group bookings. Look out for good deals in seniors’ magazines and travel guides and pension card-holders can even get some free trips!

Health issues related to driving / medication

Many health and medical conditions can affect driving. You need to plan around the effects. For example, if you take medication that makes you drowsy, plan trips in the morning when you are brightest and not too tired.

Also, plan ahead and try to ensure you don’t have to drive when taking medication.
SAFE DRIVING

Your safety is the most important thing if you continue driving and it is worth thinking about adopting safe strategies.

Some safe practices to consider

• If poor vision affects safety at night, for example, drive only during the day.
• If tiring easily or becoming disoriented in new places, stick to short trips close to home and familiar areas.
• If uncomfortable driving at high speeds, stay off highways and freeways.
• Schedule appointments at times other than during peak hour traffic.

Safe driving our cars

If you tire easily or become disoriented travelling in new places you may find short trips close to home and familiar areas less stressful.

Remember these important signs

• Medical conditions and medications can affect driving ability.
• Declining eyesight can make driving dangerous.
• You should think about stopping driving if:
  − you experience increasing difficulty in handling driving situations.
  − your friends and family members are concerned about your driving.

Have regular health checks

Many older drivers start thinking about retiring from driving due to medical conditions. Good vision, for example, is vital for safe driving. It’s your own responsibility to regularly check with your doctor about medical conditions that may affect your driving. Treatment may be of assistance in some cases (for example, surgery for cataracts). Don’t forget that after taking new medication, changing dosages or after surgery, you may not be able to drive for a while.
All ACT drivers are required to undertake a medical assessment by a G.P at 75 years of age and annually thereafter.

*Medical conditions and medications can affect driving ability.*

While it is difficult and often painful, deciding to give up the car keys is something you will probably have to do at some stage. It is much better to make this decision for yourself rather than having a crash or losing your licence. If this happens, your self confidence can be affected. You may even become severely depressed. If you make the decision to stop driving for yourself you will feel much more in control of your life and find planning much easier. Stopping driving does not mean your current lifestyle has to stop too. You just need to have a back-up plan of alternative transport ready to go.

**TO DRIVE OR NOT TO DRIVE**

*Where can you go for help*

Sometimes it is difficult to know who or where to turn to when you are trying to make such big life-changing decisions. Your own doctor will most certainly be helpful as they know about your health status and what you are capable of physically. Your family and friends often give you an honest opinion, because they care. Your safety is foremost in their minds and they can give you a good opinion about your skills. It’s important to try to keep an open mind with this issue.

Your safety is at stake. It may be difficult, but you need to try not to dismiss the value of people’s comments just because you do not want to hear or accept them.

*The role of friends and family*

Some older drivers may choose to resist the concerns of their friends and family. Ultimately, it’s up to each of us to decide. However, as well as discussing your driving ability, friends and family members can help you find other transport options and help you adjust to your changed circumstances.
A gradual approach

When considering retiring from driving you may like to do this gradually, rather than suddenly. Remember you need to adopt safe practices. You can do this by starting to drive during the day only, make shorter trips, drive in familiar areas, drive at speeds that are comfortable for you. Here are some alternatives to consider:

- Drive only during the day if poor vision affects your driving ability and safety at night.
- Stick to short trips if you tire easily or become disoriented when driving in new places.
- Stay off the highways and freeways if you are uncomfortable driving at high speed.
- Appointments can be scheduled at times other than during peak hour traffic.

Consider the option of retiring from driving gradually, rather than suddenly.

Maybe you could keep a mobile telephone to contact a neighbour who can help in an emergency. When it’s time to stop driving altogether, you might sell your car or transfer it to another family member, who could then use it to drive you around.

The costs of running a car

It’s expensive to run a car – especially if it’s not being used often. If you were to add up the money used for petrol and upkeep (tyres, servicing and repairs etc), insurance and registration, you’d probably find that it far outweighs the cost of alternative transport.

You can try out the sums for yourself. Add up the running costs of your car including petrol, servicing and repairs, insurance, registration, licence renewal fee, and parking costs. Then add up the cost of current taxi fares and public transport.
Alternative services

All sorts of transport options are available to you. Many are listed from page 28 of this book. One option might be for your friends and family to drive you around. If you want more independence, you can use taxis, buses, community buses and other volunteer services.

Living without a car

When you make the decision to phase driving out of your life remember it’s not the end of the world. Just because you’ve decided to retire from driving, doesn’t mean you have to stay at home.

ACTION buses have a comprehensive coverage of urban areas, their services are reasonably frequent and they are very safe. Also, the bus fleet in Canberra is increasingly being equipped with fully accessible ‘kneeling’ buses, particularly on routes where many older people live.

You might think of different travel options for each trip. For example, you could take the bus to your local club and then catch a taxi home if the timetables aren’t convenient. Start a car-pooling club for social outings – this saves money for everyone and the driving can be shared.

Electric scooters are becoming an increasingly popular way to travel. If you think a scooter may be a good option for you, you will need to examine this very carefully because safety varies widely between models.

It is important to remember that you use safe riding practices on a scooter.
**Family and friends**

Family and friends may be only too willing to drive you where you need to go. While this may often be the easiest option, you may feel as though you are depending on them a little too much. Setting up some sort of exchange system with friends and neighbours can see a whole new social world open up. And it can take the pressure off family, too. Remember there are many other ways you can get around independently, safely and conveniently.

**Community transport**

Many local communities have recognised the need for transport for their senior members. Some communities have door–to–door services to assist older people to get to activities and appointments. Many of these are run and operated by volunteers and are safe, secure, inexpensive and reliable.

**Identification cards**

When your driver licence is surrendered there are many cards and documents you can use for identification, including your passport, government cards and ‘proof of identity’ card (A Proof of Identity Card can be obtained from Access Canberra Service Centres.).

**Walking**

Walking is well documented as one of the best ways to keep physically fit and active. Walking can be a most pleasurable way of getting around. Perhaps your visit to the local shops to buy the paper, milk and bread can be incorporated with a morning stroll.

However, it’s important that we feel safe when walking. It’s not a good idea to walk alone through lonely or isolated areas such as parks and gardens when it’s dark.
COUNSELLING SERVICES

Some counselling services are available to help people make the decision to stop driving. If you feel depressed, isolated, or lonely because you feel you can’t easily go out, there are people to help. Counselling services are available everywhere. A list of services in the ACT can be found on the Community Services Directorate website at http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au.

There are services which can help if you feel depressed, isolated, or lonely.

STRATEGIES

It is vital that you develop some strategies to maintain mobility without the car. Don’t just sit back and let things happen. Be active, and make sure authorities and community services know what your needs are. If you feel that your area could be serviced by better transport services, let them know.

HOME DELIVERY SERVICES AND THE INTERNET

Make use of home delivery services offered by local businesses, often also available to access on the internet. This allows you to avoid having to carry heavy bags of shopping if you are walking or using the bus or taxi.

MOBILITY SCOOTERS

Mobility Scooters can provide short distance transportation needs for shopping, visiting and excursions.

Develop strategies to maintain mobility if you retire from driving.
SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

As the records show, in terms of crashes per licence holder, older drivers are not over-represented. Many older drivers already compensate for the limits they see in themselves as drivers. They avoid night-time driving, dense traffic periods, and the personal behaviour and life-style which contribute to crashes.

However, it is important to recognise that many traffic changes occur over the years and it is important for all drivers to be up-to-date on these to remain safe drivers. There is a lot of new knowledge about good driving practices which can improve traffic safety for everyone.

If this handbook has helped you identify any shortcomings in your driving, they can be dealt with through driver refresher courses.

We hope that as you reviewed this information together with the accompanying explanations and suggestions that you have considered ways to improve your driving performance.

The main focus is to put you more in control of your future as a driver and to suggest steps you should take to retain that control and continue to drive safely.

No matter how good you are at driving now, there may come a day when you must retire from driving to avoid injury to yourself and other road users. When your self-examination and other occurrences tell you that you can no longer correct your shortcomings enough to drive safely, you need to plan alternative forms of transport.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Licence Class</th>
<th>May Drive:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>R</strong></td>
<td>Motorcycle licence</td>
<td>1. A motorbike or motor trike.&lt;br&gt;2. 2A motorbike towing a single trailer designed to be towed by a motorbike.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>Car licence</td>
<td>1. A motor vehicle (other than a motorbike) with a Gross Vehicle Mass (GVM) not over 4.5 tonnes and that is constructed or equipped to seat not more than 12 adults (including the driver).&lt;br&gt;2. A tractor or implement.&lt;br&gt;3. A motor vehicle mentioned in item 1 or 2 that is towing a single trailer with a GVM not over 9 tonnes.&lt;br&gt;4. However, this class does not cover a motor vehicle that is towing:&lt;br&gt;   (e) 2 or more trailers; or&lt;br&gt;   (f) a single trailer with a GVM over 9 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LR</strong></td>
<td>Light rigid vehicle licence</td>
<td>1. A motor vehicle with a GVM over 4.5 tonnes but not over 8 tonnes.&lt;br&gt;2. A motor vehicle with a GVM not over 8 tonnes that is constructed or equipped to seat more than 12 adults (including the driver).&lt;br&gt;3. A motor vehicle mentioned in item 1 or 2 that is towing a single trailer with a GVM not over 9 tonnes.&lt;br&gt;4. However, this class does not cover a motor vehicle that is towing:&lt;br&gt;   (a) 2 or more trailers; or&lt;br&gt;   (b) a single trailer with a GVM over 9 tonnes.</td>
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<td>Codes</td>
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<td>MR</td>
<td>Medium rigid vehicle licence</td>
<td>1. A motor vehicle with 2 axles and a GVM over 8 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. A motor vehicle mentioned in item 1 that is towing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a single trailer with a GVM not over 9 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. However, this class does not cover a motor vehicle that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>towing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(d) 2 or more trailers; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(e) a single trailer with a GVM over 9 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Heavy rigid vehicle licence</td>
<td>1. A rigid motor vehicle with 3 or more axles and a GVM over 8 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. An articulated bus with 3 or more axles and a GVM over 8 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. A motor vehicle mentioned in items 1 or 2 that is towing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>a single trailer with a GVM not over 9 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. However, this class does not cover a motor vehicle that is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>towing:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a) (2 or more trailers; or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(b) a single trailer with a GVM over 9 tonnes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Heavy combination vehicle licence</td>
<td>1. A prime mover to which is attached a single semi-trailer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>plus any unladen converter dolly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. A rigid motor vehicle to which is attached a trailer with a GVM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>over 9 tonnes plus any unladen converter dolly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Multi-combination vehicle licence</td>
<td>Any motor vehicle or combination of vehicles, other than a motor bike.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>