

# moving rightalong

OBLIGATIONS AND  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
OLDER DRIVERS



Information Sheet 10

# Are you worried about someone's driving?



**Government of South Australia**

Department of Planning,  
Transport and Infrastructure

## Moving Right Along: Obligations and Opportunities for Older Drivers encourages safer, greener and more active travel for older South Australians.

It comprises a series of Information Sheets about fitness to drive and legal responsibilities, driver assessments, ideas for maintaining the ability to drive safely and planning for the time when you, a family member or friend will decide to drive less or stop driving altogether.

### Are you worried about someone's driving?

This can be a difficult issue for all who are involved. People may feel upset or angry if they are criticised, and worried that their independence is threatened. In addition, it takes courage for concerned relatives and friends who are worried about someone's driving to address this issue. Older people may have been in a similar situation with their own parents and still have memories of how they managed it, and how they felt.

Be open and honest. Include the person in all discussions about their driving. They should feel that they are still in control and that the decision is theirs. Discuss your concerns for their safety, the changes that they can expect with age and the options they have for remaining independent.

Be positive. Focus on what the person does well and how they manage their independence.

Be sensitive about how you broach the subject. Think about how you would like somebody to discuss it if the situation were reversed. You might bring up the topic indirectly, for example "I saw a newspaper article about older drivers" or "I heard Mrs Smith gave up driving". Avoid any criticism that could make the person feel that they are under attack.

The following suggestions may help you decide what you can do to help a family member or friend. They could also help you understand if you are the person being helped.

- Encourage safe habits. Discuss how they cope with:
  - night driving
  - peak hour traffic
  - driving in rain, fog or snow
  - busy intersections
  - driving at times when they would normally be asleep
  - driving a car with tinted windows
  - sun glare.
- Plan short trips to familiar destinations and travel them together, avoiding busy roads and major intersections.
- Encourage the person to book with a driving instructor for some refresher driving lessons. These are useful for negotiating new road features and are a practical update of the *Australian Road Rules*.
- Revise knowledge of the Australian Road Rules by doing the online road rules refresh quiz together at [www.mylicence.sa.gov.au](http://www.mylicence.sa.gov.au)
- Give them a copy of *The Drivers' Handbook*, which contains a self-assessment questionnaire and discusses many issues facing older drivers.
- Some medical conditions and medications affect driving. Encourage regular medical checkups and suggest that the person discusses the effects of changes to their health, vision and hearing with their health professional.
- What about insurance? The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure requires notification of medical conditions or injuries that may affect a person's driving ability. Encourage the person to ask their health professional if their condition should be reported to the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure. This does not necessarily mean that the person cannot drive, but if the condition is not reported they may not be covered by insurance in the event of a crash.
- If you feel confident, go for a short drive to determine the problem. Things to look for include poor judgement, changing lanes without checking, going too fast or too slow for safety, having difficulty making turns, jerky stops or starts, and not obeying signs and signals.
- If all else fails, assistance is available from your local health professional, who can discuss the effects of health and ageing on driving with your friend or relative and may suggest that they stop driving. You can raise your concerns separately and confidentially with the health professional, who can then discuss them with the person in private.

For more Information please refer to:

#### Information Sheet 4

Driver Medical Assessment

For more Information please refer to:

#### Information Sheet 2

Fitness to drive



- Alternatively, contact the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure to organise a Practical Driving Assessment. This request is treated confidentially. This assessment of a person's driving ability is completed by an Assessment and Accreditation Audit Officer from the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

For more Information please refer to:

**Information Sheet 5**

Practical Driving Assessment

- It may be as simple as reminding the person of their legal obligation as a South Australian driver's licence holder to report any condition that may affect their driving to the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.
- Discuss other options. When people decide to give up driving, other issues may arise. Some people may be reluctant to ask for help and find they are staying at home instead. Discuss the options of family and friends picking them up, or of using public transport, community buses or taxis.
- Go on outings together, a day excursion by bus or train, visit to a garden centre or shopping mall, trip to visit relations or friends.

For more Information please refer to:

**Information Sheet 6**

Travel options

## Your legal responsibility

As a licensed driver in South Australia and regardless of your age, you are **legally required** to report any medical condition or medication that may affect your ability to drive a motor vehicle safely. Please contact a Service SA customer service centre [www.sa.gov.au/contact-us](http://www.sa.gov.au/contact-us) or call 13 10 84 for information regarding reporting a medical condition.

Also, health professionals are **legally required** to notify the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure as soon as they consider that you suffer from a physical or mental illness, disability or deficiency, or take medication that would be likely to endanger the public if you drive a motor vehicle.

The health professional does not need your permission as this notification is **compulsory by law**.

**The consequences for failing to notify a reportable medical condition and continuing to drive are severe.**

If involved in a crash:

- you may be charged with related driving offences and with failing to notify a reportable medical condition
- you may be sued for any damages to people or property caused by the driver in that crash
- your private car insurance coverage may be affected.

### **Moving Right Along Information Sheets**

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For resources and contact details of relevant government departments and other organisations refer to Information Sheet 11.

#### **Information Sheet 10, version 3**

Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure

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[www.movingrightalong.sa.gov.au](http://www.movingrightalong.sa.gov.au)

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