

Senior Drivers and Their Caregivers



Driving is a complex activity that requires good physical and mental health.

The SAAQ has implemented procedures to ensure that senior drivers are still able to drive a road vehicle safely.

Consequently, when driver's licence holders turn 75, they are required to fill out a questionnaire on their state of health and functional deficits. In some cases, they may also be asked to undergo a medical examination or eye test.

At age 80 and every two years thereafter, drivers must undergo a health assessment. The assessing health care professional inquires about the driver's medical history, performs a full physical examination and reviews the medications the driver takes. Other tests, including eye exams, may also be performed as needed. The assessing eye specialist ensures that the licence holder's visual acuity and field of vision are sufficient for driving.



These procedures can reveal certain difficulties and offer solutions other than the definitive revocation of a driver's licence, such as wearing eyeglasses or not driving at night

Rest assured!

Few medical assessments result in licence revocation. Among drivers assessed between 2016 and 2020:

- approximately 50% kept their licence with the addition of one or more conditions;
- approximately 45% kept their licence without any additional conditions;
- approximately 3% asked to have their licence (or a licence class) cancelled;
- less than 2% had their licence (or a licence class) suspended.

Sometimes, senior drivers only need to change their driving habits. These changes might include:

- avoiding driving during rush hour;
- planning for long trips and including rest stops along the way;
- driving only in familiar surroundings;
- avoiding driving at night or in bad weather;
- avoiding driving when they do not feel well or when they have taken medication that could reduce their ability to concentrate or cause drowsiness;
- choosing a vehicle with options that can make driving easier (automatic transmission, power windows, backup camera, etc.).

Alternatives

Fortunately, there are many alternatives to driving a car. For some, carpooling with relatives or friends is a solution. For individuals in large urban centres, there is public transit, as well as active transportation such as walking or cycling. For others, taxi or paratransit services may be viable options, while some may prefer to use travel companion services offered by community organizations in their area. Some seniors also choose to move to be closer to services and loved ones.

Friends and family members of seniors must be on the lookout for the warning signs of unsafe driving. You may have noticed that a loved one:

- is disoriented when merging onto or exiting a road;
- forgets the route that they usually take;
- stops at intersections at the last minute, or forgets to stop altogether;
- needs a passenger's help in order to drive;
- has difficulty backing up;
- gets honked or shouted at by other drivers on a regular basis.

Ideally, friends and family members should be able to have a frank and open discussion about their loved one's driving.

If need be, suggest that your loved one consult a health care professional, review their driving knowledge and skills, or consider other transportation options available. Some seniors decide for themselves that it is time to give up driving.





Did you know?

Anyone who has doubts about someone's ability to safely drive a vehicle can notify the SAAQ.

If you wish to report a driver to the SAAQ, you must explain why you question their ability to drive and be able to provide identifying information, such as their:

- name and date of birth;
- name and address;
- driver's licence number;
- name and licence plate number.

A licence plate number alone is insufficient. All information received is analyzed as soon as possible.

To reach us

ONLINE

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BY TELEPHONE

Québec area: 418-643-7620

Montréal area: 514-873-7620

Elsewhere: 1-800-361-7620

(Québec, Canada, United States)

TDD/TTY

Deaf or hard of hearing persons

Montréal area: 514-954-7763

Elsewhere in Québec: 1-800-565-7763

BY MAIL

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IN PERSON

At one of our service centres

Call us before heading out. In most cases, we can provide you with the information you need, and you will not have to make the trip.

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au cœur de votre sécurité