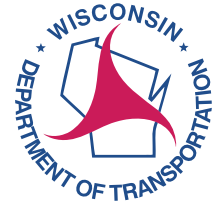


Be Safe, Not Sorry



Assessing your driving skills

Am I still a safe driver?

Driving is a complex activity requiring a variety of high-level thinking skills as well as a certain degree of physical strength, flexibility and coordination. As we age, we can experience decline in a number of areas that affect the ability to drive.

Things to watch for include:

- » *Reduced ability to quickly react*
- » *Decreased vision capability*
- » *Slower visual processing speed*

It is important to take the responsibility of driving seriously and understand how changes in both mental and physical ability can affect driving. A person may be a great driver for many years until a medical condition or age related infirmity results in a loss of the ability to drive safely. This can happen at any age.

No one should be expected to give up his or her driver license based solely on age. Driving is a privilege, and that privilege should be extended to anyone who is able to drive safely and responsibly. As a driver, you play an essential role in making that determination.

“It is important to take the responsibility of driving seriously and understand how changes in both mental and physical ability can affect driving.”

A SELF-ASSESSMENT GUIDE

Use this guide to help you to determine if you may need to change your driving habits, or explore other avenues of transportation.

- * Do other drivers honk or pass you frequently, even when traffic is moving relatively slowly?
- * Do you become nervous or anxious when approaching intersections?
- * Do you arrive at a location and not remember how you got there?
- * Do you notice dents and dings on your vehicle and do not know how they got there?
- * Have you found yourself in more close calls and near misses on the road?
- * Do family or friends comment negatively on your driving habits?

If you answered “yes” to any of the questions above, then it could be time to recognize that your motor skills may be declining.

Based on your “yes” answers, now ask yourself:

- * Are there ways I can improve my driving habits?
- * Am I physically in shape to drive?
- * Am I taking medications that could affect my ability to drive safely?
- * Should I consider public transportation or alternate means of transportation?

If the answers to these questions indicate a need for change, there is help available. Turn to the last chapter of this handbook for helpful contact information.

What happens at renewal?

What should I expect?

Every 8 years all drivers must renew their driver license in person at a DMV customer service center. This can be a stressful experience for many reasons.

The following information should help you in preparing for your driver license renewal. If you are better prepared, you will be less stressed and better able to make informed decisions.

VISION SCREENING

Option 1

- » DMV tests the vision of all drivers at every renewal.
- » DMV may require a vision specialist's report prior to renewing your license if you are unable to attain a vision reading of 20/40 or better.
- » Currently there is no additional fee for having the vision screening completed with DMV.

Option 2

- » A vision specialist tests your vision.
- » The examination must be conducted within the last 90 days from the date you renew your license.
- » It must be legible and completed in full.
- » Any cost incurred is your responsibility.

ACUITY

- » For a regular driver license you need a minimum of 20/100 in one eye, with or without corrective lenses.
- » Testing with DMV is required at any level of vision 20/70 to 20/100.
- » Periodic filing of vision reports may be required for any visual acuity levels between 20/50 and 20/100, in the best eye, as condition for licensure.
- » A physician or vision specialist can recommend testing with DMV at any level of vision, as well as recommending you not be licensed if they feel you pose a potential highway safety risk.

FIELD OF VISION

Field of vision, the ability to see out of the corner of your eye, is important because it helps you spot vehicles or other potential obstacles on either side of you while you continue to look ahead.

The minimum level for field of vision is 20 degrees in the best eye. This is from mid-eye towards the temple. Any level below 70 degrees will require a re-examination with DMV to insure your license is properly restricted.

Almost 90% of driving decisions are based on visual information, so it is important to have regular eye exams and be aware of any decline in your vision or visual abilities.

If you need to wear corrective lenses for driving:

- » Always wear them, even for short distances. If corrective lenses are a restriction on your driver license you could get a ticket if you are stopped by a law enforcement officer and are not wearing them.

Other tips to cope safely with declining vision:

- » Avoid tinted windshields.
- » Wear sunglasses if glare is a problem (but remember to take them off at night).
- » Keep your headlights and windshield clean and properly maintained.
- » Avoid driving vehicles with large blind spots.
- » Avoid wearing glasses that restrict your side vision.
- » Only wear corrective lenses that fit your current prescription.

FUNCTIONAL ABILITY OBSERVATION AND MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

Many people think that once you have a driver license, it is yours for life. While it may be true for some, that is rarely the case. There are many requirements, responsibilities and qualifications for driving. Some you can control and some you cannot. For every driver of every age, functional ability to drive is a requirement. DMV is responsible for determining a safe level of function.

This means that every person with a driver license must have cognitive, physical and sensory capabilities necessary to drive safely. If there is any doubt about your ability to safely operate a motor vehicle, a driver-licensing examiner may require testing and/or medical information prior to renewing your driver license.

Below is a list of medical conditions that may require additional information and/or testing.

(This list is not all-inclusive.)

- » Chronic pain requiring narcotics or opiates
- » Diabetes requiring insulin
- » Parkinson's disease
- » Multiple Sclerosis
- » Alzheimer's disease
- » Dementia
- » Neuropathy
- » Glaucoma
- » Seizures
- » Vertigo
- » Substance use/abuse
- » Stroke
- » Macular Degeneration
- » Schizophrenia
- » Renal Failure/Dialysis
- » Diabetic Retinopathy
- » Congestive Heart Failure
- » COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) and other oxygen requiring conditions

“For every driver of every age, functional ability to drive is a requirement. DMV is responsible for determining a safe level of function.”



"Keep in mind that diagnoses alone will not result in the cancellation of your license, but rather how your medical condition affects your functional ability."

"In terms of your ability to drive safely, we take into consideration: the effects of medication on you, your compliance with recommended treatment, the stability of your condition, and your functional ability to drive."

Keep in mind that diagnoses alone will not result in the cancellation of your license, but rather how your medical condition affects your functional ability to drive.

In terms of your functional ability to drive safely, we take into consideration:

- » *The effects of medication on you*
- » *Your compliance with recommended treatment*
- » *The stability of your condition*
- » *Your functional ability*

When requesting medical information, we require you to have a medical professional (MD, DO, PA-C or APNP) who is familiar with your health history complete a medical report and provide a recommendation for continued licensing.

Even if a medical professional indicates that you are safe to be driving, you may still be required to take a test at DMV.

If the medical report indicates you are not medically safe to drive, your driver license will be cancelled.

If your condition improves or stabilizes, you may submit additional information at any time to be considered for licensing.

The department cannot test someone who is not medically safe to drive.

What if I have to test?

You may be required to complete testing with DMV for a variety of reasons. We understand that being required to test is stressful and can cause unnecessary anxiety. Testing is necessary so that we can make sure that you are still safe to drive and isn't meant to punish you or "take your license away".

We require testing when we receive medical or vision reports that indicate it is necessary. Additionally, medical professionals, law enforcement officers, private citizens and driver license examiners may also request testing. You may also be required to test if it is necessary to determine that you are properly restricted or if you have adaptive equipment installed in your vehicle required for you to operate safely.

If your medical provider recommends you to a Driver Rehabilitation Program or an Occupational Therapist to assess your driving, you may still be required to test with DMV, if testing was recommended as a requirement. When tests are required by DMV because of a functional observation or medical condition, the tests must be taken at a DMV Customer Service Center. If your doctor recommends DMV testing, or if we determine an examination is required, the examination may consist of a vision screening, driving knowledge/ rules of the road test and a sign identification test. Once these are successfully completed, you will be scheduled for a road test.

KNOWLEDGE TEST (RULES OF THE ROAD)

Many Wisconsin drivers over the age of 70 have never taken a knowledge test. The knowledge test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions sometimes referred to as "rules of the road". The test is automated. Questions appear on a monitor, and you choose the correct answer by touching it on the screen. The examiner will show you how the touch screen works before you begin. If you prefer, there is also an audio option that allows you to listen to the questions through a head set. If you have problems using the touch screen or don't want the audio option, you can ask the team leader or supervisor for a printed copy of the test.

Don't hesitate to ask for help from a DMV employee if you have questions or concerns before you begin.

You can attempt the test five times within the time frame stated on your letter or within a one-year period. You can only take the test once per day. If you fail the test using the touch screen system, you can request a study guide that will outline areas you should study before your next attempt. You must request this before leaving the exam station on the same day you take the test. It isn't provided automatically.

You need 80% to pass the knowledge test, which means that you can't have more than 10 incorrect answers.

HIGHWAY SIGN IDENTIFICATION TEST

Taken at the same time as the knowledge test but scored separately, the highway sign identification test is also administered on the computer touch screen. If you pass one and not the other, you are only required to retake the portion you did not pass. You are asked to select the appropriate name of the highway sign from 4 possible choices. There are 15 multiple-choice questions. You need to score 80% to pass, which means that you can't have more than three incorrect answers.

Please refer to the sample review and sample highway sign test on the following pages for some examples of information you may find on the knowledge or highway sign tests.

SKILLS (ROAD) TEST

Upon successful completion of the knowledge and highway sign identification tests, the driver-licensing examiner will schedule a road test. The notice to appear for the test contains important information including the date, time, address and contact information in the event you need to reschedule. The road test can take approximately 60 minutes and will require you to demonstrate your driving ability. The examiner will ask you to perform some driving maneuvers and measure your ability to follow instruction. Additionally, he or she will measure your ability to complete parking maneuvers and execute highway speed driving. The examiner will provide specific instruction and conduct

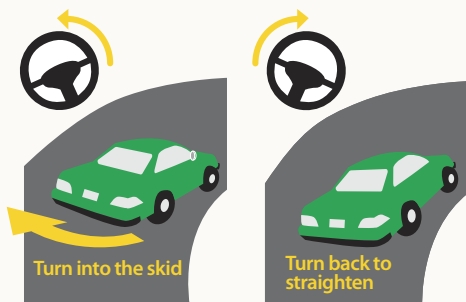


a safety inspection of your vehicle prior to starting the test. If your vehicle is not in safe operating condition, the test will not be conducted. The examiner can stop the test at any time if you are operating in an unsafe or dangerous manner. Upon returning to the exam station, the examiner will review the results of the test with you and may determine that certain restrictions are required on your driver license. If you receive more than 25 points or violate a law, you fail and are no longer licensed to drive. You may be allowed a second attempt at a later date, if it is felt that the items missed could be easily corrected with practice.

SAMPLE REVIEW

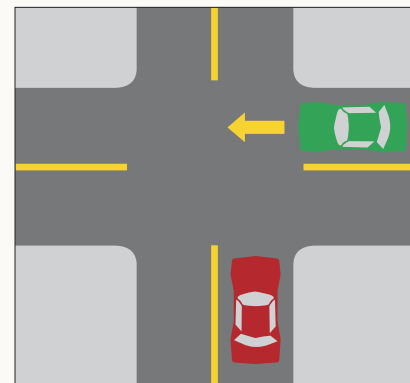
The following statements are true. Study them to help you pass the knowledge test and get your learner's permit.

1. A yellow unbroken line on the right-hand side of the center line means a no-passing zone.
2. When parking on a hill with a curb, your front wheels should be turned as follows:
 - Down hill: towards the curb.
 - Up hill: away from the curb.
3. When your car starts to skid:
 - ease off the gas pedal.
 - don't apply the brakes.
 - turn the front wheels in the direction of the skid.
 - when the skid stops, turn the wheels back the other way.



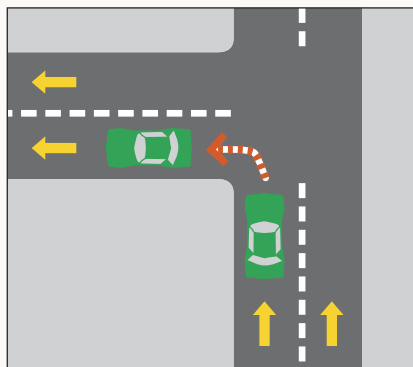
In the drawing, the back of the car is skidding in the direction shown by the yellow arrow.

4. When two vehicles approach an intersection without traffic signs at about the same time, the driver on the left must yield the right-of-way to the driver on the right.
5. When preparing for a right turn, signal for at least 100 feet. Check traffic to the rear and drive in the right-hand lane.



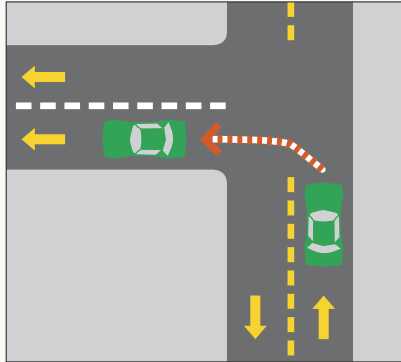
SAMPLE REVIEW

6. It is unlawful to park:
 - closer than 15 feet to a crosswalk.
 - closer than 2 feet to the bumper of another parked car.
 - closer than 10 feet to a fire hydrant.
 - in an alley in a business district.
 - in front of a fire station.
 - within 4 feet of the entrance to an alley or private driveway.
 - in any area reserved for disabled parking (unless you are disabled).
 - in front of a school from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on school days.
7. The speed limit in a school zone when children or a crossing guard is present is 15 miles per hour (unless signs say otherwise.)
8. A left turn from a one-way street to a one-way street should be made from the far left lane.



SAMPLE REVIEW

9. A left turn from a two-way street onto a one-way street should be made to the far left lane.



10. The speed limit in a residential district in a city is 25 miles per hour unless another speed limit is posted
11. Headlights must be turned on:
- during the hours of darkness.
 - from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise.
 - anytime weather conditions make it hard to see.
 - when part of a funeral line.
12. When you hear the siren of an emergency vehicle you should pull over to the right and stop.
13. Passing on the right is permitted only:
- when the roadway is wide enough for two cars to move legally in the same direction.
 - when the car ahead is making a left turn, providing you remain on the paved part of the highway.

SAMPLE HIGHWAY SIGNS IDENTIFICATION TEST

Match the signs with what they mean:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>A. Do Not Enter</p> <p>B. No Left Turn</p> <p>C. No Passing Zone</p> <p>D. Right Lane Ends</p> <p>E. School Zone,
School Crossing</p> | <p>F. Merging Traffic</p> <p>G. Two Way Traffic</p> <p>H. Divided Highway Ahead</p> <p>I. Pedestrian Crossing</p> |
|---|---|



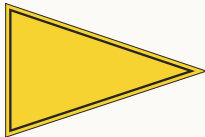
1.



4.



7.



2.



5.



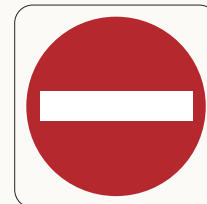
8.



3.



6.



9.

Answers:

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. I | 3. G | 5. F | 7. D | 9. A |
| 2. C | 4. B | 6. H | 8. E | |

WORKSHEET: GETTING AROUND WITHOUT DRIVING

When you no longer drive, daily life may become more challenging. It helps to know what resources are available in your area to assist you. No single method of transportation is likely to meet all needs.

This worksheet is designed to help you identify available transportation alternatives in your area.

FAMILY/FRIENDS

Family and friends are the top alternative to driving for older adults. This mode of transportation may seem more familiar, comfortable and social to many older adults. That being said, there might be conflicting feelings of burdening or inconveniencing others. Some older adults may want to do something in exchange for the ride.

Questions to Ask

1. Are people available to provide rides at the times required?
2. To what extent are family or friends able or willing to provide rides?
3. Do people provide the rides willingly or do they resent having to adjust their schedules?
4. Is there something the older adult can “trade” for a ride (making dinner, taking the driver to lunch, paying for gas)?

NOTES

PRIVATE PROGRAM SERVICES

Services such as adult day centers, housing programs, stores, malls, or other businesses may offer transportation for program participants or customers.

Questions to Ask

1. What ride destinations are provided?
2. Is there a cost?
3. What hours does the service run?
4. What are the routes?
5. Is there any assistance available to people with physical or other health constraints?
6. Is there assistance for people with bags, etc.?
7. Is pre-registration with the service required?
8. Are wheelchair lifts available?

LOCAL PROGRAMS THAT OFFER RIDES

These are locally developed programs, often sponsored by faith-based or non-profit organizations, which provide rides for older adults. They may charge nominal fees or accept donations and often operate with the help of volunteer drivers.

Questions to Ask

1. What programs are available in my area?
2. Is there a cost?
3. What hours and days of the week does the service run?
4. What are the routes or areas of service?
5. Are there limits to the number of rides in a given time period?
6. Is there any assistance available to people with physical or other health constraints?
7. Is there assistance for people with bags, etc.?
8. Is pre-registration with the service required?
9. Are wheelchair lifts available?

WORKSHEET: GETTING AROUND WITHOUT DRIVING

DEMAND-RESPONSIVE SERVICES OR PARATRANSIT

Often referred to as the Dial-a-Ride or Elderly and Disabled Transportation Service, these programs are almost always subsidized by government funds and provide door-to-door service and offer rides by appointment. Fees or donations are common. Many use vans and offer accessible services for riders with special needs. In Wisconsin, you can obtain information on your county's Department of Aging at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aging/contacts/COAGOF.htm>

Questions to Ask

1. Is there a minimum age or other physical or cognitive criteria for using the service?
2. How much does it cost?
3. Can an account be set up in advance with the service?
4. How far in advance do reservations need to be made?

MASS TRANSIT

Public transportation, where available, can be an affordable option for some older adults.

Questions to Ask

1. How much does it cost?
2. Are there discounts for older/disabled people?
3. Can an account be set up in advance with the service?
Or are there monthly passes?
4. What hours does the service run?
5. What geographic area does the service cover?
6. Will drivers provide assistance with bags, packages, etc.?
7. Can companions accompany the person on the service?
8. Are wheelchair lifts available?
9. Does the older adult have cognitive or physical limitations that prevent him or her from using this mode of transportation?

TAXI/CAR SERVICE

These private services offer flexible scheduling and charge a fee. Many older adults may perceive these services as “expensive” or “a luxury” but they can cost much less than owning and maintaining a car. Some taxi/car services may be willing to set up accounts that allow other family members to pay for services.

Questions to Ask

1. How much does it cost?
2. How is the cost calculated?
3. How long in advance should I call for a ride?
4. Do you offer any guarantee on response time?
5. Are there geographic limits to where you provide service?
6. Can an account be set up in advance with the service?
7. How are tips handled with an account system?
8. Will drivers provide assistance with bags, packages, etc.?
9. Can the service accommodate wheelchairs

NOTES

More Information

**Wisconsin DOT Division of Motor Vehicles
Medical Review Unit**

P.O. Box 7918

Madison, WI 53707-7918

Email: dmvmedical@dot.wi.gov

Telephone: (608) 266-2327

Fax: (608) 267-0518

Web: <http://wisconsin.gov/Pages/dmv/license-drvs/mdcl-cncrns/olderdrivers.aspx>



Helpful Resources

AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety

www.aaafoundation.org/senior-drivers

www.aaafoundation.org

American Association of Retired Persons

www.aarp.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

www.nhtsa.gov/

U.S. Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

www.fhwa.dot.gov

www.byways.org

Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services

<http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/aging/contacts/COAGOF.htm>