The older adult population is continuously increasing as they live longer and healthier lives. This population is also remaining behind the driving wheel longer. In fact, the older adult population (65 and up) accounted for 21% of all licensed drivers in 2021 — that is 55.8 million licensed drivers1. Although this population is less likely to drive aggressively, they are considered vulnerable road users. This is seen in the crash data, as this group accounts for a disproportionate number of the annual traffic fatalities in the United States (17% in 2021).1

Driving is a complex activity. It is essential that the older adult population be proactive about safe driving and learn ways to identify changes early. Older drivers should plan for a safe transition beyond the driver’s seat to ensure safe mobility.

Trusted friends and family members can help older drivers be proactive about safe driving by:

* Promoting awareness of the impact aging has on driving.
* Encouraging older drivers to be proactive about safe driving skills. Identifying changes early and intervening when necessary, will help older drivers, and other road users, stay safe.
* Motivating older drivers to plan for safe mobility even beyond the driver’s seat.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s mission is to save lives on our nation’s roads, and that includes safe mobility for older adults. NHTSA offers free educational resources for older drivers and their loved ones or caregivers to help ensure older driver safety. For more information, visit [NHTSA.gov/OlderDrivers](https://www.nhtsa.gov/OlderDrivers).

Talking with an older person about their driving or evaluating your own driving is often difficult, but it’s important — especially before it becomes a safety issue.

Here are three steps to better prepare trusted friends and family members for those conservations and to make them more productive with an older driver in your life.

**Step 1:** **Collect information**. Note specific concerns about the person’s driving, and about their ability to carry out routine non-driving tasks such as cooking or yard work, as changes in the ability to do such tasks may indicate declines that affect driving as well.

Here are some questions to consider asking an older driver:

* Are you getting lost on routes that should be familiar?
* Have you noticed new dents or scratches on your vehicle?
* Have you recently received a ticket or citation for a driving violation?
* Have you experienced a near-miss or crash recently?
* Have you been advised to stop driving due to a health reason?
* Do traffic signs and signals, or other motorists, make you feel overwhelmed while driving?
* Have you discussed with a healthcare provider whether an over-the-counter or prescription medication, or diagnosis change, may affect your driving abilities?

**Step 2: Develop a plan** to (a) convey your concerns to the driver, (b) assist the driver with identifying strategies to avoid unmanageable driving contexts, and (c) show them how to access and use alternative transportation options to maintain their mobility without driving.

**Step 3: Follow through on the plan**.

For more information, visit [NHTSA.gov/OlderDrivers](https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/older-drivers).

1 National Center for Statistics and Analysis. (2023, August). *Older population: 2021 data* (Traffic Safety Facts. Report No. DOT HS 813 491). National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.