

“Mom was only driving locally. Then she got lost in town. Was lost for several hours. Even ran out of gas. Somehow, she called my sister. We sat on it (the problem) for 3 months. Then we went for help.”

-from “When You Are Concerned” by NYSOFA

There is help available to the older adult and to those who care about them. This brochure is a good place to begin to look for help in resolving these difficult dilemmas.

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AT- RISK OLDER DRIVER PROGRAM



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How can I begin to talk to my older driver about this sensitive subject?

Only you know the best approach to take with this person. Some have been successful by beginning the conversation with “you know how much I love you and I would hate to have anything happen to you....”

It is helpful to be ready with suggestions for how this person can maintain their independence without driving. For example, “we always visit you on Sundays. We can bring you your groceries then.” It may be helpful to present your concerns and ask them how they would like to handle this problem.

What are some signs that my older driver may be having trouble driving?

- not obeying traffic signs or traffic lights
- damage to his vehicle or new paint on the vehicle
- driving too slow (way below speed limit)
- getting lost routinely
- repeated comments from friends or neighbors about unsafe driving
- changes in the older person’s grooming can be a sign that they are beginning to have difficulties with daily activities

I want my dad to stop driving immediately because he is so unsafe. He refuses to give it up. What should I do?

If you truly feel that your dad is at risk of crashing or doing harm to others, you can call the police and give the dispatcher details of the immediate situation. The police cannot arrest or detain your dad if he has done nothing wrong, or if the impairment is not alcohol or drug related. If your dad is clearly impaired, they will try to convince him not to drive or arrange for him to be transported to a medical facility for examination. The police can file a request for the DMV to retest the driver or they can issue a summons for a traffic infraction.

For less urgent driving concerns, you can complete a “Letter of Concern” and submit it to the Dept. of Motor Vehicles. This form is available from the DMV or the Office for the Aging.

Is getting the at-risk older driver off the road the only solution?

Certainly not! It is possible that, with a little help, the older driver can improve their driving enough to be safe on the road. Physicians can evaluate any physical causes of their difficulties, and perhaps offer solutions. They can order a driving evaluation done by a certified driver rehab. specialist. People with dementia may have limited success in driver rehab, however.

Where can I look for help in finding transportation alternatives?

Steuben Coordinated Transportation (SCT) connects people to rides for medical and other essential trips. **1-800-346-2211**

What resources are available to help the older driver and me?

- ❖ Your local **Office for the Aging** can provide you with resources, counseling and referrals. Depending on the nature of the difficulty, you may be referred to the older person’s physician, Dept. of Motor Vehicles, a law enforcement agency, etc.
- ❖ The **New York State Office for the Aging** has published a handbook called “When You Are Concerned”, which covers many of the aspects of ensuring older driver safety. It is available to you free of charge by calling **1-800-342-9871**. A limited supply is also available at the Steuben County Office for the Aging in Bath, NY.
- ❖ The **Association for Driver Rehabilitation Specialists** at (800) 290-2344 or e-mail webmaster@driver-ed.org can help you locate a driver rehabilitation specialist in your area if your physician orders a driver evaluation. You can also look in the yellow pages of your phone book under “rehabilitation services”.

WEB: www.aded.net

So now you have an overview of the at-risk older driver issue. The rest is up to you. Doing nothing can have disastrous results. Help is available so you don't have to go it alone.