



Keep *Moving!*

Older Driver Assessment and Mobility Planning

Activities for
seniors, their family
and friends, who
want to make wise
decisions about
driver retirement



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Purpose

A lot of us like driving. Some of us even love driving. Some of us don't like it, but still find it the quickest, safest way from place to place. Like it or not, however, all of us some day have to retire from driving. We grow too old to drive.

This workbook will help you get ready for that day, and live well without driving. It is meant for older drivers, their family members, and their friends. It aims to get you talking – together – about when to let other people do the driving for you and how you can get around without a car.

This may well be a sensitive topic, especially if you are already an older driver. You are the one whose way of life will change the most, if you can't just take the car when and where you want. Family and friends may have to change their habits, too, to drive older family members here and there.

It is important not to put off these issues until later, though. Later can end up being too late. You may already have received some "warning signs," like driving over a curb, getting confused in traffic, or forgetfulness around the house.

So recognize that this is about *safety*: your safety, that of your elderly friend or relative, and the safety of the public. It is of the utmost importance for you to 1) evaluate your driving abilities, or those of older friends and family members, and 2) plan, together and in good faith, when and how to live without driving. The Keeping it Moving handbook will help you do both.

In addition to the handbook, users of *Keep Moving!* would benefit from visiting the [STAR Canada Website](#), where a list can be found of the various community ride programs currently available to senior residents throughout the region.

The Seniors Transportation Access and Resources (STAR) program is an initiative of Better Environmentally Sound Transportation (BEST,) a registered Canadian non-profit charitable organization. We would like to thank Keeping Us Safe (<http://keepingussafe.org>) and their *Driving with Dignity Handbook* for inspiring us to create this handbook, as well as the United Way of the Lower Mainland for their support.

STAR Canada Team
January, 2014



The 3 Phases of Our Transportation Lives

Before Driving ...



Driving ...



After Driving ...



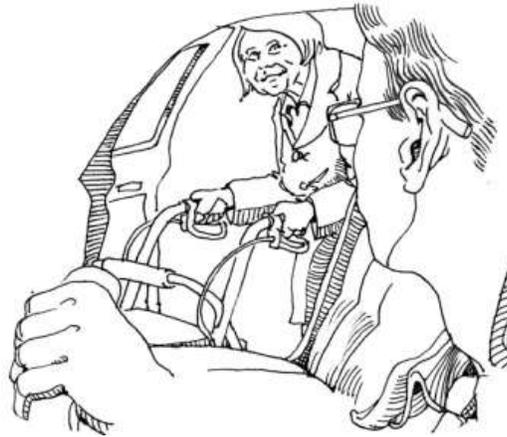
Driving predominates in just **one phase** of a person's transportation life.

Background Information

Driving a car is a privilege. *Mobility* – a person’s ability to get around - is a right and a necessity.

In fact, for older people, mobility is crucial to health and wellbeing. Mobility is what allows you to age in place. It enables you to remain part of your community. No matter where seniors need to go or why, mobility is essential to independent living. This is true for people of all backgrounds.

So services that allow us to remain mobile as we age are very important to individuals, families and communities. Research shows that older people are fully aware of this. They consistently state that access to adequate transportation is a #1 concern.



“Adequate transportation” does not have to mean driving your own vehicle, however. There are other options. It is important to learn about them so that everyone understands how a person can retire from driving, but stay mobile.

When it comes to seniors transportation, five things are essential. We call them the five “A’s.” Transportation has to be

Available, Acceptable, Accessible, Adaptable and Affordable.¹

Few transportation options meet all 5 A’s. (Even driving your own car doesn’t – it’s often the least affordable option.) Because of that, many

* The 5 A’s are the work of The Beverly Foundation, a nonprofit organization in the USA concerned with mobility and transportation issues affecting older adults.

seniors have trouble meeting basic needs, like getting to the doctor, shopping for groceries, visiting family or going to church or the temple. When adequate transportation is lacking, people become less mobile, at the cost of their independence and their dignity.

This workbook will help older drivers, their family and friends draw up a mobility plan. It will identify challenges to the mobility of older drivers. It will also establish measures that will keep older drivers mobile while ensuring their safety and the safety of others.

This workbook asks questions, presents conversation starters, and encourages open discussion between everyone concerned. It looks into a driver's emotions, dignity, lifestyle and abilities:

- Vision
- Hearing
- Memory
- Medication
- Strength and flexibility
- General health concerns
- Overall driving performance
- Reaction time



If you are an older driver, you may choose to work through the exercises independently. If you are a family member or friend of an older driver, remember to approach these exercises with the utmost sensitivity. Place yourself in the shoes of your older relative or friend. As you grow older, these topics could very well affect you in exactly the same way. Empathy is vital to a successful and fair outcome.

Whether you use this workbook by yourself, or as part of a group, please do every questionnaire and exercise. That is the only way to summarize all your concerns, and reflect on what you have uncovered.

A Note to Family & Friends

No two families are alike. So please treat this workbook as a guide, not as an instruction booklet. Your situation may require that the exercises occur in a different order, or that you reword some of the questions. Throughout the process keep close track of how your elderly loved one is feeling. Ideally,

- the older driver is a willing participant at all times.
- you and other family members or friends agree that this is a wise thing to do, and for the same reasons.
- you and other family members or friends are determined to make alternatives to driving available to your elderly loved one.
- **everyone is willing to act on the results of this process.**

As you do the exercises, remember that clear and honest communication may be your most powerful tool. Remember too that “retiring from driving” is not the same as “staying at home.” Far from it! In fact, alternative means of transportation can increase the life expectancy and well-being of the retired driver. They will also contribute to the safety of everyone else on the road.

Finally, realize that older people may resist retirement from driving out of actual *fear*.

- They may believe that, if they stop driving, they will become a burden to others.
- They may believe that, if they stop driving, their opportunities to socialize will diminish.
- To surrender their driver’s license may seem like a public acknowledgement of the deterioration of their abilities. It may seem like an admission that life is “getting worse.”
- To lose the ability to drive can be devastating. It may be one more in a series of losses, such as an involuntary change of residence, the death of a companion, or a worsening medical condition.

By recognizing the validity of these fears and losses you will be able to talk to and listen to an elderly loved one with much more empathy. It is important to appreciate how deeply the loss of a driver's license will affect someone's quality of life. It is crucial to identify for him or her viable alternatives to driving.

Driver retirement may be a topic that an older person's friends and family are also reluctant to discuss. Consciously or subconsciously, they may overlook the inadequacies in that person's driving for any number of reasons.

Ask yourself the following questions to help identify some fears that you may have. To answer "yes," put a **check mark** in the box in the left-hand column. To answer "no," put a check mark in the box in the right-hand column.

- | Y | N | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Does the topic of driver retirement make you uncomfortable? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you want to avoid conflict? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you overloaded with other responsibilities? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you postpone discussions, in hopes that a crisis won't occur? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are family members indecisive? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you live far away and feel there's little you can contribute to the situation? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Are you concerned about "insulting" your loved one? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you think you might seem disrespectful of your loved one? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do you think someone other than you should be the one to begin the conversation? (For example, the older driver may be an in-law, and not your parent.) |
- 

We all have reservations about broaching uncomfortable topics of conversation. If you put any checkmarks in the above list, however, you are one step ahead: you know where your reservations are coming from. A conversation about driver retirement has to take place because

the risk of harm to those you care about and to the general public is far more important than anyone's personal comfort.

The task at hand is simply to determine if someone is a safe driver.

The First Conversation

This process takes time and patience. Begin it earlier rather than later. (If you wait until an incident has occurred, everything will be more difficult.)

The goal of the first conversation is not to settle the issue of driver retirement. Instead, approach the first conversation as an opportunity to really *listen* to the older driver and understand his or her perspective.

Good listeners have four basic behaviors. They:

- maintain eye contact.
- let the other person vent their fears, frustrations, and other important feelings.
- give their full attention to the person who is speaking. They fight distractions. They do not look around the room.
- do not interrupt! They let the speaker finish, and only then take their own turn.

Here are a few important things to remember when broaching a difficult topic:

- **Share your thoughts and be clear**
The goal is to have a good conversation, not tell everyone what is going to happen. A conversation is very different from a decision.
- **Be unruffled and open minded**
Speak calmly and with compassion. Arguments and confrontations are counterproductive. If a conversation is becoming tense, you

might want to lightly change the topic. Come back to it with a fresh outlook another time soon.

- **Be sure everyone is proud of their decisions**

Do not make decisions on someone's behalf unless the person is no longer of sound mind. To assume (even with the best of intentions) that a person thinks or feels this way or that way could deeply injure someone you care about. It is very important to preserve the dignity of everyone involved.

- **Respect – always the most important!**

Good conversations are collaborative, so treat everyone fairly. Allow each person to take part and have their say.

Assessment of Driving Ability

The questions on page 11 will help you start to assess how safe a driver you are or a loved one is.

If you are an older driver, you may be able to answer the questions yourself. When the answer is “yes,” put a check mark in the box in the left-hand column. When the answer is “no,” put a checkmark in the box in the right-hand column. Then compare your answers with what a friend or family member says.

If you are an older driver's friend or family member, answer the questions yourself with that older person in mind. Then compare what you think with what the older person says. You may choose to ask the questions directly or to get the answers from a conversation.

You will know best what will work for you. Either way, we **highly** recommend that you compare your answers with the answers of others who care about you.

Before you begin the driving assessment, please read and sign the **Agreement** on page 10. That will ensure that everyone understands that this Assessment of Driving Ability is a serious matter.

Agreement

I, _____ (an older driver) will use the checklists and exercises in *Keep Moving!* to assess how fit I am to drive. My family member (or friend) _____ is supporting me throughout the assessment.

If the checklists and exercises show that it is no longer safe for me to drive, I will stop driving. If they show that it is safe for me to drive, I will continue to do so.

I will revisit these checklists and exercises if I notice, or if a family member, friend, or doctor observes any of the following:

- My vision deteriorates
- My hearing deteriorates
- My memory deteriorates
- My medication changes
- My strength and flexibility deteriorate
- My overall health declines

Signature of Older Driver

Signature of Family member or Friend

Date



Y N

- Do I feel stressed when I get ready to drive?
- Do I get anxious when I approach a left-hand turn?
- Do I become agitated or frustrated when driving?
- Do I drive as confidently as I once did?
- Do I get lost or confused when driving in areas that I don't often visit?
- Do I have a harder time seeing and driving at night?
- Do I have a difficult time judging the speed of oncoming vehicles or vehicles that cross in front of me?
- Does direct sun give me a hard time?
- Do I get confused at exits and intersections?
- Do I often have trouble understanding traffic signs?
- Do I find it difficult to concentrate while driving?
- Upon arrival do I forget how I got to my destination?
- Have the police recently talked to me about my driving?
- Are there unexplained dents on the car?
- Do I ever forget where I have parked the car?
- Do I ever have problems pushing on the gas or brake pedals?
- Do I have trouble putting on my seatbelt?
- Does driving often make me tired?
- Do I have trouble shoulder-checking or changing lanes?
- Do I find it difficult to turn the steering wheel?
- Is there sometimes a delay before I respond to something on the road or in traffic?
- Does anything else make me concerned about how well I am driving?



(For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix A.)

While going through this checklist, feel free to add your own questions. What is important is to assess the person's anxiety, agitation, confusion, fear, tension, embarrassment, or stress while driving.

If you are an older driver, you may find some of your answers to these questions troubling. This conversation may be a sign that your role in life as a parent and caregiver is shifting to that of a care recipient. If you are an older driver's friend or family member, this conversation may mark a shift in your role from child to parent and caregiver.

As awkward as these conversations may be, it is important to acknowledge this role reversal, not deny it. Handle it with sensitivity, great patience and clear communication. It can impact the well-being of a great many people.

So, how did it go? When comparing answers, did you notice any significant differences?

Were there differences between your responses to these questions, and the responses of others? If so, some additional exercises may be necessary to assess driving ability accurately. These exercises address vision, hearing, memory, medication, strength and flexibility, general health, overall driving performance, and reaction time.

Vision

Good vision is essential for safe driving. Have you, or has the older driver in your family been diagnosed with any of the following conditions?

- Macular Degeneration
- Glaucoma
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Cataract
- Another vision disorder

The absence of such a diagnosis does not mean a person is safe to drive. It may mean that vision checks have been infrequent. To ensure

that vision is good enough for driving, and the time of day at which it is best to drive, regular visits should be paid to an eye-care professional.

Consider the following questions. If you are an older driver, answer them for yourself. If you are family or a friend, answer them with the older driver in mind. Compare answers afterwards.

- Y N**
- Have you ever noticed gaps in your peripheral vision?
 - Do you have difficulty reading signs? Do you have difficulty reading maps or newspapers?
 - Does your vision ever give you headaches?
 - Do you have difficulty distinguishing between colours?
 - When you look out the window, is it easy to tell which objects are closer and which are further from you?
 - Do you wear glasses when driving? Is your prescription up to date?
 - When was your last eye exam?
 - Have you scheduled your next exam?
- 

(For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix B.)

When reviewing the responses to these questions, consider these points:

- When is your next eye exam?
- Have you followed up on the eye-care professional's recommendations (like medications or prescriptions for lenses) from your last exam?
- Have any new limitations in your vision arisen?
- Does your driver's license indicate that you must wear corrective lenses?

Now that you and your loved ones have assessed your vision, make some decisions:

Can any limitations in your vision be corrected by a physician or medical professional? Can they be addressed through driver education or vehicle modifications? Can you alter your driving habits in order to compensate for limitations in your vision?

Hearing

Technology has made cars more sound proof. That makes driving a more enjoyable experience for both drivers and passengers.

Unfortunately, it also makes approaching sirens, honking horns, and other traffic noises harder to hear. Worse still, a quiet ride can be due to more than a well-insulated vehicle. It can be due to hearing loss.

It is important to catch hearing loss early, so it can be treated with hearing aids, medications, or surgery. Otherwise, a small hearing problem can grow to become a big one.

Consider the following questions. If you are an older driver, answer them for yourself. If you are family or a friend, answer them with the older driver in mind. Compare answers afterwards.

While driving can you:

Y N

- hear sirens, horns, or other important sounds outside the car?
- hear passenger's conversations without straining?
- hear your turn signals?

Is it ever challenging for you to:

- hear the other person on the telephone?
- hear when there is background noise?
- follow a conversation with two or more people?
- hear what someone says the first time?
- hear the TV when the volume is set at medium?
- hear certain voices or pitches?

*(For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix C.)

Now that you and your loved ones have assessed your hearing, make some decisions:

Can any limitations in your hearing be corrected by a physician or medical professional? Can they be addressed through driver education or vehicle modifications? Can you alter your driving habits in order to compensate for the limitations in your hearing?

Memory

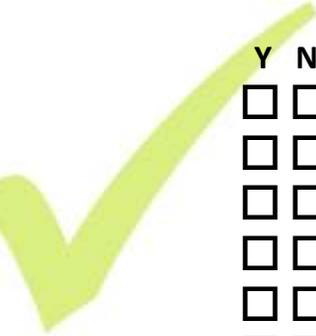
It is not uncommon to hear of elderly people “getting lost” while doing everyday tasks. Even in places they visit all the time, some seniors may find their surroundings unfamiliar. Clearly, such memory problems affect a person’s ability to drive a car, shop, handle money, and carry out other routine activities.

Certain medical conditions can cause memory problems. Below is a list of such conditions:

- Unexpected reactions to certain medicines
- Lack of fluids (dehydration)
- Depression
- Poor diet (a lack of essential vitamins)
- Minor head injuries
- Thyroid problems

Alzheimer’s Disease causes increasingly severe loss of memory over time. What originally may look like simple “forgetfulness” could actually put people at serious risk.

Consider the following questions. If you are an older driver, answer them for yourself. If you are family or a friend, answer them with the older driver in mind. Compare answers afterwards.

- 
- Y N
- Do you forget new information?
 - Do you have trouble remembering names?
 - Do you become disoriented in familiar places?
 - Do you ever forget how to do a favorite hobby?
 - Do you repeat questions?
 - Do you forget how you arrived at a destination or have trouble retracing your steps?
 - Do you have trouble recognizing a familiar face?
 - Do you forget important dates and events?
 - Are you always careful about your personal hygiene?
 - Do you repeat phrases or stories in the same conversation?
 - Do you sometimes have trouble following recipes, directions, and other basic instructions?

(For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix D.)

Now that you and your loved ones have assessed your memory, make some decisions:

If any memory issues have become apparent, can they be corrected by a physician or medical professional? Can they be addressed through driver education or vehicle modifications? Can you alter your driving habits in order to compensate for these issues?

Medication

Prescription medications do us a great deal of good. However, they can also impair our perception, cognition, attention, balance, coordination, and reaction time. This is especially the case when a person is taking two or more prescriptions at the same time. When combined, some medications may have unexpected, adverse effects.

It is important to know what medications a driver is currently taking, their side effects, and how, when used in combination, these medications may limit the person's driving ability.

Some common side effects of prescription medications are:

- Blurred vision
- Reduced alertness
- Inability to focus
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Drowsiness
- Slower movement
- Fainting

Clear communication about the side effects of each medication, as well as combinations of medications, can help you make better choices about your driving ability. We strongly recommend that the communications occur both verbally and in writing. When prescription information is written out, family members can consult and make themselves aware of the risks posed by certain combinations of medications.

If an older driver regularly experiences some of the "possible side effects" of a medication, consult a physician. It may be possible to adjust the prescription dosage or the timing of doses.

It is also important to realize that someone whose prescription medication renders them unfit to drive may be breaking the law if they take the wheel of a car. They may be deemed to be driving “under the influence.” Usually this term refers to driving while under the influence of alcohol, of course. But driving while under the influence of certain prescription medications can also bring about inappropriate and dangerous behavior.

We recommend the following:

- Keep on hand an up-to-date list of all your prescription medications in case of an emergency.
- Meet with a medical specialist to talk about the adverse effects of these prescription medications. Follow the specialist’s recommendations about how to drive safely while taking them.
- Give your family members a copy of the list of your prescription medications.

**Do any of your current prescriptions impair your driving ability?
Are there any combinations that are particularly dangerous for
drivers?**

Strength & Flexibility

It may not be obvious – but good drivers need to be fit! Weak muscles and reduced flexibility may affect an older person’s ability to drive safely.

As we age some decline in physical fitness is inevitable. It is possible to anticipate certain limitations in our strength and flexibility, and how they might affect our driving ability.

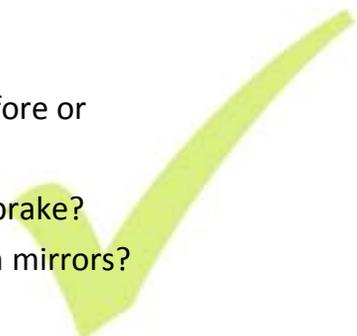
Here’s a simple “Range of Motion” exercise to test your flexibility.

Get behind the steering wheel of your car, while a friend or family member takes the seat behind you. (If there is no rear seating, that person will have to sit to your right, and then stand outside the car to your left.)

Hold the wheel at 10 o'clock with your left hand and 2 o'clock with your right hand. Look as far to the right as possible. Next, look as far to the left as possible. If you can indeed look over each shoulder far enough that your nose aligns with that shoulder, then you are flexible enough to drive safely. This is the range of motion you need in order to park and to check for hazards, merging, changing lanes, and so on.

Consider the following questions. If you are an older driver, answer them for yourself. If you are family or a friend, answer them with the older driver in mind. Compare answers afterwards.

Y N

- Do you have difficulty looking over your shoulder before or while reversing?
 - Do you have difficulty moving your foot from gas to brake?
 - Do you have difficulty adjusting any of the rear vision mirrors?
 - Do you have difficulty turning the steering wheel?
 - Do you have difficulty getting in or out of the car?
 - Are any other movements that are routine to driving troublesome to you?
- 

For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix E.)

Does your range of motion raise any concerns about your ability to drive safely?

General Health Issues

Health issues arise at every stage of our lives. Vision, hearing, memory, medications, reaction times, and strength and flexibility are all aspects of a person's general health. To identify all the issues that may affect our driving ability, and how these issues may be addressed, clear and open communication with a physician is essential. As we age, regular tests become necessary to ensure that we are still safe to share the road with other motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians.



Regular checkups and clear communication – these are the first steps to ensuring safety for all.

However, health issues tend to arise slowly. They start small, and then present an ever-growing challenge to caregivers. Friends and family should take note of all the risky behaviors they observe in their loved one's

driving, and consult his or her physician. By doing so, they may be able to identify a specific issue early on and arrive at a solution.

It is relatively easy to assess someone's general health. Simply spending time with them and listening to their daily challenges can provide invaluable insight into their level of health.

Consider the questions on the next page. If you are an older driver, answer them for yourself. If you are family or a friend, answer them with the older driver in mind. Compare answers afterwards.

Y N

- Do you ever experience dizziness or loss of consciousness?
 - Do you often forget recent events or find your surroundings unfamiliar?
 - Do you ever experience numbness in your arms, legs, fingers, or toes?
 - Do you ever drink alcohol prior to driving?
 - Do you suffer from stiff joints or sore muscles?
 - Have you had recent surgery that may affect your movement?
 - Have you been diagnosed with any chronic medical condition?
 - Do you have trouble sleeping?
 - Has a physician ever told you that your driving career may be coming to an end?
 - Do you suffer from migraines or headaches?
 - Have you been diagnosed with anxiety or personality disorder?
- 

(For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix F.)

If you, a family member, or friend answered “yes” to any of these questions, it does not necessarily mean you are unfit to drive. However, it does mean that there is more risk associated with you driving. The more “yes” answers, the greater still the risk.

Now that you have recorded general observations about your health, or the health of an older person in your family, let’s consider actual driving abilities.

Can any issues with your general health be corrected by a physician or medical professional? Can they be addressed through driver education or vehicle modifications? Can you alter your driving habits in order to compensate for these issues?

Let's Take a Ride

Go for a ride in the car together. Let the older person do the driving, while the family member or friend observes. (Older drivers can also complete this exercise alone by making notes immediately after returning safely home.)

Before starting the car, consider recent events:

- Has the older person had any recent traffic accidents or contact with a traffic officer or police?
- Have there been any “near misses” recently?
- Are there new dents or visible damage to the vehicle, or to any items in the driveway or garage?
- Has the older person requested a ride instead of doing the driving?

Treat any “yes” answer as a warning sign. Keep your eyes and ears wide open during the driving exercise.

Step One

Make sure that the driver is fully at ease. Treat this exercise as an outing, or as a series of outings, rather than an exam. You don't want to “scare” anyone or cause undue stress. The purpose is simply to provide insight into an older person's abilities on the road and natural driving habits.

Step Two

Make a list of three places that the older driver visits frequently (pharmacy, grocery store, friend's house, etc.)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Now substitute a new destination for one of these three. Make it somewhere nearby that the older driver is relatively familiar with (perhaps a nearby park, or public centre). In addition, reshuffle the order of the destinations slightly. This reshuffling will not trouble a driver with normal cognitive abilities. A driver with diminishing capabilities may struggle with it.

New Destination: _____

Your revised destinations:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Be sure one of these destinations requires the driver to back into a parking stall. Mark that destination with an asterisk in order to remind yourself to ask the driver to do that.

Now you are ready to begin the driving exercise. You can do one of two things. You can either explain to the driver that you will be assessing their driving and making notes, or simply sit back and take mental notes.

If you tell the driver the purpose of the outing, write down anything out of the ordinary that occurs! You will easily forget these slight occurrences if you do not record them. Be sure to take as many notes as possible. It is important to be able to discuss your concerns at a later date if necessary.

Immediately after the drive, review your notes and consider the following questions. "Score" the driver by putting a check mark in the box beside every question to which you answer "yes." Put a cross there to answer "no." If you've noticed something that is not listed, add it to the score card.

Score Card

- 
- Y N
- Did the driver ensure that mirrors and seats were adjusted properly?
 - Did the driver remember to use a seatbelt – without prompting?
 - If corrective lenses must be worn to drive, did the driver remember to wear them?
 - Did the driver remember to turn on the lights, use the signals, and turn them off after making a turn?
 - Did the driver drift to the right or left, or bump any curbs?
 - Did the driver complete shoulder checks before changing lanes, before entering an intersection, or making a turn?
 - Did the driver follow the posted speed limit? (Travelling slowly can create a hazard for others.)
 - Did the driver stop for pedestrians at crosswalks?
 - Was the ride smooth? (no abrupt stops, sharp corners, etc.)
 - Did the driver obey all road signs?
 - Did the driver yield as required to other road users (cars, cyclists, pedestrians)?
 - Did the driver judge distances accurately?
 - Was the driver physically able to drive comfortably?
 - Was the driver strong enough to turn the wheel abruptly in case of emergency?
 - Did the driver have the ability to shoulder-check throughout the drive?
 - Was the driver able to back safely into a parking spot?
 - Did the driver show signs of frustration?
 - Was the driver able to navigate the new route?
 - After the drive, did the driver seem exhausted or mention any frustrations about driving?

Reaction Time

As we age, ordinary street activity – people walking, running, cycling, driving, skate-boarding, and so on – can become overwhelming. This is especially the case at intersections. Driving more slowly can help an older driver stay safe on the roads. It gives the driver more time to notice and react to obstacles, signs, and events. However, by impeding the flow of traffic, slow driving also can put other motorists at greater risk.

Reaction times are more difficult to observe than loss of hearing loss or memory. That makes it all the more important to assess reaction times regularly.

Consider the following questions. If you are an older driver, answer them for yourself. If you are family or a friend, answer them with the older driver in mind. Compare answers afterwards.

- 
- Y N**
- Are traffic signals and signage overwhelming at times?
 - Are approaching pedestrians difficult to notice?
 - Is it sometimes confusing when traffic is approaching from all directions?
 - Do any medications that you are taking make you drowsy?
 - Are familiar neighbourhoods ever confusing?

(For a second copy of these questions for purposes of comparing replies, see Appendix H.)

Physical activity helps us all stay fit and alert. Generally, seniors who are more physically active tend to have better reaction times and greater flexibility. They are more likely to be safe drivers over the long run.

To assess reaction time on the roads, go for a drive. Let the older person do the driving while a family member or friend pays close

attention to how the driver reacts to traffic, pedestrians and signage. Everyone's safety depends on how quickly and appropriately a driver reacts to these activities.

Now that you and your loved ones have assessed your reaction time, make some decisions:

Can any issues about your reaction time be corrected by a physician or medical professional? Can they be addressed through driver education or vehicle modifications? Can you alter your driving habits in order to compensate for these issues?

The Risk Reducing Decision

The exercises you've completed will now allow you to reflect on some recorded observations – your own, and those of others. Ideally, you will be able to compare these observations, recognize how they affect your emotions, and if they confirm or challenge your opinions to date. In short, you can really draw some conclusions about your driving abilities, or those of an older loved one.

You can also consult these exercises when discussing the issue with other friends and family members. You can show them evidence that you or your loved one is safe to continue driving, or that other transportation options are required.

As you will recall, we have asked several questions throughout this document. The questions relate to concerns about

- Vision
- Hearing
- Memory
- Medication
- Strength and flexibility

- General Health
- “Let’s Take a Ride” (Overall Driving Performance)
- Reaction time

Remember, a less than adequate assessment in any one of these sections does not necessarily mean that an older person must retire from driving. Many of the challenges, once identified, can be dealt with by other means. For example, if nighttime vision is poor, put in place a nighttime driving restriction. If there is slight hearing impairment, a hearing aid is in order. By addressing concerns appropriately, you may be able to improve the older person’s abilities to the point that he or she can keep driving.

Other “manageable” changes are alterations to prescriptions, and vehicle adaptations or modifications.

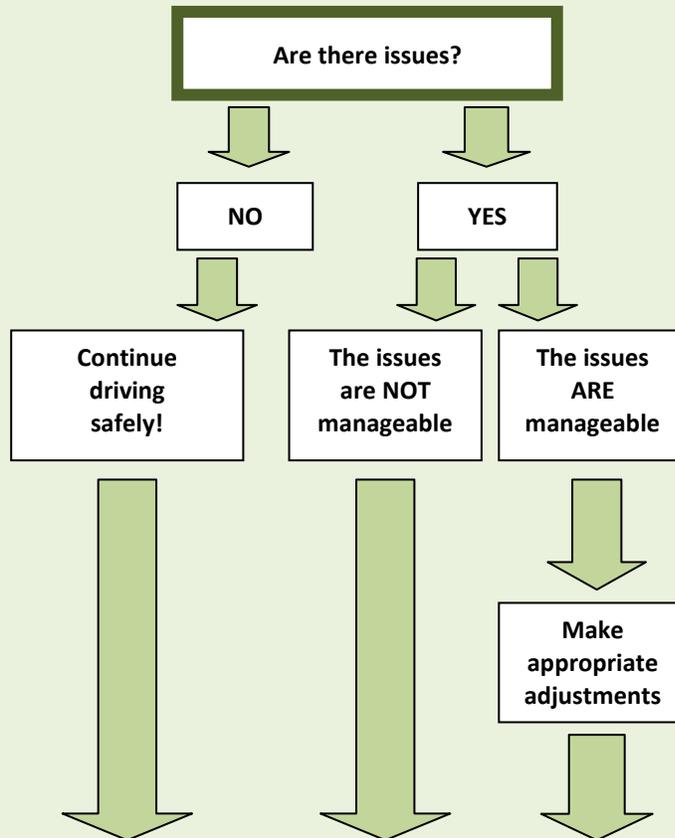
To summarize the findings from each exercise we recommend completing the table on the next page.



| | | Are there issues? | | If so, are the issues manageable? | |
|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|----|-----------------------------------|----|
| Issues | Page # | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Vision | 11 | | | | |
| Hearing | 13 | | | | |
| Memory | 14 | | | | |
| Medication | 16 | | | | |
| Strength and flexibility | 17 | | | | |
| General Health | 19 | | | | |
| “Let’s take a ride” | 21 | | | | |
| Reaction Time | 25 | | | | |

Now it will be clear to you where there are grounds for concern, and how best to address them. It is highly recommended that you speak to a physician. Take your notes along with you and discuss your observations and results. For the next steps to follow, see the chart on the next page.

Driving Decisions Made Easy



Complete a Mobility Contract: a mutual agreement about when it is time to stop driving, and how a loved one can stay mobile without driving.

In the simplest terms, an older driver has three options:

- 1) Continue driving with no changes
- 2) Continue driving within new limitations
- 3) Discontinue driving

In every case, a Driving Retirement Contract is strongly recommended.

Remember that this workbook is meant to guide your decision – not make it for you. We recommend that you make use of all the resources available to you and your family in order to reach the best possible solution.

Next: The Mobility Contract

The assessment of your driving ability is over. It will have shown one of three things.

- That you are still a capable driver. Congratulations!
- That certain issues are reducing your driving ability, but you can (and must) take steps to manage them. That's good news, too.
- That the time to retire from driving has arrived. This news may not be welcome, but it may not be bad either. It means you are about to find out that you can live without driving. In fact, life without driving can be great.

Whatever the result of the assessment, we strongly recommend that older drivers, their family members and friends complete a Mobility Contract. Like the driving ability assessment, the Contract will get you talking again together. This time, however, you will be talking about when to let other people do the driving for you and how you can get around without a car.

For older persons who are still capable drivers, or can manage the issues that reduce driving ability, the Contract will specify when it is unsafe for that person to keep driving. The Contract lists the behavior and experiences which, in the view of an older person and his or her loved ones, are signs that driving is no longer safe – no longer safe for the older person or for the general public. It describes when everyone agrees it is time for that older person to retire from driving, or to do another assessment.

But the contract does much more than that. It also explains how the older person will get around without driving. It says how that person will get groceries or go to doctor's appointments. It says how they will visit friends, family, and go to church or the temple. Sometimes a family member or friend will drive them. Sometimes they will take the bus or taxi. If HandyDart is an option, the contract may state who will

make (or guide) the application for that service. For a full list of the current community ride options available to senior residents throughout the region, please be sure to visit the [STAR Canada Website](#).

All that is important information for people to work out sooner, rather than later. It is important, no matter what the results of the driving ability assessment.

Please turn to page 34 to complete the contract. On page 33, there is a diagram to think about first. It's called "The 3 Phases of Our Transportation Lives," and describes how we each get around as we grow older. We start out crawling, running, biking, and being driven around by others. Later in life, we again get around on foot, on bikes, or in buses, taxis, and cars driven by others. Only in the middle phase are we the drivers.

It all goes to show that we can live without driving. We all did it once, and we can do it again.

The 3 Phases of Our Transportation Lives

Before Driving ...



Driving ...



After Driving ...



Driving predominates in just **one phase** of a person's transportation life.

Mobility Contract

This contract is between _____ (an Older Driver) and _____ (his/her Family member or Friend).

Having completed the *Keep Moving!* Driving Assessment, the Older Driver has decided to drive less, or to retire from driving altogether. This contract explains how Family or Friends will help the Older Driver to stay mobile despite this decision.

This contract begins on this date: _____ and will run to this date: _____, when we will revisit it. However, either of us may ask to revisit it earlier, if that seems wise. For example, if a new bus route opens up in the area, or the Older Driver's health takes a turn and he or she can no longer get around as before.

The Family or Friend will provide a ride or keep the Older Driver company to do these things (for example, go to doctor appointments, family gatherings, church or temple) . . .

The Older Driver and his or her Family or Friend will work together to find out if HandyDART is an option, and register the Older Driver if it is. In that case, the Older Driver will use HandyDART to do these things . . .

The Older Driver will walk to do these things . . .

The Older Driver will use the bus or other public transit to do these things . . .

The Older Driver will use a taxi to do these things . . .

. . . and use other means of transportation, such as those listed on the [STAR Canada Website](#), like _____

to do these things . . .

This green section is for an Older Driver who has decided to drive less. The Older Driver will limit his or her driving as follows (for example, drive only in daytime) . . .

The Older Driver will use the car to do these things . . .

The Older Driver feels that this plan addresses his or her concerns about driving less or about retiring from driving.

The Older Driver understands that his or her Family or Friend will provide help as listed above.

The Family or Friend understands that little things, like a change in a bus route or in the location of a store, can make a big difference to someone who doesn't drive. In such cases, the Family or Friend understands the Older Driver depends on them for more help.

(Older Driver)

(Family member or Friend)

(Date)

Appendix A: Assessment of Driving Ability

- Y N
- Do I feel stressed when I get ready to drive?
 - Do I get anxious when I approach a left-hand turn?
 - Do I become agitated or frustrated when driving?
 - Do I drive as confidently as I once did?
 - Do I get lost or confused when driving in areas that I don't often visit?
 - Do I have a harder time seeing and driving at night?
 - Do I have a difficult time judging the speed of oncoming vehicles or vehicles that cross in front of me?
 - Does direct sun give me a hard time?
 - Do I get confused at exits and intersections?
 - Do I often have trouble understanding traffic signs?
 - Do I find it difficult to concentrate while driving?
 - Upon arrival do I forget how I got to my destination?
 - Have the police recently talked to me about my driving?
 - Are there unexplained dents on the car?
 - Do I ever forget where I have parked the car?
 - Do I ever have problems pushing on the gas or brake pedals?
 - Do I have trouble putting on my seatbelt?
 - Does driving often make me tired?
 - Do I have trouble shoulder-checking or changing lanes?
 - Do I find it difficult to turn the steering wheel?
 - Is there sometimes a delay before I respond to something on the road or in traffic?
 - Does anything else make me concerned about how well I am driving?
- 

Appendix B: Vision

Y N

- Have you ever noticed gaps in your peripheral vision?
- Do you have difficulty reading signs? Do you have difficulty reading maps or newspapers?
- Does your vision ever give you headaches?
- Do you have difficulty distinguishing between colours?
- When you look out the window, is it easy to tell which objects are closer and which are further from you?
- Do you wear glasses when driving? Is your prescription up to date?
- When was your last eye exam?
- Have you scheduled your next exam?

Appendix C: Hearing

While driving can you:

Y N

- hear sirens, horns, or other important sounds outside the car?
- hear passenger's conversations without straining?
- hear your turn signals?

Is it ever challenging for you to:

- hear the other person on the telephone?
- hear when there is background noise?
- follow a conversation with two or more people?
- hear what someone says the first time?
- hear the TV when the volume is set at medium?
- hear certain voices or pitches?

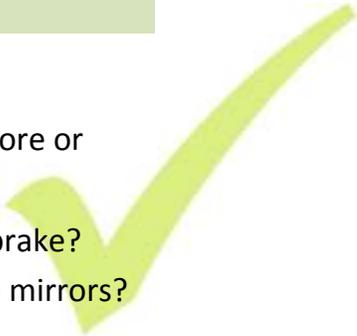
Appendix D: Memory

Y N

- Do you forget new information?
 - Do you have trouble remembering names?
 - Do you become disoriented in familiar places?
 - Do you ever forget how to do a favorite hobby?
 - Do you repeat questions?
 - Do you forget how you arrived at a destination or have trouble retracing your steps?
 - Do you have trouble recognizing a familiar face?
 - Do you forget important dates and events?
 - Are you always careful about your personal hygiene?
 - Do you repeat phrases or stories in the same conversation?
 - Do you sometimes have trouble following recipes, directions, and other basic instructions?
- 

Appendix E: Strength & Flexibility

Y N

- Do you have difficulty looking over your shoulder before or while reversing?
 - Do you have difficulty moving your foot from gas to brake?
 - Do you have difficulty adjusting any of the rear vision mirrors?
 - Do you have difficulty turning the steering wheel?
 - Do you have difficulty getting in or out of the car?
 - Are any other movements that are routine to driving troublesome to you?
- 

Appendix F: General Health Issues

Y N

- 
- Do you ever experience dizziness or loss of consciousness?
 - Do you often forget recent events or find your surroundings unfamiliar?
 - Do you ever experience numbness in your arms, legs, fingers, or toes?
 - Do you ever drink alcohol prior to driving?
 - Do you suffer from stiff joints or sore muscles?
 - Have you had recent surgery that may affect your movement?
 - Have you been diagnosed with any chronic medical condition?
 - Do you have trouble sleeping?
 - Has a physician ever told you that your driving career may be coming to an end?
 - Do you suffer from migraines or headaches?
 - Have you been diagnosed with anxiety or personality disorder?

Appendix G: Let's Take a Ride Score Card

- Y N
- Did the driver ensure that mirrors and seats were adjusted properly?
 - Did the driver remember to use a seatbelt – without prompting?
 - If corrective lenses must be worn to drive, did the driver remember to wear them?
 - Did the driver remember to turn on the lights, use the signals, and turn them off after making a turn?
 - Did the driver drift to the right or left, or bump any curbs?
 - Did the driver complete shoulder checks before changing lanes, before entering an intersection, or making a turn?
 - Did the driver follow the posted speed limit? (Travelling slowly can create a hazard for others.)
 - Did the driver stop for pedestrians at crosswalks?
 - Was the ride smooth? (no abrupt stops, sharp corners, etc.)
 - Did the driver obey all road signs?
 - Did the driver yield as required to other road users (cars, cyclists, pedestrians)?
 - Did the driver judge distances accurately?
 - Was the driver physically able to drive comfortably?
 - Was the driver strong enough to turn the wheel abruptly in case of emergency?
 - Did the driver have the ability to shoulder-check throughout the drive?
 - Was the driver able to back safely into a parking spot?
 - Did the driver show signs of frustration?
 - Was the driver able to navigate the new route?
 - After the drive, did the driver seem exhausted or mention any frustrations about driving?
- 

Record all additional comments below:

If you observed any unsafe driving behaviors, record the three most important ones.

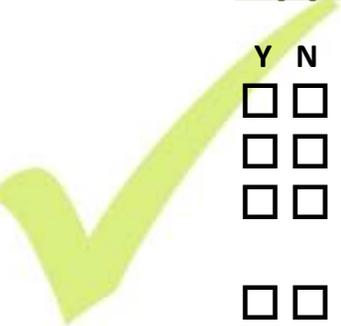
1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Appendix H: Reaction Time

Y N

- 
- Are traffic signals and signage overwhelming at times?
 - Are approaching pedestrians difficult to notice?
 - Is it sometimes confusing when traffic is approaching from all directions?
 - Do any medications that you are taking make you drowsy?
 - Are familiar neighbourhoods ever confusing?

For more information related to seniors mobility concerns and alternative transportation visit the STAR Canada website at www.starcanada.ca

Thanks for reading!



Community Partner
United Way
of the Lower Mainland

