

Is someone you know no longer safe to drive?

Changes in mental and physical health related to aging or other circumstances can greatly affect the ability to drive safely. Sometimes, a person doesn't recognize these changes on their own and you may need to get involved before someone gets hurt.



WHERE TO BEGIN

The first step in helping your friend or loved one is recognizing a pattern of unsafe driving. Driving ability seldom changes drastically in a short time. Track changes over time to get a clear picture of overall driving ability.

- Observe driving over time, keeping notes to help you understand changes in driving ability.
- Look for a pattern of warning signs and for an increase in the frequency of occurrence.

WARNING SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

The following driving behaviors are ranked from (1) minor to (28) serious.

1. Decrease in confidence while driving.
2. Difficulty turning to see when backing up.
3. Riding the brake.
4. Easily distracted while driving.
5. Other drivers often honk horns.
6. Incorrect signaling.
7. Parking inappropriately.
8. Hitting curbs.
9. Scrapes or dents on the car, mailbox or garage.
10. Increased agitation or irritation when driving.
11. Failure to notice important activity on the side of the road.
12. Failure to notice traffic signs.
13. Trouble navigating turns.
14. Driving at inappropriate speeds.
15. Not anticipating potential dangerous situations.
16. Uses a "copilot."
17. Bad judgment on making left hand turns.
18. Near misses.
19. Delayed response to unexpected situations.
20. Moving into wrong lane.
21. Difficulty maintaining lane position.
22. Confusion at exits.
23. Ticketed moving violations or warnings.
24. Getting lost in familiar places.
25. Car accident.
26. Failure to stop at stop sign or red light.
27. Confusing the gas and brake pedals.
28. Stopping in traffic for no apparent reason.¹

MINOR ISSUES OBSERVED

If the observation of your driver resulted in infrequent, minor issues, your loved one may be able to continue driving by making some changes. Visit our website (iowadot.gov/mvd/driverslicense/retiring-from-driving) or reference the *Driving As You Age* handout for information about limiting driving or adapting to changing driving ability.

SERIOUS ISSUES OBSERVED

Frequent minor and serious behaviors may require your immediate action and indicate it's time to retire from driving. See page 2 for next steps.

¹ Information from the Hartford: https://s0.hfdstatic.com/sites/the_hartford/files/we-need-to-talk.pdf

WHEN MY LOVED ONE VOLUNTARILY QUILTS DRIVING

If your loved one decides to quit driving, it's a good idea to have them formally surrender their license. They can do that at any driver's license service center in Iowa (iowadot.gov/mvd/iowa-dot-locations). There's no penalty or sanction for doing so, and we will issue them an ID card to replace it at no cost.

MY LOVED ONE REFUSES TO QUIT DRIVING

We know some people, despite your best efforts, won't be willing to quit driving even if it's no longer safe. If that happens, you still have the following options for getting them help:



OPTION 1

Submit a request for re-examination.

Anyone can submit a signed and written request for re-examination. You just need to complete and submit in writing, **form 431030** (forms.iowadot.gov/BrowseForms.aspx?templateid=431030).

When we receive it, we will evaluate the information provided to determine whether re-examination is appropriate based on the information provided.

If it is, we will send them a notice for re-examination, and they will be required to go to a driver's license service center to complete a re-exam, which may include cognitive screening, a written test, and a drive test with a licensing professional.

We may also request information from a medical professional about their condition and ability to drive as part of the re-examination process.

If the results of the re-examination indicate their driving privileges should be terminated or limited, we will either suspend their license or re-issue it with additional restrictions. Again, there is no penalty, and if their license is suspended they can get a replacement ID at no cost.



OPTION 2

Have a health care professional submit information to us.

If a health care professional that has knowledge of a physical or mental condition that prevents the person from safely driving, they can submit information directly to us.

If they submit information indicating the person's ability to drive may be impaired and should be re-evaluated, we will take the same course of action we take when any person submits a request for re-examination. However, if the health care professional submits written information indicating that, in their opinion, the person is not fit to drive, we will immediately suspend the person's driving privilege and issue them an ID at no cost.

If a health care professional is involved in the person's care, you might explore their willingness to request re-examination or recommend suspension of driving privileges. This can be an important option to consider when the threat of a crash or injury is imminent, and the person is not willing to voluntarily surrender their driving privileges.



OPTION 3

Have a law enforcement officer submit a request for re-examination.

Law enforcement officers may submit a request or recommendation for re-examination to us, either through an accident report or by completing 431030.

If either form is received, we will take the same course of action when any person submits a request for re-examination. If the person has been in a crash, been cited, or warned for a traffic violation, you might explore the officer's willingness to request or recommend re-examination.

I'm worried they will be mad at me.

There's no way around that – they might. We can't take action on any request unless it is in writing and identifies the person who submits it. We'll avoid naming you if possible, but it is the person's legal right to know where the request came from if they ask.

Ask yourself, is it worse to have them be upset with you, or have them injure or kill themselves or another person? You're in the best position to see that someone needs help and your willingness to speak up can make all the difference.

WHAT IF I'M A POWER OF ATTORNEY OR GUARDIAN AND CONSERVATOR FOR MY LOVED ONE

If the person has executed a durable power of attorney that is effective and that designates you as their attorney-in-fact or if you have been appointed by the court as the person's guardian and conservator, you can surrender their license on their behalf and we will issue them a replacement ID at no cost. You just need to bring the original power of attorney or a certified copy of the court's order authorizing you to act as their guardian and conservator as proof of your authority to act on their behalf.