
OLDER DRIVER FACT SHEET

October 2012

- Drivers age 65 and older represent Iowa's fastest growing group of drivers. Nearly 18.5% of Iowa's licensed drivers were 65 or older in 2011 (412,678).
- Sixty-eight people age 65 and older were killed in Iowa traffic crashes in 2010. Nationwide, 16.7% of traffic fatality victims were 65 or older versus 17.4 in Iowa.
- In 2010, drivers age 65 and older were involved in 78 fatal traffic crashes in Iowa which was 14.3% of all crashes compared to 12.5% in fatal crashes nationwide.
- Most traffic fatalities involving older drivers in 2010 occurred during the daytime (77%), occurred on weekdays (71%), and involved other vehicles (66%).
- Major factors in crashes involving older drivers include failure to yield on left turns and failure to yield at stop signs and stop lights.
- Older drivers undergo physical changes that can affect driving ability – changes in vision, reaction time and flexibility [source: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety].
- With age, eyes lose the ability to change focus quickly, peripheral vision narrows and the retina becomes less sensitive to light. The amount of light needed to drive doubles about every 13 years. A 45-year old requires 4 times the light of a 19-year old and a 60-year old requires 10 times as much. Older drivers should keep their headlights, mirrors and windshields clean, limit driving to daytime if they have trouble with night vision or glare, add a larger rearview mirror to increase your visibility range, and look at the road ahead to spot trouble before reaching it.
- Reacting to driving situations involves 3 steps: sensing, deciding and reacting. For older drivers, each step takes longer. Older drivers should allow a greater distance between them and other vehicles, take extra caution when making left turns, pay attention to the speed of on-coming cars, watch for pedestrians, reduce distractions like the radio, and know their limitations.
- Consider these factors when deciding if it's time to stop driving: having minor or near crashes, being unable to concentrate, being unable to read road signs, getting lost on familiar roads, other drivers honking at you frequently, having family, friend or police speak to you on your driving.

