



VICTORIA POLICE

Fitness to Drive

An important safety message from
Assistant Commissioner Doug Fryer

The focus of road trauma is often on young people, but older people also make up a significant percentage of Victorian road trauma.

It is important for people to understand the limitations and impact of ageing on driving, what steps can be taken to assist them in remaining mobile and safe and when it is time to stop driving.

As part of the ageing process, people may experience a decline in eyesight and hearing, a decline in cognitive skills, such as the ability to focus on multiple tasks or to judge the speed of vehicles and gaps in traffic, particularly when turning right, and a decline in psychomotor skills including reaction time, flexibility and strength. Some medical conditions that impact on driving are also more common with age.

All drivers, irrespective of age, have a responsibility to ensure they are fit and safe to be driving. If you have any concerns about your fitness to drive it is important that you speak with your doctor.

In Victoria, all drivers have a legal obligation to report to VicRoads (Medical Review Section) any serious or chronic medical condition or disability which may affect their ability to drive. Concerns about 'fitness to drive' can be made to VicRoads by phone or online via the VicRoads website.

Family, friends and members of the public can also make a report to VicRoads if they have concerns about somebody's fitness to drive. People can remain anonymous if they choose. Reports can also be made at a police station and the police member can submit a Licence Review Request form to VicRoads on the family member's behalf.

As we grow older there are steps that we can take to adjust or modify our driving to enhance our safety and ability to continue to drive for longer. Such steps may include avoiding situations where we feel unsafe or situations that are too complex, such as driving on a highway, undertaking a right hand turn across traffic, driving at night or driving during peak hour times. We know that older drivers also do better if they undertake refresher driving training. Transition plans for becoming a non-driver are also an important part of the driving cycle.

Finally, as part of staying fit and safe on the roads, it is important that regular health and vision checks are undertaken, that we encourage people we trust to give us honest feedback about our driving ability and that we seek to secure, where possible, a 4 or 5 star rating car to provide the greatest protection possible should we become involved in a crash..

Providing a safe Victorian driving environment is a shared community responsibility. We need everyone to do their part in ensuring Victorian drivers are fit to drive.